RICE UNIVERSITY

Cyrano de Bergerac and Seventeenth Century French Free Thought

by

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ABSTRACT

Cyrano de Bergerac (1619-1655) has traditionally been grouped with some early seventeenth century thinkers known as libertins. An examination of these people and a reading of Cyrano's works, especially *L'autre monde*, show that Cyrano's connection with libertinage is tenuous. Thus, the traditional appraisal of his position is not a helpful one, and to a large extent it accounts for the little attention he has received from those studying the intellectual history of seventeenth century France.

*L'autre monde* is an important book for several reasons. Its social, religious, and political criticism foreshadows the point of view taken by many during the Enlightenment, and Cyrano's emphasis on reason as the best criterion for value judgments deserves attention. Also, Cyrano enthusiastically supported heliocentricity, and the book is worth consideration as an easily read, popular propaganda effort on behalf of the new astronomy. In this case, as in the case of the criticisms Cyrano made of French life, the connection with Enlightenment thought is striking.

Nevertheless, it is no more useful to consider Cyrano a philosophe than it is to treat him as a libertin. His work is permeated with a mysticism--taken from the Italian naturalists--that sharply distinguishes what Cyrano has done from what the philosophes did. Instead, Cyrano is important in
French intellectual history as a transitional figure. He illustrates the modifications which had taken place in men's ways of thinking between the highpoint of humanism and the Enlightenment. While Cyrano is not a philosophe, he is a precursor of Enlightenment thought and should be studied as such.
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INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

Aside from the legends about him, Cyrano de Bergerac is a little known figure in French intellectual history. Although he apparently was a popular writer in his own time, people who have written on Cyrano since then have either romanticized his life and achievements or scarcely given him serious consideration. Moreover, almost nothing on Cyrano has been written in English. Especially for the English-speaking reader, Cyrano is primarily the swashbuckling, dueling poetaster of Edmond Rostand's play. The persistence of such a characterization may be unavoidable, for the possibility of a complete biography of Cyrano is very small. There are too many uncertain events in Cyrano's life and too many years about which nothing is known.

A man's work may be studied even though little is known about his life. Cyrano's ideas have not received much attention, however. The neglect may be largely attributed to the place in intellectual history traditionally given to Cyrano. Most of the people who have written about him have numbered him among the libertins. This group, generally speaking, adopted a fideistic position on religious matters and a sceptical one on epistemological and ethical questions; they were for heliocentricity in astronomy and absolutism in government. While it is true that Cyrano wrote in a
sceptical fashion from time to time and always supported heliocentricity, his connection with libertinage is tenuous. Among other things, his valuation of reason and his attitude toward science set him apart from the libertins. Cyrano renounced the pyrrhonic doubt of the sceptics and lauded reason in the manner of the eighteenth century philosophes. He viewed science with enthusiasm and popularized heliocentricity with vigor. In his writings science and reason work together; for Cyrano's critical rationalism is recommended as a method for science, and science, in turn, should cause man to view himself and his place in the world more reasonably than he has in the past.

The emphasis on science and reason in Cyrano's works makes him appear close to the Enlightenment. Italian naturalism, however, pervades his writings and distinguishes him sharply from the philosophes. Eighteenth century thinkers agreed with Cyrano's scientific ideas, but stripped away the mysticism with which he justified them. Belief in the oneness and the value of Being, in itself, provided the ethical foundation for Cyrano's thoughts; the philosophes rejected these metaphysical implications. Thus, while Cyrano's purposes and many of his ideas were acceptable during the Enlightenment, the principles he used to explain or support them were not. Cyrano cannot, therefore, be grouped usefully with eighteenth century thinkers, even though he often sounds surprisingly ahead of his time. Nonetheless, he foreshadows
the Enlightenment far more than he participates in libertinage. Grouping Cyrano with the libertin has brought about a disregard for him. Cyrano's ideas are important, and he deserves more attention than he has received, if only because of his dissenting voice. His dissent is a reminder of the dangers of overgeneralizing about the absolutism of the seventeenth century; it also illustrates the historical axiom that change is slow. The Enlightenment did not burst upon the world in splendor, fully grown; rather, the way had been prepared by just such dissenters. Cyrano was one of the earliest to set forth ideas that came to prominence in the Enlightenment, and his contribution, like those of Bayle and Fontenelle, should not be overlooked. It was a stepping stone from the classical humanism of the sixteenth century to the scientific humanism of the eighteenth.

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I

THE BACKGROUND
I

THE BACKGROUND

Cyrano de Bergerac—a rebel who spoke out against established, institutional patterns of behavior and belief—was one of a number of free thinkers in seventeenth century France. In the early part of the century a type of free thought, rooted in the traditions of naturalism and scepticism, developed. It was encouraged by the political, social, and intellectual disorder from which France was slowly emerging.

One religious war after another marked the second half of the sixteenth century. These wars not only upset France; they also indicated and intensified the instability of the French monarchy. For example, the assassination of Henry III in 1589 raised the question of succession, and Henry IV became king by winning battles and abjuring his faith. The edict of Nantes, during his reign, ended the religious wars, more or less, but Henry's assassination in 1610 brought fresh troubles for the monarchy; for the regency of Marie de Medici and the control of state affairs by Concino Concini were decidedly unpopular.

After Louis XIII was declared of age in 1614, he and his favorite, the Duke de Luynes, took control. Concini was arrested and murdered, and Marie de Medici was sent to Blois. She tried to stir up opposition to the government, but finally she and her son were reconciled by Cardinal Richelieu who
soon after took control of the affairs of state. Richelieu attempted to strengthen and stabilize the monarchy; at the same time his ministry was marked by conspiracies and Protestant uprisings. Nevertheless he enforced a civil status on Protestant strongholds, strengthened central government by the use of intendants, and showed the nobles that rebellion and alliances against the king were treason.

The Thirty Years War had already begun, but France did not take an active part until the 1630's. In external affairs as well as internal, Richelieu worked for a strong state; so the French fought with the Protestants against the Catholic Hapsburgs, the biggest threat to French power. Cardinal Mazarin carried on Richelieu's foreign policy, both in the Thirty Years War and in the war against Spain, which ended with the peace of the Pyrenees. Mazarin also followed Richelieu's example in internal affairs, though his ministry was interrupted by the Fronde. Politically, therefore, the era—which included two foreign wars, a civil war, and two unpopular regencies—was a turbulent one.

Religious strife was, of course, prominent, but it is not only the battles between Catholics and Protestants that are important. Religious and civic prosecutions of witches, demoniacs and atheists were extremely common. There were epidemics of possession and widespread burnings; in Lorraine, for example, approximately 900 sorcerers were executed between 1580 and 1620. Although the phenomenon of witchcraft
and possession reached its height in the last half of the sixteenth century, trials and executions were still frequent in the seventeenth. One of the most notorious executions, that of Urbain Grandier, who was burned for bewitching the Ursulines of Loudun, did not occur until 1634.

Language and literary style were also in an unsettled state. François de Malherbe (1555-1628) had tried to impose rules on French poetry, but his fellow poets did not always recognize him with the enthusiasm that Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux later showed; Mathurin Régnier and Théophile de Viau did not follow his example. Salons which encouraged preciosity flourished; at the same time, burlesques were popular. In drama, the Aristotelian unities were observed, but casually. Corneille in _Le Cid_, for instance, paid no attention to unity of place and achieved unity of time only by creating a fantastically busy day. Moreover, the Académie française was not established until 1635. The work of the Académie, the standardization of French through the compiling of a dictionary, soon began to have an effect; by the end of the seventeenth century written French was very much like twentieth century French. Language in the first part of the century, however, still encompassed a bewildering variety of spellings and grammatical constructions.

In all the tension and turmoil of this period a particular type of free thought developed. This was called _libertinage_, and free thinkers were given the name _libertins_.

In modern French usage, as in English, these words now refer to libertinism and libertines, except when reference is made to seventeenth century free thought, when the original meanings obtain. Since there are no English equivalents for the technical meanings of libertinage and libertin, these words will be used whenever it is necessary to distinguish between this type of free thought and free thought in general. At the same time, it should be made clear that libertinage does not refer to an organized movement or to an altogether coherent body of thought; yet the various libertins are sufficiently close to each other to warrant the use of common name.

Many of the libertins were prudent, conservative scholars, living comfortable lives, who kept their ideas to themselves. Their distrust of people resulted in a view of themselves as initiates in a higher form of culture, one marked by a passion for antiquity. This cult of antiquity and an accompanying belief in the great wisdom of the Greeks and the Romans became for many of the libertins a source and a principle of moral life.

Another important principle for many of the libertins was the separation of faith and reason. Most stayed in the Catholic Church and, while never zealous Christians, adopted the position that there was a God, who could be known only through faith. Although many of the libertins were not
willing to attack religion on the grounds that it was unreasonable, they were willing to attack superstition and dogmatism on this basis, and they fought against the theories of alchemists and astrologers as well. Neither were they sympathetic toward the grandiose claims being made for the new science and mathematics, for pyrrhonistic doubt had undercut natural as well as religious knowledge. Yet, at the same time, they did take the side of heliocentricity and atomism and opposed authoritarian limits on scientific and philosophic investigation.

To some extent, the question of respect for authority divides the libertins. There was the group mentioned earlier who lived quiet lives and aired their views only among friends. Against authoritarianism in intellectual matters, these men were willing to support authoritarian government as a means of preserving order. Another group was bothered by royal as well as religious authority, one which distrusted wealth and court life. This second attitude toward authority was particularly common in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, but after the trial of Théophile de Viau for impiety and blasphemy most of the libertins became quieter and more prudent.

Just as there was a group of ideas common to the libertins, there were common sources for their ideas, and just as these ideas were handled somewhat differently by each of the various libertins, so each libertin emphasized
different parts of the traditions within which he worked. One common source for all the libertins was the writings of antiquity. Probably the most important writer was Lucretius, and a quick summary of *On the Nature of Things* will indicate why. In Books I and II, the universe and man are explained in terms of reason and sensation. Such an explanation would have appealed to the libertins, and they also appreciated some of the smaller points included in these books; the idea that superstitious religion was harmful, for example, fitted in with their fight against superstition. The Epicurean idea of an infinite universe, too, was consistent with the new cosmology. Book III is devoted to a refutation of the immortality of the soul and to an explanation of why death is not to be feared. Since it has been stated that most libertins stayed within the framework of the Catholic Church, it might be thought that this part of Epicurean philosophy would find little favor with the libertins; yet this is not the case. It seems that many remained Catholic because they believed in God, but neither this God nor the libertins' religious doctrine was often that of traditional Christianity. The belief in the immortality of the soul was one of the traditions frequently rejected by the libertins. Some, like Pierre Gassendi, tried to improve upon Epicureanism so that immortality could be included, but others were willing to accept death as the end of life. This latter group was attracted to the Stoics as well as to Epicurus; Seneca was
quite popular. Gabriel Naude', a representative of the libertins attracted to Stoicism, considered that his religion was, in part, that of Seneca. Naude' also wrote that he agreed with the chorus in Seneca's Troades, a chorus which expresses the view that there is nothing after death, that any tales of after-life are empty words. Some libertins (the quiet, prudent ones) lived by principles that mixed Stoicism and Epicureanism, for Stoic calm fitted in well with the idea Lucretius expressed in his discussion of the development of man that it was best to live tranquilly and unambitiously under a monarchy.

Another source of ideas for libertinage was Italian philosophy, of which two sorts were important. One was the teachings of Paduans such as Pietro Pomponazzi, who remained an Aristotelian while working to destroy the teaching of the scholastics. Pomponazzi in A Treatise on the Immortality of the Soul examines Aristotle's ideas on immortality, and after deciding that St. Thomas Aquinas was wrong in thinking that Aristotle believed in an immortal soul, he goes on to say that the soul is immortal. Its immortality is known through faith alone, and not by reason. The treatise also discusses whether immortality is necessary for a moral system. Pomponazzi thinks it is not and develops a Stoic ethic. The libertins found Pomponazzi attractive because of his treatment of immortality and his fideism. Moreover, Pomponazzi helped to break up the hegemony which the scholastic
teachers held over thought.

The other kind of Italian philosophy which influenced the libertins was the nature philosophy of Bernardino Telesio, Giordano Bruno, Gerolamo Cardano, and Tommaso Campanella. Telesio posited an underlying substance for matter which was possessed of dim feelings. Bruno and Cardano were even more specific in their pantheism, both developing the idea of the anima mundi (world soul). Bruno, like Copernicus and Nicolas of Cusa, also believed in the relativity of motion, an infinite universe, and infinitely divisible matter.  

The latest of these Italians, Campanella, considered himself to be a follower of Telesio; Campanella does emphasize Telesio's ideas that knowledge is based on sensation, but he goes beyond Telesio in his extension of consciousness throughout matter. Campanella replaced Telesio's dim feelings with a scale of consciousness, and while Telesio's feelings are vague and primordial, Campanella's consciousness is an awareness that partakes of the anima mundi. Consciousness operates in nature, which Campanella considered to be both animate and intelligent. Men participate in nature through one of the forms of soul Campanella thought man possesses. This form is a sensible, material one; the other, spiritual form aspires toward the divine, which was defined as infinite being and sovereign good. Telesio had written of this dual soul, but his divine was somewhat more traditional.
Campanella apparently did not get from Telesio the ideas that religion is the means by which men communicate with perfection and that all men have an innate religious sense (adoration of nature). Of the Italian nature philosophers, Campanella has the closest ties with libertinage; for after he was released from prison, where he had spent twenty-seven years because of his ideas, he went to Paris. He lived there for five years, from 1634 until his death in 1639.

Nevertheless, the influence of Campanella as well as that of the other Italian philosophers has been questioned, especially by a man who has done the most thorough and extensive work on libertinage, Rene Pintard. Although Pintard admits that the ideas of Bruno, Campanella, and the rest were important because they raised questions about an infinite universe, about the creation of the world, providence, and immortality, he adds:

le "naturalisme panthéistique" de Bruno ou de Campanella n'avait pas moins repugné aux érudits libertins . . . que la scolastique elle-même . . .

Pintard also says that nothing in France corresponded to Italian naturalism with its animate nature, optimism, aesthetic outlook on life, and emphasis on immanence rather than transcendence. Moreover, ideas about an independent morality could have come from Pierre Charron as easily as from the Paduans, and antiquity could have supplied ideas of
atomism. 23

To a great extent, Pintard's belief that the Italians were not influential depends on his definition of the scope and character of libertinage. The problem of divergent definitions of libertinage will be considered later in this chapter, but it might be helpful to point out here that Pintard characterizes libertinage as a final development of the Renaissance rather than as anything having to do with later free thought. The scope of his definition, moreover, is rather narrow. Pintard also gives the impression that he wants the libertins to be as completely French as possible; he shows a rather nationalistic proprietary interest in them. Pintard seems to forget that the libertins were fairly cosmopolitan, and he ignores the fact that beliefs may be strengthened by the existence of two separate authorities for them; that is, atomism may seem more reasonable if both the ancients and the Italian philosophers expounded the theory. There is also the question of where one is to draw the line when one goes hunting for influences. Perhaps many libertins were more familiar with the writings of Charron or Michel Eyquen de Montaigne than with the writings of the Italian philosophers, but it seems likely that Montaigne and Charron knew the works of the Italian philosophers and could have incorporated Italian ideas into their own works.

The thought of the French sceptics exerted an important influence on libertinage. The sceptics attempted to humble
man by humbling his reason. Montaigne examines the arguments about such things as natural theology and decides that much of the arguing stems from pride; so Montaigne points out that man does not have much of which to be proud. Vain and trivial man has thought that he was superior in the world because of reason, but Montaigne asks how one knows that man is superior, how one can tell that animals do not reason. He says that we have to interpret ideas in terms of our categories of knowledge, without any knowledge of how adequate these categories are. Therefore, he decides that one knows only through faith and that man's redeeming traits are humility and submission. Otherwise men and beasts are on the same level, each having advantages and disadvantages. Charron carried on Montaigne's work, and decided that, compared to animals, man was a poor, weak creature. Charron's Sagesse came to be the standard catalogue of the weaknesses of men.  

Free thinkers of the earlier seventeenth century utilized Montaigne's and Charron's ideas, but not always for the same purpose. François de la Mothe la Véry continued the sceptical tradition and remained close to the sixteenth century sceptics. Cyrano de Bergerac, however, did not use the ideas of Montaigne and Charron to humble man. He criticized society instead. Cyrano, like La Fontaine after him, employed animals as symbols of reasonableness; he also made animals act like men sometimes to show how foolishly man could behave. A whole section of his "Les états et empires du soleil"
"Histoire des oiseaux," is devoted to this type of satire.

The new science, in addition to scepticism and Italian nature philosophy combined, emphasized the problem of knowledge. One of the main contributions of Italian naturalism was the idea of an orderly and regular nature. God, defined as intelligence, was expected to use his intelligence in an orderly, regular manner; God could be expected to reason. Since God is in nature, in the naturalistic scheme, nature is therefore part of this reasoning intelligence. Since man also participates in the divine, he can know the world around him. The sceptics on the other hand attacked both the scholastics' and the nature philosophers' belief in certain knowledge; the sceptical position has been summarized in this way:

The bewildering variety of human opinions, the deceptive nature of the senses whereby our knowledge of the outside world comes to us, the vacillations of our reason, made nonsense of the vaunting pretensions of the learned.

The problem of certain knowledge was further intensified by the new physics. The ideas of Nicolaus Copernicus, Johann Kepler, and Galileo Galilei created a new universe for man to live in, thus raising doubts about traditional beliefs.

As may be expected, the new science was far closer in spirit to Italian nature philosophy than to French scepticism. Brun supported Copernican astronomy, and Galileo
followed Telesio's ideas about sense perception. The approach to knowledge expounded by the Italians became dominant, of course, but not before much of the mysticism surrounding naturalism had been stripped away. (The world spirit is present in Spinoza, but he is rather the exception.) Meanwhile, as people tried to order their ideas about the universe and how they could know it, a group of questions became important, especially for the libertins. The impact of science gave new urgency to questions about the nature of the universe, and the place of both man and God in this new framework was open to speculation.

So far, libertinage has been treated as if everyone were in agreement about what it was. This is not the case, however. What has been said so far about libertinage would fit in fairly well with the accepted definitions, although at least one commentator would look for a closer adherence to scepticism than has been indicated here. Some definitions are much broader. F. T. Perrens seems willing to let speculation about the nature of man, God, and the universe be the criterion by which he judges whether a man was a libertin or not. The only other limit he imposes is one of time, libertinage being a seventeenth century phenomenon. Such a definition of libertinage helps very little, for it is too loose. Some writers, like Jean Goudal and Julien-Eymard d'Angers, use the term libertin to include both sensualist
men of the world (Jacques Des Barreaux and Jean Dehenault, for example) and the more philosophic free thinkers.\textsuperscript{29} The scope of this definition, too, seems too large to be useful.

J. S. Spink uses \textit{libertinage} generally to characterize those whose thought on historical, philosophic, and moral questions was in opposition to Christian belief, and he divides the \textit{libertins} into two classes. The first is made up of sceptics, who held responsible positions and often kept their views to themselves. The second group is composed of free thinkers with naturalistic tendencies, who were usually independent and anti-authority.\textsuperscript{30} Short sketches of some of the people involved will illustrate the distinction.

The most important thinker in the first class is Gassendi (1592-1655), who was a professor at Aix and at the Royal College in addition to being the provost of the Cathedral of Digne. In his writings he supported Epicurus and posited two kinds of soul, a material and a spiritual one, to make Epicureanism and Christian doctrine compatible. He also adopted the position that faith was the basis for belief in God. In Gassendi, this modified Epicureanism was mixed with some scepticism and with a distrust of metaphysics. On this basis he tried to find a middle way between dogmatism and scepticism; his solution was that man could know some things, but that knowledge was a hypothetical system, that one had truth about appearance rather than reality. He was, however, unwilling to define actuality.
Because of his ideas about true knowledge, Gassendi tried to separate science and metaphysics and so criticized both Aristotle and Descartes. Descartes may not seem to be a metaphysician like Aristotle, but Gassendi feared that mathematical physics such as that of Descartes would revive metaphysics. Additionally Gassendi attacked what he believed to be Descartes' complete separation of mind and body.  

Gassendi lived the quiet comfortable life that Spink describes as a characteristic of the first group of libertins; he has also been called conservative:

Gassendi was extremely conservative . . . unwilling to break with the qualitative world of ordinary experience or to throw overboard the heritage of human wisdom in order to pursue a new insight and a new frame of reference.  

La Mothe le Vaycr (1588-1672) was not so much an Epicurean as a sceptic. A man of great erudition, he thought that wisdom was to be found in the suspension of judgment, in remaining aquiescent and neutral; his anti-intellectual scepticism and anti-rational Christianity (for he, too, maintained the position that belief in God comes solely through faith) have been considered the height of libertinage. In his writings La Mothe le Vaycr imitated Montaigne and Charron, and he showed great admiration for ancient philosophers.  

Naudé's libertinage was rather similar to La Mothe le Vayer's. Louis XIII's doctor and the curator of Mazarin's library, Naudé (1600-1653) can be considered a forerunner of
critical rationalism because of his attacks on myths, legends, and occultism. Yet as an absolutist and an elitist, he did believe that popular superstitions and the like could preserve order. He was one of the few libertins in the first category to concern himself actively with politics; he was concerned because he thought the state was in such a bad condition that it might collapse. This is one issue on which he and La Mothe le Vayer were widely separated, for the latter believed that thought and action about such things as politics were simply and purely a form of vanity.  

Cui Patin (1600-1672), the fourth figure in the class, was dean of the faculty of medicine of the University of Paris and, medically, one of the most conservative in the profession. He was a free thinker in so far as he distrusted ceremony (as being empty practice) and the miraculous, but he seems to have diverged only once from major Catholic doctrine; he thought purgatory was invented to get money. On the whole, he was not philosophic. He enjoyed the company of free thinkers but made no contributions to libertinage of his own.  

Spink uses two men as examples of his second group, Giulio Cesare Vanini (1585-1619) and Théophile de Viau (1590-1626). Vanini lived a wanderer's life; he travelled through the continent and England until he was condemned to death as an atheist by the Parlement of Toulouse. He had been charged with teaching that there was no soul and no
after life; it is not known if this was the case although his name became a synonym for atheism. It is known, however, that he believed in a pantheistic naturalism and thought that evil, or an absence of good, was produced by man's will. Additionally, he made light of oracles and martyrs. 36 One wonders whether he should be included as a libertin:

His [Vanini's] acute mind was probably too mobile to admit of real conviction, but his habits of thought led him along the well-worn paths of sixteenth-century speculation and did not open up the new vistas of seventeenth-century scientific inquiry. . . . his learning was that of the generation of Cardano and Scaliger. 37

Characterizing Théophile de Viau as a libertin is also questionable. Though a fine poet, he was neither a philosopher nor a moralist, and Spink's reason for including him as a libertin seems to be the cynicism, blasphemy, and pantheistic naturalism found in some of his poetry. Since Spink considers that neither Vanini's nor Théophile's was a dominant voice in the early part of the century and since he admits that they did little to shape the free thought that followed, 38 it seems that Théophile and Vanini do not really form a category of libertins.

Pintard's use of the term libertin has the virtues of consistency and tightness, although the latter quality might also be called rigidity. Pintard avoids the connections between libertinage and mystical naturalism and states that the libertins were influenced by non-scholastic Aristotelianism, Stoicism, and scepticism. Pintard sets up a pattern
for libertinage, using for his models the conservative, academic freethinkers. Gassendi, Naude', Patin, and La Mothe le Vayer become the epitome of libertinage, and all other libertins are worth consideration only to the extent that their work is modeled upon that of these four men. Pintard, then, sees libertinage as a disorganized movement that started with lively plans for research but one which soon quieted down; the libertins were unable to utilize and expand the work of sixteenth century thinkers as they had hoped. Instead, they turned to the past, thinking it sufficient to live and write quietly. With no ideals to communicate nor any hopes to offer, the libertins became anachronistic, the last of the Renaissance thinkers. Even Gassendi, who was interested in science, is not considered at all modern by Pintard because Gassendi was too timid in his thinking and too apt to rely on faith when he sought to explain something. 39

This method of characterizing libertinage, though more specific than most, is to a great extent the traditional one. Even those like Perrens who use the term libertin in a very general sense, when they discuss libertin thought, emphasize the work of the four men Pintard uses as his models. A historical problem arises from this way of handling libertinage, for too artificial a break is made between the earlier and later parts of the seventeenth century: thinkers in the earlier seventeenth century were acquiescent and turned
toward the past, while those after 1660 were critical and interested in the present and future. Louis XIV may have been a great king, but there seems to be little reason to take his accession to power as a signal for an about-face in French thought. It seems just as strange to write of an about-face in any case. Yet this is how Pintard and others writing on libertinage have described seventeenth century French intellectual history.

Pintard says that after 1660 intellectual life was challenged and revived by scientific experiments and free discussion. With the revocation of the Edict of Nantes liberalism and tolerance became important issues; it was then that people began to read Cassendi, Patin, Naude', and La Mothe le Vayer and to consider their writings in terms of the present. This was the way in which libertinage influenced men such as Fontenelle and Bayle, who picked what they wanted from the libertins.17 Such a version of historical development is curious, to say the least, not only because of the discontinuity it involves, but because of some peculiar conclusions as well. Pintard gives no reason for his belief that after 1660, intellectual life was greatly stimulated, and there seems to be little to support his statement. Discussion was free before that time, and the experiments of Galileo, Evangelista Torricelli, Blaise Pascal, and William Harvey all precede 1660. There is also the question, which goes unanswered, of why people suddenly
began reading the libertins in a new light.

The difficulties that arise from this explanation of seventeenth century thought can be attributed to two causes, the undiscriminating inclusion in libertinage of too many seventeenth century free thinkers and the great reliance on Gassendi, La Mothe le Vayer, Naudé and Patin. These four men were not quite so much a part of sixteenth century thought as Vanini was; they knew the new cosmology, and even though they turned to the past, their ideas provided a rationale for absolutism (Pintard calls them the avant-garde of absolutism). Thus they do form a valid category of libertins. Nevertheless, defining libertinage primarily in terms of their ideas defines out the most forward-looking and radical elements of free thought in the earlier seventeenth century. Spink's category of libertins who were influenced by Italian naturalism is a step toward correcting Pintard's interpretation. Yet, as has been seen, this group does not seem important enough to be placed in a separate category. What is to be done with them; and what is to be done with Cyrano de Bergerac, who shows the influences of both mystic naturalism and scepticism and who is certainly neither acquiescent nor oriented toward the past? Spink places Cyrano closer to the naturalists than to the sceptics, though not readily identifiable with either. Cyrano stands alone, being, in Spink's terms, "one of the most daring speculative thinkers of his generation."
Pintard, even with his narrow definition of libertinage, accepts Cyrano as a libertin. Nevertheless, he considers Cyrano an unsystematic thinker who mixed the ideas of the philosophic libertins into a disorderly and flamboyant product. For example, Cyrano assimilated Gassendi's ideas, but made of them only "une étourdissante et sommaire caricature." Cyrano was not an orderly thinker; so that charge holds. Since, however, Pintard apparently uses Gassendi, Naudé, Patin, and La Mothe le Vayer as rigid models, what Pintard calls flamboyance may quite possibly be Cyrano's own originality. Original thoughts would not fit Pintard's canon of libertinage and so must, of necessity, be dismissed.

It seems that no one who has written on libertinage questions Cyrano's being a libertin, but there is a wide range of opinion about what sort of libertin he was and what was his place in libertinage. An examination of his life, his works and the ideas expressed in them should help to establish a more certain place for him in French free thought of the earlier seventeenth century.
II

CYRANO’S LIFE
II

CYRANO'S LIFE

Cyrano de Bergerac is one of the more familiar figures in seventeenth century French legend, whose name calls to mind a great duelist and a great nose. However well known the name may be, the man's life and his writings are little known; they have been obscured by legend.

One of the men responsible for these legends is Théophile Gautier. While three editions of Cyrano's complete works were published in the eighteenth century (1710, 1741, 1761), little attention was paid to the man. Gautier was one of the first to try to remedy this. His essay on Cyrano first appeared in La France littéraire as part of a series on little-known French poets entitled "Exhumations littéraire." The series was published in book form in 1844 under the title, Les grotesques, an appropriate heading for Gautier's Cyrano.

Gautier wrote that Savinien Cyrano de Bergerac was born in 1620 at the chateau of Bergerac in Perigord and was educated by a stupid country priest until he convinced his father that he should go to Paris. In Paris he quickly learned the ways of debauchery and dueling. A member of the regimental guards, Cyrano became known for his bravery, especially after he fought against one hundred men at once to defend the honor of a friend. He was wounded twice in his army career and so gave up this profession for study and writing. He
did not approve of patronage, but he finally yielded to the urgings of his friends and came under the protection of the Duke d'Arpajon, to whom his works were dedicated. Not long after the duke became his patron, Cyrano was wounded in an accident and died at thirty-five, a good Christian who had given up his wild ways to study philosophy.

Such was Cyrano's life, according to Gautier. As for his character, Gautier describes Cyrano as an amiable, bright person, the friend of brave and learned people. In his essay Gautier defends Cyrano against the charge of impiety, saying that what a character might have said in some of Cyrano's writings proves nothing about Cyrano himself.

The legend of Cyrano was further embellished by Edmond Rostand. Cyrano's life is complicated in the play, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, because he loves his cousin, who loves someone else, and because he is terribly unhappy about his big nose. (Gautier has nothing to say about Cyrano's feelings for his nose, but he does include a five-page appreciation and analysis of the nose in his essay.) Rostand concentrates on Cyrano's escapades and says little about his writings; otherwise, there are only a few differences between Gautier's Cyrano and Rostand's. In Rostand's play Cyrano never takes a patron; also his apparently accidental death is really the result of a plot to assassinate him.

From the 1880's on, a number of men have attempted to
separate Cyrano from the legends which have surrounded him. Pierre Brun wrote his doctoral thesis on Cyrano, Savinien de Cyrano Bergerac, sa vie et ses oeuvres, which was published shortly before Rostand's play appeared. After Rostand's success, Brun wrote Savinien de Cyrano Bergerac, gentilhomme parisien: l'histoire et la légende. In the preface to this book, Brun pleads somewhat hopelessly for a recognition of the real Cyrano. Before Brun published his second book on Cyrano, Emile Magne's Le Cyrano de l'histoire appeared. In this book Magne takes Rostand to task severely for all the historical errors in the play. Some work along this line has been done more recently. For example, there are Charles Pujos' Le double visage de Cyrano de Bergerac, which presents a biographical sketch and a summary of the play, and Hobart Ryland's The Sources of the Play, Cyrano de Bergerac.

Probably the most thorough treatment of Cyrano's life is to be found in the biographical notice that Frédéric Lachèvre includes in his edition of Cyrano's Oeuvres libertines. Lachèvre hated Cyrano, hated free thinkers in general. To show the world how terrible these people were, it seems, he spent much of his life collecting and publishing the writings of seventeenth century French free thinkers, attaching biographical notices to many. Although, as L. Maury pointed out in his review of Lachèvre's edition of Cyrano's works, Lachèvre treats Cyrano with unhistorical and unscientific
severity, even writing at times as if Cyrano's work were a personal affront, one is able to winnow information from the hatred. Much of Lachèvre's material is included in the biographical preface which Richard Aldington wrote for his own translation of Cyrano's *Voyages to the Moon and the Sun*.

The Cyrano with whom these writers have been concerned was born in 1619; the exact date is not known but he was baptised 6 March of that year. His father, Abel de Cyrano, headed a prosperous bourgeois family that lived in Paris until 1622; after that time, they moved to their chateau at Mauvières. Cyrano lived with his family until he was old enough to learn to read and write. Then he was sent to live with and study under a country curate, whom he very much disliked. Cyrano complained frequently to his father about this man, and finally his father removed him from the curate's care. Henri Le Bret also studied under this curate; the friendship between Cyrano and Le Bret began at this time.

Cyrano's education was continued at the college de Beauvais, which was headed by Jean Grangier, a man Cyrano apparently liked even less than the curate; for he poked fun at him in *Le pédant joué*, a play in which the tricked pedant of the title is named Granger. Cyrano did not remain long at the college. In this case, he withdrew from school because the family suffered some financial setback, not because of his dislike of Grangier.

After his time at Beauvais, Cyrano lived at home with
his family, who had moved back to Paris. Around seventeen years old, he soon learned to avoid life at home with his parents, brother, and sister, and he became part of a group which spent much of its time in what Lachèvre describes as the best cabarets. Cyrano became dissatisfied, during this period, with the name which had been given him in baptism, Savinien de Cyrano, and added de Bergerac, a name which came from the fief of Sous-Forest which the Cyranos owned until 1636. It had belonged to a family named de Bergerac in the mid-sixteenth century. With this addition, Cyrano varied his signature, which became, at times, de Bergerac, de Bergerac Cyrano, de Cyrano de Bergerac, even Alexandre de Cyrano Bergerac. Cyrano's father became alarmed by his son's dissipation, but Le Bret, who had come to Paris, managed to calm his friend's father. Thereafter, the two boys seem to have studied and dissipated together.

Le Bret also helped Cyrano get into the nearly all-Gascon company of guards commanded by Carbon de Casteljaloux, in 1638. This company was famous for its dueling skill, and Cyrano, who excelled in duels, soon came to be greatly admired by his fellow guards. By 1639, the company was in battle, fighting against the Germans, and was besieged at Mouzon. In a letter, "Sur le blocus d'une ville," Cyrano describes such a siege:

Monsieur, Le blocus de notre ville est si étroit que le passage n'y est ouvert qu'aux Gardes seulement; le menu peuple qui vit encore,
quoi qu'on l'ait déjà mangé depuis longtemps, n'a plus lieu de faire entendre ses plaintes, puisqu'on a mis entre deux l'Allemagne et la Pologne. Nous sommes la proie de ces Nations barbares... on veut que nous emportions le Paradis par famine.14

During the siege of Mouzon, on a sortie to get food and fodder, Cyrano was seriously wounded, and it was 1640 before he was back in battle. Then, fighting under Conti at the siege of Arras, he was wounded again. This second wound caused him to give up his army career.16

After Cyrano returned to Paris, he lived at the collège de Lisieux. Whether he simply lived there, took courses, or acted as a tutor or proctor is not known. It is known that he studied with Gassendi, who had come to Paris in the spring of 1641 to stay with Francois Lullier and to tutor Lullier's son, Chapelle. A group of students was formed which, besides Chapelle and Cyrano, included Francois Bornier, Molière, and La Mothe le Vayer, fils. The year 1641 must have been a busy and varied one for Cyrano, for in addition to his philosophical studies, he took fencing and dancing lessons.17

Having become a philosophy student, Cyrano certainly did not stop his escapades and settle into a quiet life of study. Le Bret says that Cyrano never fought a duel on his own account; rather he fought as a second for friends.18 Whether this is true or not, he maintained his reputation as a duelist. For example, there is Le Bret's story, retold
by Gautier, of Cyrano's fighting one hundred men in broad daylight near the porte de Nesle because a friend had been insulted. Another version of the story, which Rostand uses, is that a friend of Cyrano's, Lignières, was in danger of having his ears cut off by a gang of men in the employ of a nobleman who had been insulted by one of Lignières' epigrams. Lignières hid at Cyrano's until night, when Cyrano said that he would see Lignières home. On the way, near the porte de Nesle, they met the gang, which had been lying in wait. Cyrano, in this version as in the other, killed two men, wounded seven, and put the rest to flight. This fight is reported to have caused such an uproar that the Maréchal de Gassion offered Cyrano protection. This was refused.

Then there are reports that Cyrano told a popular actor--probably Zacharie Jacob Montfleury--not to appear on stage for a month. The actor did appear two days later in a performance that lasted until Cyrano chased the man off the stage. Lachèvre has doubts about this incident, since the first report he can find of it is in the second edition of Menagiana, printed in 1694. Nevertheless, Cyrano includes in his "Lettres Satiriques" a letter called "Contre un gros homme" or "Contre le gros Montfleury, mauvais auteur et comédien." This letter criticizes Montfleury for his appearance, his writing, his acting, and it ends on this note:

Non, non, je serai moi-même votre Parque, et je vous eusse dès l'autrefois écrasé sur votre théâtre, si je n'eusse appréhendé d'aller contre
Lachèvre does credit as probable the story about Cyrano and the monkey, Fagotin, and says that it clearly illustrates Cyrano's irritability. According to an anonymous pamphlet (attributed to Charles Coypeau Dassoucy), Combat de Cyrano de Bergerac avec le Singe de Brioché, au bout de Pont Neuf, Fagotin was as large as a small man and belonged to Jean Brioché, who ran a marionette theater on the Pont Neuf. Brioché had taught Fagotin the correct positions in which to lunge when fencing. Once, when Cyrano was crossing the bridge, there was a performance going on for which the monkey was dressed up as a man; several people in the audience saw Cyrano and called out insults about his nose. Cyrano retaliated with his sword. Fagotin, sword in hand, decided to join the fracas and lunged at Cyrano in fourth. In the excitement Cyrano did not realize that a monkey was lunging and ran the poor animal through. Lachèvre may take the story of Fagotin seriously; however, it must be recognized that the pamphlet, Combat de Cyrano de Bergerac, is the only source for this tale, and the point of the pamphlet is to make fun of Cyrano. If it were written by Dassoucy, it must be recognized in addition that the pamphlet was written by a man who came to hate Cyrano, a man perhaps not coincidentally
described earlier by Cyrano as a "...plaisant petit singe!
ô marionnette incarnée!" One wonders if Lachèvre is willing to attribute veracity to the account primarily because he, too, hated Cyrano.

Except for these incidents, little is known about Cyrano’s life from 1641 to 1653. Through much of this period he was quite poor, and he perhaps started writing to mitigate this poverty. He did inherit some money from his father in 1649, but, while this inheritance took care of immediate financial problems, the money was received in the form of *rentes* which diminished each year. Decreasing income from the *rentes* soon forced Cyrano to begin liquidating his capital, and it was not long before Cyrano was again in need of money.

According to Lachèvre, who puts forth the theory that poverty inspired Cyrano to write, Cyrano’s first work was *Le pédant joué*, the play mentioned earlier in which Grangier is satirized. Lachèvre thinks that the play was never performed during Cyrano’s lifetime, and it does seem to be important mainly because Molière used a scene from it in his *Fourberies de Scapin*. Spink says, however, that it was played by *Illustre théâtre* in 1645. Ryland believes the play was written much earlier, while Cyrano, not yet eighteen, still studied at the collège de Beauvais. This seems unlikely because of his youth. Lachèvre also dates "L’autre monde où les états et empires de la lune" and many of the letters
as products of the mid-1640's.  

"L'autre monde ou les états et empires de la lune" was printed without authorization in 1650. No authorized edition came out until 1657, when it was published posthumously with "Les états et empires du soleil" under the title Histoire comique. Lachevre uses the title L'autre monde to refer to the whole work because he doubts that the title Histoire comique was Cyrano's idea. Since Histoire comique seems inappropriate and since L'autre monde has become a common title, Lachevre's example will be followed. "Les états du soleil" was written somewhat later than "Les états de la lune"; probably started around 1650, it was not finished when the Duke d'Arpajon became Cyrano's patron. Perhaps it was never finished; for the ending is certainly abrupt, and there are a number of inconsistencies in it. Since "Les états de la lune" is consistent, the inconsistencies of the other work would indicate that "Les états du soleil" was unfinished. Pietro Toldo, though, thinks that this abrupt ending was, in imitation of Rabelais, intentional. Moreover, Le Bret, who edited the 1657 edition, did so about the time he became a priest, and, as editor, he deleted many passages which would have offended the Church. Two complete manuscript copies of "Les états de la lune" remain so that an unexpurgated edition may be had, but there is no known manuscript of "Les états du soleil." Many of the letters were also expurgated before they were printed; Cyrano himself edited the
letters, and manuscripts for most of them still exist. Since *L'autre monde* is Cyrano's most important work, a summary of it may be useful. Though the ideas found in it will be considered at length in the next chapters, a description of the work at this point will illustrate Cyrano's taste for the fantastic as well as his ability to invent situations in which he could criticize commonly and officially held beliefs concerning religion, philosophy, and society.

*L'autre monde* is the story of several marvelous voyages. It opens with Drycona, the main character, arguing with some friends about the possibility of the moon's being inhabited. Drycona is laughed at, but firm in his belief, he decides to try going to the moon to see for himself. Strapping bottles of dew to his body, he finds that the heat of the sun attracts the liquid, and he is quickly pulled into the clouds. He breaks some of the bottles because he is afraid of going too fast, but he breaks too many. He weight pulls him back to earth, to Canada, because of the earth's rotation. His stay in Canada is short, and he uses a sort of rocket ship for his next attempt.

This attempt is successful, and when he finally arrives on the moon, he lands in the garden of Eden. Elijah is there and tells him something about the place, but Drycona does not last long in Eden. He is soon expelled because of his blasphemies. After his expulsion he sleeps, and when he wakes up, he is in a kingdom of the moon in which the rest of
the "États de la lune" takes place. He has many adventures and troubles in this kingdom, the people there being unsure whether he is a monster or an animal possessed of the devil. (He cannot be a man since he does not look like men on the moon.) Guided by the daemon of Socrates, Drycona finally is accepted by the inhabitants of the moon whose customs he writes about. He also reports philosophical conversations; most of these are anti-religious, and one is responsible for his returning to earth.

There are two versions of the end of "Les états de la lune." In the 1657 edition, Drycona finds the anti-religious conversations unappealing and, more important, is becoming homesick. He asks Socrates’ daemon to see that he gets back to earth, and, returning with a sorcerer, he lands in Italy. In the manuscript version, Drycona gets involved in a conversation so blasphemous that a devil appears and carries Drycona and the man with whom he was talking off toward Hell. As the devil goes past the earth, Drycona, seeing an erupting volcano, exclaims, "Jésus Maria." The phrase saves him, for he is dropped by the devil and lands in Italy, from which he makes his way to France.

"Les états du soleil" begins when Drycona arrives in France. He stays with a friend in Toulouse for some time and writes an account of his trip to the moon. This account brings on new adventures because he is soon arrested as a sorcerer. In prison he constructs another machine, one which takes him
to the sun by way of a small planet which had been thrown off by the sun and which was in the process of drying out after an inundation. On the sun he visits a kingdom made up of particles which shape themselves into whatever the king desires, then a kingdom of birds in which he is sentenced to death for being a man, because men harm birds. He is rescued at the last moment by a parrot which had belonged to Drycona's cousin and which Drycona had freed. After freeing Drycona, the birds send him away; his next stop is a forest made up of oaks descended from those in the oracular forest of Dodona. He talks with the trees and then meets an old man; he is Campanella, who becomes his guide for the rest of the journey.

Drycona learns about the various governments of the sun from Campanella, and they travel together toward the Province of Philosophers, a monarchy. On the way Drycona is shown the Lake of Sleep, into which streams representing the five senses flow, and the three large rivers which provide water for the sun. The largest of these is Memory; a narrower, deeper one is Imagination, and the smallest of the three is Judgement. Then Drycona and Campanella meet a man and a woman from the Kingdom of Lovers who are going to the Province of Philosophers to settle an argument. The woman describes the customs of their kingdom, of the kingdom in which she was born, Truth, and talks a little about the Kingdom of the Just and the Republic of Peace (apparently the only republic
around). "Les états du soleil" then ends as the spirit of Descartes, who died in 1650 and who has recently arrived on the sun, meets the group.

Cyrano's political writings during the Fronde (1648-1653) and L'autre monde must be considered together because some doubts about the authorship of four letters and a poem, "Le ministre d'état flambé," bring the purpose of L'autre monde into question. Brun writes that Cyrano is the author of only one letter, "Lettre contre les frondeurs," in which Mazarin and his policies are defended against popular criticism. Cyrano also argues in the letter that the people are incapable of judging correctly since, for example, they condemned Socrates and Pericles. Monarchy is supported as the best, most natural of governments and one which has the sanction of divine right. Brun feels that since Cyrano showed such good sense in the "Lettre contre les frondeurs," he could not possibly have made any of those attacks in print against Mazarin, known as mazarinades. On the theory that this was Cyrano's sole contribution to the battle of letters which went on during the Fronde, Brun then states that L'autre monde was simply a satirical exercise, with no serious criticism intended. Since the "Lettre contre les frondeurs" treats strong government, absolute monarchy, and rigid social hierarchy sympathetically, L'autre monde is merely a product of an ingenious person who wanted to demonstrate his individuality by attacking established opinions and practices.
Lachèvre handles Cyrano's political writings in a completely different fashion and believes that in addition to the "Lettre contre les frondeurs," Cyrano was the author of five mazarinades, printed in February and March, 1649, signed D.B. The first of these is the poem which, after violently attacking Mazarin, ends:

Le Bourgeois et le Parlement
Ne craindront jamais cet infâme [Mazarin];
Le Bourreau prend son vêtement
Et le Diable gobe son âme!

Epitaphe
Ici gît pour longtemps, ou plutôt pour jamais
Un homme dont chacun maudit la destinée;
Dieu lui veuille donner la paix
De même qu'il nous l'a donnée!

The other mazarinades are pamphlets called "Le gazettier des-interessé," "La sybille moderne," "Le conseiller fidèle," and "Remonstrances des trois états, à la Reine régente, pour la paix." Cyrano accuses Mazarin of bad government in these pamphlets because he usurped power which rightfully belonged to the king, took rights from the people through the use of intendants, and weakened the finances of the state while impoverishing those people to whose misery he was blind. The country was also suffering from the number of people killed in the war and because Mazarin expected a blind submission that smothered natural and religious sentiments. Cyrano argues, as he does in "Lettre contre les frondeurs," that Mazarin must be judged by his deeds, not by his Italian birth or obscure origins: "Notre condition est une; il n'y a que
Cyrano, however, does criticize Mazarin's Italian birth in "Le conseiller fidèle," where he says that Mazarin had brought with him the enmity that Italy felt toward France.

Just as Brun has a reason why Cyrano could not have written both the mazarinades and the "Lettre contre les fondeurs," so Lachèvre has his to explain how Cyrano could have written for both sides. Lachèvre writes that Cyrano was not particularly interested in the events of the early stages of the Fronde, for he was busy reestablishing contact with friends whom he had not seen for some time while he was trying to straighten out his father's estate. Then came the mazarinades of February and March, 1649, followed by silence. This silence Lachèvre explains as the result of not being paid enough for his pamphlets. The "Lettre contre les fondeurs" was written, Lachèvre says, in the spring of 1651 and may have been paid for by Mazarin himself. Lachèvre seems to expect that Cyrano would write for money, not out of conviction, and he does not criticize Cyrano for doing so. He does, however, criticize Cyrano for what he considers a piece of deception. When Cyrano's last letter on the Fronde was printed in the Oeuvres diverses of 1654, it was prefaced by a statement that the letter was written during the siege of Paris, a time of strong feeling against Mazarin. Since the letter, though apparently intended as a pamphlet, was not published until 1654, the date of its composition is uncertain;
Lachèvre believes that Cyrano is referring to the siege of Paris in 1649 and charges Cyrano with trying to mislead his readers by posing as someone who had always been pro-Mazarin. It is clear that Cyrano did not write "Lettre contre les frondeurs" in 1649; the last part of the letter refers to a mazarinade by Scarron which was printed in March, 1651. Nevertheless, there seems to be no reason to accept Lachèvre's date of spring, 1651, for Cyrano's letter. Lachèvre is not even consistent, for in a note to one of the letters in his edition of Cyrano's Oeuvres diverses, he explains that Cyrano had changed a name in the manuscript when he prepared the letter for publication because he had changed sides in the Fronde in 1652. If one accepts the theory that Cyrano became pro-Mazarin in 1652, the note which Cyrano wrote for the Oeuvres diverses no longer needs an explanation that involves deceit on Cyrano's part. In July, 1652, Paris was besieged and captured by frondeurs. The note could easily refer to this siege rather than that of 1649. Lachèvre, moreover, admits twice that "Lettre contre les frondeurs" is not in the manuscript collection dated 1651 in the Bibliothèque nationale.

The reason Cyrano wrote mazarinades until March, 1649, and then later supported Mazarin may also be much simpler than that which Lachèvre advances. While Cyrano may well have been paid for his pamphlets and poem, one does not need to use money and the intervention of Mazarin as de _i_ ex _m_ achina.
In 1648 and 1649, the Parlement, supported by the bourgeois and many of the nobles, led the fight against the monarchy, which was charged with destroying traditional rights. This part of the Fronde was over in March, 1649; the treaty of Rueil was submitted to the Parlement 31 March, 1649; and it was registered on 1 April. On 5 April a thanksgiving service celebrating the end of what has come to be known as the first Fronde was held in Notre Dame. But the nobles were not willing to quit, and they finally forced Mazarin's dismissal in 1650. The government then came under the control of the Duke d'Orleans until Louis XIV's majority was declared. Much of the fighting that went on in this second Fronde stemmed from the bickering of nobles over family alliances, especially the marriage of Mazarin's niece to the Duke of Mercoeur and the engagement of the Prince de Conti to the daughter of Mme. Chevreuse; the breaking of this engagement added to the squabbles. It seems reasonable to expect that someone interested in the first Fronde might not be excited by the events of the second, at least not until the declaration of Louis' majority. After this declaration the regent was able to begin an offensive against the frondeurs, and though the frondeurs did capture Paris in 1652, their victory was short-lived. The Fronde ended soon afterwards.

Cyrano may have written both the "Lettre contre les frondeurs" and the mazarinades in defense of traditional forms of government. The mazarinades were part of a battle
to retain the rights of the Parlement while in "Lettre contre les frondeurs" Cyrano was defending the monarchy against those who wished to establish an oligarchy. If "Lettre contre les frondeurs" was written during July, 1652, there is nothing peculiar about its not being published since the Fronde ended soon afterwards. Lachèvre's idea that Mazarin both employed Cyrano to write the letter and then refused to publish it as revenge for Cyrano's mazarinades is no longer necessary. Indeed, this seems to be a case in which Lachèvre's dislike for Cyrano has caused a serious distortion.

The ideas in the mazarinades and in "Lettre contre les frondeurs" possess a consistency which allows the reader to view the compositions as a part of a coherent body of work. Stylistically, too, all these letters appear to be part of Cyrano's; so there seems to be no reason to follow Brun in excluding the mazarinades. Cyrano's political writings demonstrate that he supported a monarchy, but this has never really been in question, even if Lachèvre describes Cyrano as an anarchist. Although Cyrano criticizes various aspects of government and does not support absolutism, he never suggests replacing monarchy with another form of government.

It may have been during the Fronde that Cyrano and his friends got together to compose "Les entretiens pointus." This work, undated and not published until 1662, is a collection of puns with a short preface on the purpose and character of good puns. "Les entretiens pointus" is a trivial part of
Cyrano's work, but it does show him as a man with an agile mind and a sense of humor. Some doubts exist about whether Cyrano wrote the work by himself. Lachèvre thinks so but Paul Lacroix, an important figure in the nineteenth century revival of interest in Cyrano, states that Jacques Rohault and others were involved; Viguie, who also considers the work a group endeavor, says that Le Bret took part.  

The events in Cyrano's life after the end of the Fronde are somewhat clearer. In the last part of 1652, Cyrano was out of money, and the Duke d'Arpajon became his patron. Under this patronage Cyrano was able to have La Mort d'Agrippine and Oeuvres diverses authorized for publication in December, 1653, and printed in May, 1654.  

The Oeuvres diverses included Le pédant joué and forty-seven of Cyrano's letters. These letters, divided into three parts, Lettres diverses," "Lettres satiriques," and "Lettres amoureuses," range over a great many subjects (e.g. "Sur l'ombre des arbres dans l'eau," "Sur le faux bruit qui courut de la mort d'un grand guerrier," "Contre un ecclésias-tique bouffon," "A un liseur de romans," "Effects amoureux-d'une absence," "Pour les sorciers," "Contres les sorciers"), and they illustrate Cyrano's tendency toward preciosity, his love for puns, as well as some of his ideas about society and religion. In the 1654 edition anti-religious material was deleted and many titles, which would otherwise have identified people, were changed. Ten of his other letters were published
in Nouvelles Oeuvres in 1662, but his letters were not fully printed until a twentieth century edition of them included "Contre un Jésuit assassin et méditant," which was found in the 1651 Bibliothèque Nationale collection of manuscripts. Some of the letters not printed until 1662 are also in this collection. 47

When La mort d'Agrippine was presented, probably shortly before it was printed, the production caused a scandal. 48 In the play, Sejanus, a favorite of Tibère, and Agrippine, the widow of Germanicus, conspire against the emperor; so the tragedy's plot was familiar. Sejanus, however, has some lines which have been called the closest thing to open support for atheism to appear in France for a century. 49 For example, Sejanus mocks the power of the gods when he is told to fear divine retribution for what he plots; also, in a speech he gives shortly before he is executed, he describes death as a state of nothingness. 50 The second production fared better; presented in 1872, it was a success, as the review which appeared in Le Figaro indicates:

Tous étaient d'avis . . . que Cyrano meritait, à son époque, comme auteur tragique, une place d'honneur à côté de Corneille . . . 51

Not long after the production of La mort d'Agrippine, Cyrano was injured by a falling beam and became an invalid. The play's scandal may have led the Duke d'Arpajon to abandon Cyrano, or he may not have wanted to support a hod-ridden
writer. Whatever the reason, the Duke informed Cyrano that he had to go. Cyrano's sister and Le Bret arranged for Cyrano to be taken in by Tanneguy Renault des Bois Clairs, a counselor to the king. Cyrano remained there for fourteen months until he asked to be taken to his cousin's house in Sannois, near Versailles, where he died 28 July, 1655. 52

Cyrano's death, like much of his life, is a puzzle to which his biographers have found different solutions. La croix and Jacques Denis have stated that the block of wood which hit Cyrano on the head did not fall accidentally; instead, the Jesuits were behind a plot to assassinate him. 53 Brun thinks that probably it was an accident, but he has some doubts. He wonders why Cyrano's death remains rather mysterious if it were simply the result of an accident, and he thinks it strange that Cyrano left the Arpajon household while sick. 54 Lachevre has a plausible theory which could answer Brun's questions.

Lachevre believes that Cyrano was hit on the head accidentally; moreover, he does not consider the injury to be the cause of Cyrano's death, since such an accident, if fatal, would probably bring a quicker death than Cyrano's. Lachevre argues that he died of syphilis. In 1645 Cyrano was housed and treated by a master barber-surgeon for an unspecified illness, and Lachevre thinks it must have been syphilis because of a poem ("La maladie") in which he says
that people who see him on the street think that he has the pox. Cyrano's death, after a long illness, would then involve brain damage, but not damage caused by a falling beam. In view of Cyrano's prolonged invalidism and of the prevalence of syphilis in seventeenth century France, Lachevre's theory appears reasonable. Even though he is pleased that such a bad man, in his opinion, came to an unpleasant end, Lachevre does not seem to be arguing only on the basis of his feelings.

Such may not be the case when Lachevre deals with the problem of whether or not Cyrano made a death-bed conversion. Lachevre says that he did repent his days as a freethinker and states that all freethinkers of the seventeenth century, without exception, did so. He adds, complacently, that these conversions are a nightmare for present day freethinkers. Le Bret wrote that Cyrano died a Christian death after being convinced, with the aid of Le Bret, Cyrano's sister, and Mme. de Neuville, that free thought was a monstrous thing. Lachevre prints a death certificate signed, he says, by the curate of Sannois. The certificate states that Cyrano died a good Christian, and Lachevre reasons that the curate would not have bothered to make such a statement if it were not true. The wording of the certificate appears formal, however, and two things in it are quite odd. In the first place, the certificate reads "le mercredi vingt-huitième juillet, jour et fête de Sainte Anne." Lachevre
himself is willing to point out, Saint Anne's day is 26 July.
One would think a curate might know his saints' days. In
the second place, the certificate is signed "Cochon," a
highly improbably name.

Brun, who does not seem in the least anti-clerical,
disagrees with Lachine. He says that the circumstances are
too obscure for a definite answer to the question, but he
also says that Le Bret's statement about Cyrano's rejection
of libertinage could be the product of wishful thinking.
In addition, Brun points out that there are no records of
Cyrano's being given the last sacrament.

Cyrano did not have much of a chance to see how popular
his works would be. After his death, there were three editions
of La mort d'Ariipine, six of Le pedant joue, four of L'autre
monde, six of selected works, and seven of his complete works
in the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century there
were three complete editions published. Lachine believes
that these editions never sold; yet he offers no supporting
evidence. One wonders why the printers kept publishing un-
popular works. Also, there was a suit filed by one publisher
against another which charged piracy and in which the plain-
tiff was awarded four hundred livres plus court costs in
damages, a large sum if Cyrano's works were unpopular.

From the foregoing it can be seen that many of the facts
of Cyrano's life are in doubt. The type of man he was is no
clearer. F. T. Porrens says, "Tout n'était pas folie chez
cette fou agité," and Ferdinand Castet, who sees Cyrano as an
arrogant man with bold imagination and an independent spirit,
summarizes his characterization of Cyrano:

"Il aurait le culte désintéressé de la
vérité, la passion de la liberté, un
vif sentiment de la dignité humaine." Lachèvre disagrees and characterizes Cyrano as one of a group
of uprooted egotistical people totally lacking in good sense; 66
Cyrano's main purpose was to destroy Christianity. Emile
Faguet moderates this position by saying that Cyrano was
irreligious and probably atheistic. 67 Cyrano's irreligion
is agreed to and admired by Henri Busson who calls Cyrano,
"le plus ose de nos libertins." 68 While Busson admires
Cyrano, Rene Pintard calls him a strange madman and "escrimeur
et rimeur, philosophe et bouffon, ingénieux et détaché, truc-
culent et famelique." 69 H. G. Harvey counters, "The madness
of Cyrano is simply his outrageous courage." 70
III

RELIGION AND REASON
Cyrano's ideas cannot be put into any one category. He attacked the Church, but he was not simply irreligious. He supported scientific endeavor and non-Aristotelian or non-Ptolemaic theories of the universe, but he was more than an apostle of the new science. His concern was larger, both for man and the universe, and he considered a wide range of subjects, all interrelated, having to do with the universe, man's place in it, and his proper behavior. Nonetheless, Cyrano's thought can be separated into categories for the purposes of examination and analysis, and his reaction to Church dogma and abuse of authority is a good starting point.

The Church was one of Cyrano's primary targets; he attacked a number of its doctrines and practices, in addition to inveighing against its authoritarian spirit.

In the first place, Cyrano was not very sure about the existence of the soul. On the moon Cyrano talks to someone identified only as a young man. This character can, in many places, be taken as Cyrano himself; for he answers questions, addressed to him by Drycona with the point Cyrano is trying to make. Yet in the discussion concerning the soul and God, Cyrano apparently wants to raise questions, rather than give answers.

The young man first questions the existence of the soul on the basis of its functions. The soul, according to orthodox
doctrine, is reasonable and capable of intelligence even when separated from the body. If this were true, the young man asks, why is a blind person, with an intelligent soul, unable to imagine what it is to see; also, why are the deaf unable to imagine sound? The senses are the soul's tools, and since the soul works imperfectly when bereft of some of them, the young man wonders how it could possibly function well when it is bereft of all, as in death. He also worries about other aspects of the relationship between the living soul and death, for he cannot understand how the soul knows when the body is dead. Perhaps the soul has made a compact with the body; it will flee if a sword goes through the heart or if a ball of lead hits the head. If this be so, then the soul does not always keep its compact because people sometimes recover from these wounds. This puzzle leads the young man to reason that such compacts may be made individually, an explanation the young man uses to account for the longevity of evil people: the soul tries to prolong its stay as long as possible if it knows its next lodging place will be Hell.¹

Bodily resurrection is another problem that bothers the young man. Specifically, he brings up the problem of what happens if someone is eaten. If eaten, the body nourishes and is assimilated by another body; if the eater is human, it can be argued that the eater's body belongs to two souls. God could decide to allow the eater the body and to make a new body for the eaten, but this is not a satisfactory solution...
since with a new body the man is not the same person as he was before he was eaten. Drycona quickly tires of this argument and states flatly that there is bodily resurrection because God has said so and God does not lie. The young man's reply is the question, how do you know there is a God?

Cyrano answers with his version of the wager. Why not believe in God? If there is a God, then not to believe would be a mistake that could lead one into trouble and pain. If no god exists, even though one believes in a god, no harm will come. This wager is challenged. Because sin requires knowledge of God and the desire to sin, the young man states that one cannot sin if one does not believe in God, and he goes on to ask how God could blame men for not knowing him when God himself has refused to give man the means to know him. The young man then pictures a capricious God; for he argues that if belief in God is necessary for man, God should show his existence more clearly. If God does exist, he plays hide-and-seek. Thus if God can be known, this knowledge derives solely from man's genius and is to man's credit, not to God's. Likewise, if God gives man a spirit which is incapable of understanding God, that is God's fault, not man's. This is the blasphemous conversation that brings "Les états de la lune" to a close.

Elsewhere, Cyrano indicates his belief both in God and in an immortal soul. In neither case is he completely orthodox, but his ideas about the soul are far more inimical
to Church doctrine than his ideas about God. In "Contre un pédant, ou au régent de la rhetoriques des jesuits," Cyrano says that he knows God, but he is convinced of God's existence by faith alone, a viewpoint of which the Church was hardly fond, but one the Church grudgingly accepted as long as the position did not lead the believer into Protestantism. This God that Cyrano knows must, in the light of his other writings, be one which is deistic. Also Cyrano's conviction by faith indicates that he rejects the idea of a God working in the world, a God whose handiwork may be observed. This God is not that of the eighteenth century deists, a god which set the world in motion. Cyrano's God, as may be seen more plainly when Cyrano's ideas about science are considered, is not God the Creator, since Cyrano thinks that the universe is eternal. Instead his God may be described as a life force, a vital principle.

Cyrano gives the reader of L'autre monde a choice of three different kinds of immortality; one form is described in "Les états de la lune," the other two in "Les états du soleil." On the moon only criminals are condemned to die natural deaths and are buried; others may take their own lives and are cremated, but a special form is reserved for the very best people, the philosophers. The philosopher's death not only illustrates a form of immortality; it is also an open and blasphemous parody of parts of the Mass.
When a philosopher feels himself getting old and feeble, he gets permission (presumably from the state—Cyrano does not specify) to hold the death ceremony. The philosopher then invites his friends to a great banquet, in preparation for which the friends fast twenty-four hours. After the friends have gathered for the banquet, they all embrace the philosopher, and then the philosopher's best friend drives a knife into the philosopher's heart. The best friend drinks as much of the blood as he can, and each of the guests does likewise. Some hours later, a young girl is brought in for each man. The couples spend three or four days together, being nourished during this time by the philosopher's flesh and endeavoring to produce children who will embody (literally) the spirit of the dead man.  

Surprisingly enough, this section was printed with only minor alterations, none of them changing the sense or the details of the passage, in the 1657 edition of L'autre monde. Apparently authorities would accept a sexually oriented last supper, complete with the consumption of body and blood, and a worldly immortality as long as it took place on the moon. The presence of this material in an edition authorized by the state forcibly illustrates the advantages of handling religious, social, philosophic, and political criticism in terms of an imaginary voyage.

Cyrano presents the second form of immortality after Drycona is sentenced to death by the birds in "Les états du
soleil." Drycona is counselled by two birds of paradise who serve a function analogous to that performed by modern prison chaplains when they speak to prisoners awaiting execution. Birds on the sun believe that men have neither reason nor immortal souls; so the birds of paradise prepare Drycona for a death that is final. The birds tell him that death cannot be a great evil since all are subject to it. Compared with life, death is a small thing; in death Drycona will be as he was before birth. If he should think that life is so good that he cannot bear to lose it, he can console himself with a certain kind of immortality. Drycona, like all men, is material, so that when he ceases to be himself he will become something else—a piece of earth, a rock, something, at any rate, less harmful than a man. He may also console himself with the thought that in being eaten by flying insects (the form of death to which he is condemned), he is contributing to the welfare of these insects. Moreover, there is the slight possibility that he may exist again. The material which has made him into what he is will be separated at death, but there is the chance that at some time in the future this material will come together again to make another being. Even though this future Drycona will not know that he was the past Drycona, the material so brought together will feel life again, and this is what is important.6

The third form of immortality which Cyrano presents is
explained to Drycona when he asks about philosophers on the sun. Philosophers are the principal inhabitants of the sun and come to the sun after their earthly death. When something on a planet dies, whether plant, animal, or man, its spirit rises to the sun and performs one of three functions. There is no decision making process; no judgment is necessary to determine which of the three the spirit will be involved with. Rather, this is determined automatically by a principle of resemblance. The most common and rough spirits (most men fall into this category) are assimilated by the sun itself and add to its mass. Somewhat finer souls become part of the sun's rays. Philosophers, however, are not assimilated but are inhabitants, for their spirits are already pure. Yet even the inhabitants of the sun do not live forever; they have very long lives, seven or eight thousand years, but death comes when the soul burns itself out. Then all that is left is a substance that looks like cinders.

There are only superficial resemblances among these three explanations of immortality. Death in all three can be considered an end of consciousness as man knows it; Cyrano in "Sur l'éternité de beau-père" compares death with sleep. Also, all three versions are totally unorthodox. The first two attempt to establish a worldly form of immortality, an endeavor which was to assume major importance in the eighteenth century. Consider Denis Diderot's statement:
Indeed, man reveals himself . . . for what he is: an odd mixture of sublime talents and shameful weaknesses. But our failings follow our mortal remains into the tomb and disappear with them forever; the same earth covers them both, and there remains only the eternally lasting evidence of our talents enshrined in monuments we raise to ourselves . . .

Nevertheless it is the third version which most clearly displays the underlying principle which joins all three explanations of immortality to each other and to Cyrano's ideas about God and the soul. As well as his final home, the sun is a source of life for man and the center of man's universe. Also, the souls of the philosophers which are nearly pure spirit are said to resemble the sun most closely. Since the sun is a life force, it can be argued that souls in a purified form are also life forces or vital principles. These are terms in which God has been defined.

Thus Cyrano has a coherent system of belief, even though it is not presented systematically. God and the soul are one and the same. Man participates in the divine, and when his life on earth ends, his soul remains a part of life. Man can have additional, earthly forms of immortality, but even if he does not, he is still part of being. One is tempted to identify God and the sun; this would not, however, be exact. A better way of relating them is to consider that the sun is a concrete manifestation of God.

Cyrano was not always philosophic in his religious criticism; he delighted in making fun of orthodox belief, and
Biblical stories were a fertile source for his tales. The conversation between Elijah and Cyrano in the lunar paradise is an example of this type of criticism. Strangely enough, this section also includes some material describing Paradise, which is a fine example of Cyrano's interest in nature. Elijah tells Cyrano that when Adam and Eve were banished from paradise, God rubbed their gums with the peeling of the fruit of the Tree of Science. This fruit has a tough outer covering which produces ignorance if tasted; only underneath is there knowledge. God did this so that the couple would not be able to find their way back to Paradise. Such a thorough job was done that ignorance persisted for many generations, and this is why nothing was known about Creation and the Law until Moses. The couple, while expelled from Paradise, were not banished from the moon. They lived on another part of the moon until Adam decided that they would be more protected from God's wrath if they moved to the Earth. When they arrived on earth, they settled somewhere between Mesopotamia and Arabia. The Hebrews knew the man as Adam, but the pagans called him Prometheus.

Original sin was a favorite topic of Cyrano's; references to it are found in several places. In L'autre monde Cyrano proposes the idea that God punished man for the sins of Adam and Eve by incorporating the snake into man's body. The snake forms the intestinal system and the genitals, thereby causing
man both discomfort and trouble. In "Contre l'automme," Cyrano says "Ilélas! pour un seul fruit qu'Adam mangea, cent mille personnes moururent qui n'étoient pas encore...." In another letter he writes of Eve and the apple at somewhat greater length:

\[
\text{Oh! que Notre-Seigneur savait bien ce que vous [the author of Triomphe des Dames] diriez . . . quand il refusa d'être fils d'un homme . . . sans doute il connaissait la dignité de leur sexe puisque notre grand'mère ayant tué le gendre humain dans une pomme, il jugea glorieux de mourir pour la caprice d'une femme . . . .}
\]

After the expulsion God decided that Paradise should not be uninhabited; so he called for Enoch. Because Jacob's ladder did not yet exist, Enoch travelled to the moon by catching and saving the odor of the sacrifices of the just, which ascends to God. He attached vases filled with this odor to himself and floated away, cutting himself loose as he passed the moon. Elijah arrived in Paradise later. On earth he had wanted to get away from men, and finally an angel appeared to him and told him how to get to Paradise. Following the angel's instructions, he built a vehicle powered by an arrangement of magnets with sides of polished steel that shone so brightly in the sunlight that they looked fiery. Such was the chariot of fire.

Besides criticizing Church dogma and making fun of Church teachings, Cyrano also attacked the priesthood; he especially disliked the Jesuits, whom he described as stupid and incompetent in several of his letters. Jesuit teaching
was one of his main targets and his description of the Sorbonne as "cette glorieuse mère des Sciences" is accompanied by heavy irony. No priest, however, fares well in Cyrano's work. The moon's customs and practices are advanced, compared with those of the earth, but even there priests lead people on unjust pursuits with specious reasoning. The priests on the moon wished to condemn Drycona as an atheist on the grounds that he reversed their teachings. (On the moon people believed that they lived on the earth and that why Drycona called earth was a moon.) Drycona was saved from death by a plea for tolerance from Socrates' daemon, but he had to recant his beliefs publicly about which was earth and which was moon because the priests felt that Drycona's new idea would scandalize weak souls.

Generally, Cyrano's position is that while there might be times when, for the maintenance of the state, people should ignore some things or believe some falsities, the Church should never adopt this policy. He charged, though, that it had become a maxim of religion. Cyrano thought that principles of belief, whether religious or scientific, should be determined by reason; so he decried the church's reliance on Aristotle and its use of authority:
The trouble caused by relying on Aristotle is illustrated by Drycona's examinations on the moon. As has been mentioned before, the people on the moon were unwilling to believe that he was human; so he was tested twice on philosophy, physics, and the like. In the first examination, Drycona argued according to the principles he had been taught. When he found himself being out-argued, he sought shelter in the safety of Aristotle's teachings. His examiners quickly showed him the falsity of Aristotle's theories; and Drycona was returned to his cage since it was thought that anyone who relied on Aristotle did not reason and thus was not human.

One of the judges commented:

Cet Aristote ... accommodait sans doute les principes à sa Philosophie, au lieu d'accomoder sa Philosophie aux principes.

The subject of the second examination was physics, and again Drycona's answers satisfied no one. By this time, Drycona was becoming convinced that the theories in which the moon people believed were far more reasonable than those he had learned on earth. The eternity of the world was the only theory he still found unattractive.

Cyrano did not accuse the Church alone of being too closely attached to the principles of the ancients; he disapproved just as strongly of the thinkers unconnected with the Church who used Greek and Roman writers as their
final authorities. The question for Cyrano was whether one agreed with beliefs blindly, and while he thought Churchmen the most important of those who did accept blindly, he had little patience for lay people who preferred the ancients to reason and observation. According to Cyrano, one could not always take as truth what the ancient philosophers said, since often their laws and religion required that their statements be changed in the interest of state policy. He adds that the ancients were no more able to write freely about what they believed than were seventeenth-century Frenchmen.  

A strong supporter of freedom of thought, Cyrano campaigned for this freedom by arguing that if man has free will, he should be permitted a free imagination. Man's visions cannot be constrained, and though one can force a man to say something, that man cannot be forced to believe what he says. Since what a man believes is the important thing, hampering the expression of his thoughts accomplishes little from Cyrano's point of view. Additionally, he defends philosophical people who have been mocked as dreamers, stating that perhaps these dreamers really see more clearly than those who mock.  

Cyrano not only campaigned for freedom of thought; he also complained about its absence on the earth. A Spaniard on the moon, probably meant to represent Domingo Gonsales from Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone*, expresses Cyrano's
views. The Spaniard and Dyrona are caged together while the people of the moon try to decide whether these two are human. They have a number of conversations, and despite their imprisonment, the Spaniard states that the moon is the only place where the imagination is free. He had come to the moon because he had to escape the Spanish Inquisition, which was persecuting him for believing in such things as the total interrelatedness of the universe. He thought there was really only one element and that everything exists in some form in everything else.24 Cyrano, himself, never supported this extreme position, but, as has been seen, he does maintain that the universe is linked by spirit. Although the citizens of the moon may have had difficulty deciding whether Drycona and the Spaniard reasoned, they were willing to allow those credited with reason great, even if not total, freedom of expression.

Freedom of intellectual expression was not the only goal of Cyrano's demands for tolerance. He also wanted, as had Montaigne and Naude, to see the end of Church and governmental persecutions of people accused of sorcery. Cyrano expressed himself very forcefully on the subject of witch or sorcerer hunting, sometimes using reason, at other times using humor as his weapon against this kind of fear.

Cyrano uses ridicule to combat sorcerer hunting in "Les états du soleil." Soon after Drycona returned from the moon, he wrote an account of his travels, which led to his being
accused of sorcery. People could not explain to themselves how Drycona got to the moon, and the gullible decided that he could have made the trip only with the aid of supernatural powers, presumably evil ones. The Parlement of Toulouse, as well as less responsible citizens, reasoned that the author of "Les états de la lune" must be a sorcerer because he said that he went to the moon and even admitted talking with Socrates' daemon; so after some hunting for him, Drycona was captured by a band of people chanting the Kyrie Eleison and arrested by the priest who led the group. This priest is portrayed as a greedy fool. Drycona's horse is freed because the people fear it is satanic, and as it gallops off, a copy of Descartes' Physics falls from the saddlebags. When the book is examined, the group is even more certain of Drycona's sorcery since they think that the drawings of circles indicating the movements of the planets are really magic symbols used to call Beelzebub. Drycona is taken to Toulouse and there accused of a number of crimes. One man says that Drycona started a sheep-pox among his sheep; another says that Drycona caused his horses' deaths. One person even counsels that Drycona be burned immediately, for otherwise there will be famine. Since the reader knows that Drycona is not a sorcerer, Cyrano could reasonably hope that any sympathetic reader of L'autre monde would ask himself if there were real people charged with sorcery as unjustly as Drycona had been charged.
Cyrano used humor again, this time a more fanciful kind, in a letter, "Pour les sorciers." Cyrano begins the letter by saying that he is writing about such a strange adventure that to give credit to the story, one would need more faith than was required of those who had faith enough to move mountains. After the prefatory note, however, he relates the adventure in very serious language. Cyrano, it seems, was carried off on a broomstick to watch a sorcerer conjure. The conjuring ceremony is described with a great many elaborate and fantastic details, and many superstitions are supported. But though the tone of the letter is solemn, the piling of one fantastic detail upon another and another in effect destroys the whole structure. There is too much of everything, and the tale becomes ludicrous.

Cyrano was not entirely willing to rely on people's sense of humor, however. "Contre les sorciers" followed "Pour les sorciers," and in the later letter Cyrano stated that "Pour les sorciers" was a jest, in case anyone missed the point. "Contre les sorciers" is a well-developed and, in many places, an original argument against believing in sorcerers, even though it is more a collection of arguments than a systemic presentation. In fact, Cyrano shows in this letter, as much as in any other of his writings, his inability to organize material. Nevertheless, the letter is of great enough importance in a study of Cyrano's ideas to merit close examination.
Cyrano begins by flatly stating that he does not believe in sorcerers. To support his position, he asks his readers to remember the people who have confessed to sorcery and eating children and to remember, as well, that these supposedly devoured children were found alive after the accused were burned. Later in the letter, Cyrano describes the kind of person arrested for sorcery as usually being a peasant without sufficient wits to defend himself, whose understanding is overwhelmed by the danger he is in, and who cannot make a good case for himself. This last condition is perhaps the result of the peasant's fear that if he talks, he will be charged with having the devil speak from his mouth and that if he does not talk, his silence will be taken as proof of his guilt. 28

Much of Cyrano's argument turns on the idea that he cannot be persuaded to believe in sorcerers through reason. Arguing that it is an easy mistake to adjust one's principles to commonly held opinion--when the reverse should be done--Cyrano says that he can believe only in men who are human and that he will not accept people as sorcerers until their sorcery is proven to him. Otherwise, he would simply be believing what any idiot could believe. (The implication here is that only idiots would believe in sorcerers.) He argues, furthermore, that saying sorcerers do not exist is not the same sort of judgment as saying that they do; for
while the latter is an example of passively submitting oneself to an idea, the former is not, since the effects of sorcerors can be explained without reference to the supernatural.29

In the first place, stories told about sorcerors always have as their setting some place three or four hundred leagues away from where the story is told. This makes the story hard to verify. Also, one should consider the sort of people who witness sorcerors' meetings. Usually they are old women, who may be poor enough to lie for money. Age may have affected these witnesses in a number of ways. Senility may be a factor, or age could make an old woman garrulous and willing to make up a story that would entertain her neighbors. Her eyesight might be impaired so that she could mistake a rabbit for a sorcerer's cat, and this rabbit may have become fifty cats in the telling because she wished to justify her fright. Cyrano prefers to believe that charges of sorcery can be explained by ordinary happenings such as these than to believe that an occurrence is supernatural, without reason, and unique.30

Also, stories about the powers of sorcerors are not logically coherent. Sorcerors are supposed to be capable of turning themselves into animals. Why, then, when a sorceror is caught, is he unable to turn himself into a fly and so escape? If demons are going to accomplish their evil, demoniacs should not be so easily caught. That is, only if the demons were incompetent, would demoniacs be so easily caught.
Given such incompetence, officials need not waste time catching people possessed by demons who cannot do much damage. It has been argued that God forces sorcerers and the like to be caught in order to make faith stand out more clearly. While Cyrano says he is willing to accept this argument, he remains unconvinced, for he sees no obligation to believe that the Devil is responsible for antics that men can perform so well without the Devil's help. To be convinced that there are demons, Cyrano says he needs to see something happen that man could not do without aid from the Devil. He suggests, as a possible project which would convince him of the reality of demons, that demons move the towers of Notre Dame in Paris out to the countryside of Saint Denis, dancing a Spanish sarabande while they carry their load.

It has been argued that sorcerers lose their powers when caught, but if this be true, then judges have power over demons. This should make the judges suspect. Moreover, some men become judges only by stealing the money required to buy this position; therefore even thieves have power over demons. By carrying this weakness of sorcerers to its logical extreme, Cyrano makes demons, if they exist, look insignificant. Another question to be answered is why a man would want to become a sorcerer, for Cyrano points out that all magicians who are caught are very poor. Cyrano cannot understand why someone would risk eternal damnation just to be poor, hated, and in danger of being burned in the public square. Further-
more, not only is possession of occult powers improbable, the efficacy of witchcraft is no more believable. For example, people have charged that herds of animals have been bewitched by magic words. Yet words are nothing more than the combination of the twenty-four letters of the alphabet, and Cyrano does not think it possible that the alphabet can have the power to sicken or cure one sheep, much less a whole herd.

Cyrano has a stock of several other objections to add to the foregoing. For example, he finds it curious that the Devil trembles when holy water is thrown at him, since he dares to inhabit what is more holy, a man. Man is made in God's image, recognized as a child of God through baptism, and marked by sacred oils. Man is the temple of the Holy Spirit and the tabernacle of the sacred Host. Cyrano wonders how the devil has the impudence to enter such a place, which is far more sacred than some water that has had a few prayers said over it. In the same spirit of doubt, Cyrano notes that the possessed are supposed to become very upset in the presence of a cross. Because a cross is nothing more than a long piece intersected at right angles by a short piece, Cyrano points out that one may see crosses many places in nature. What then, he asks, is the special significance of a cross made of ebony or silver; do these materials give a cross special powers? Cyrano's incredulity is based, as well, on considerable doubt about the honesty of those who hunt sorcerers. Priests say that because the devil makes
people lie, the possessed should not be believed; yet these
demoniacs are believed whenever they accuse others of sorcery.
Cyrano finds it strange that people are burned on evidence
provided by the devil, and he asks that the priest to whom
much of the letter is addressed avow that the Devil lies or
tells the truth as it suits the priest's purposes.33

Many tales of witches' sabbaths, Cyrano feels, can be
explained psychologically. The section of "Contre les
sorciers" which deals with sorcery in these terms is a par-
ticularly important part of the letter, for Cyrano maintains
several positions quite advanced for his time. Recognizing
that dreams could be a form of wish fulfillment, he also
said that if the dreaming person wished hard enough, the
dream would appear real. Additionally, Cyrano realized that
while emotional content would remain constant as a person
moved from conscious thought into dreams, the specific form
in which the wish appeared could change. He explains reports
of people witnessing witches' sabbaths in this manner. People
who, before going to bed, have wishful thoughts about wild
dancing and orgy-like parties are capable of fulfilling
these wishes in dreams. They sleep and dream fantastic,
erotic dreams which, when they awaken, seem real. Since
these dreamers know that what they dreamed could not have taken
place in any normal way, and since they are also unable to
deny the reality of the dream, they reason that the super-
natural must be involved. Thus, witches' sabbaths come into
Cases of possession, too, have psychological explanations. In this instance, Cyrano relates psychological and physical disturbances. Pointing out that most of the possessed are women, Cyrano says that such possessions are the result of conflicts that are in the nature of women and that possession can be attributed to physical causes. Unfortunately, Cyrano becomes somewhat vague in his explanation, but it is possible to read the passage as a statement that specifically sex-determined physical occurrences are the cause of unusual behavior and states of mind. Some who believe in sorcery could accept Cyrano's argument that what appears to be possession in women results from physical disturbances rather than the work of the devil. They could still believe, however, that even if these women were not possessed, satanic forces still operated in the world. That is, the women Cyrano mentions might not be sorcerers, but others were. In answer to this, Cyrano points out an inconsistency in Church teaching. He says that people who appear possessed but whose behavior is the result of natural causes are the only possessed that can exist, for the Church has taken the position that the power of demons ended with the appearance of Christ on earth. Why, he asks, are oracles no longer able to function in the world, if the devil and his forces can have such power?

Miracles in which people are cured of some disease or
infirmity are handled in *L'autre monde* in much the same way as possession in "Contre les sorciers." A sick person is not cured by divine intervention but by the person's state of mind, particularly his power to imagine or will himself well. One of the troubles with explaining cure in terms of prayer is that whatever happens can be explained as God's will. If the sick recover, then God aided them, and miracles have occurred. If they do not recover, then their faith was not strong enough; and if they should die, then God intended to remove them from their misery. Cyrano, however, does recognize the power of prayer insofar as it convinces the person praying that he will recover and so speeds his recovery. Miracles, according to Cyrano, are only natural effects, and the term, miracle, indicates simply that people are stupid and confuse the weaknesses of their understanding with the works of God. Really, then, miracles are a function of stupidity, not divinity.

Thus it can be seen from the topics considered in this chapter that Cyrano was a man in quest of answers. Not only was he unwilling to accept answers provided for him, he also reacted against any pressure that might force him to take certain positions or to believe certain things on authority. Cyrano wished to make observation and reason his guides. Beliefs should be in accordance with normal occurrences and natural sequences of events. They should be logically consistent, too, and religion ought not to be a source of un-
reasonableness. Anything which obscured truth or hampered investigation, whether it was religious mythology, belief in demons, or reliance on Aristotelian physics and cosmology, was anathema to Cyrano.

Interwoven with Cyrano's feeling that observation and reason should be man's guiding principles is his abiding sense of the importance of life. His assumptions about the worth of man (which he separates from the idea of the worth of all men) and about the value of existence, underlie all of Cyrano's positive contributions. His advocacy of tolerance and free imagination and his concepts about God and the soul all stem from his glorification of life itself and the value he puts on living.
IV

SCIENCE AND MAN'S ESTATE
IV

SCIENCE AND MAN'S ESTATE

Freedom of imagination, of investigation, and of thought, all are important to Cyrano not only because of their philosophical value, but also because freedom is necessary for progress in science. Observation of phenomena must play a prominent role in the formulation of scientific theories; Cyrano at one point describes scientific investigation of the universe as seeing and describing things as they are. This type of scientific investigation is carried on, however, only by some inhabitants of the sun who can go any place in the universe and who can assume whatever forms are most effective and efficient for a true description of it.¹ Man, because his senses are not adequately developed and because he can observe from only one point (the earth), must use reason in addition to sensation; perception alone is not sufficient for science.

To an observer on earth, the sun appears to move around a stationary earth, just as the river banks appear to move past someone standing on a boat. Although a person can leave a boat and observe that the bank remains still while the boat moves, someone on earth studying the universe cannot change his position. He must use reason to regulate sense data and to enlarge his point of view. Yet reason itself must be regulated by observation. Acceptance of the Ptolemaic theory of the universe illustrates what happens
when reason and observation are not joined. Cyrano explains the popularity of the Ptolemaic theory as the result of too great a reliance on perception. After all, the sun does appear to go around the earth. On the other hand, the complicated theories of cycles, epicycles, eccentrics, and concentrics which make up the Ptolemaic system show what happens when logic is untrammeled by information. Cyrano asks for the simplest possible explanation of the universe and one which uses only natural causes.²

He wants, for example, an explanation of the movement of planets which has nothing to do with God. While he is not sure why planets move as they do, he is certain the movement results from natural causes, and he thinks the influence of the sun could account for rotation.³ Recognition that the sun causes planetary rotation could be nothing more than a logical extension of heliocentric theory, and Cyrano might also be inclined to see the sun as the source of this movement because of his ideas about the sun as a force in all of life. Nevertheless, Cyrano has an intuitive concept of gravity, for on Drycona's trips to both the moon and the sun, he finds that as he leaves the earth's influence and nears his destination, he no longer needs any power for his machine. Instead, he is pulled toward the moon or sun. Commenting on this phenomenon, Cyrano writes:

car... cette masse [the moon's] étant moindre que la nôtre [the earth's], il faut que la sphère de son activité ait aussi moins d'étendue, et que par conséquent j'aie [Drycona] senti plus tard la force de son centre.⁴
He adds later "la pesanteur n'est qu'une attraction du centre dans la sphère de son activité." Although the language in such passages has an antiquated sound and although Cyrano seems to have connected attraction with heat, the basic outline of a gravitational concept is present.

Whatever the extent of Cyrano's understanding of gravity, the diurnal and annual rotation of the earth was a very important subject for him, and he propagandized emphatically for this part of the new science. Drycona's first attempt to get to the moon, for example, serves as a proof of the earth's diurnal rotation. When Drycona set off from Paris with bottles of dew strapped to his body, he went straight towards the moon, and when he broke some of the bottles, he came straight down. There was no wind to make him change his course. If the earth did not rotate, he should have landed some place close to where he left, but having been in the air several hours, he landed in Canada, instead of in France. Cyrano supports the idea of diurnal rotation again when he writes about Drycona's trip to the sun. En route, Drycona witnesses the diurnal rotation of the earth as well as the earth's movement around the sun. Additionally, he sees that Venus and Mercury rotate and observes that these planets, like the earth, have moons revolving about them.

Aside from proof through experience, albeit fictional, Cyrano was willing to use nearly any argument to convince his readers of the heliocentric nature of the universe. He points
out that it is out of proportion to expect the sun to turn around the earth; this is like thinking that the fire turns around a nightingale roasting on a spit. Moreover, it is only reasonable to expect that the sun is in the middle since the sun is a source of life. Using biological imagery at a time when this type of imagery was unusual, mechanistic allusions being far more common, Cyrano compares the sun with seeds and the process of germination and says that in nature everything important for life is in the center.

However much Cyrano may emphasize the workings of this solar system, the sun and its planets do not form the limits of his universe. Rather there are an infinite number of worlds, with at least some of them inhabited. Stating that stars are suns like our sun and have planets around them like ours, he goes on to say that there must be many stars we cannot see. If one were on Saturn or Jupiter, one would see much that is unobservable on earth, and as one went out farther more and more could be seen. The idea that one cannot see everything from earth is important for several of Cyrano's arguments, not just for his concept of an infinite universe. It is related, for example, to the idea of heliocentricity, since both heliocentricity and an infinite universe involve the realization that the earth is not the center of everything. More important, man is no longer the center, but simply a small part of an unimaginably great universe.

Though Cyrano's position on the extension of the cosmos
was not particularly acceptable in his own day, it is similar to modern statements:

With the 200-inch telescope on Palomar Mountain astronomers can gaze more than two billion light years into space, yet find no evidence that the matter of the universe thins out with distance. And we must assume, since we have no excuse for thinking otherwise, that the universe must look much the same from a galaxy two billion light years away as it looks to us from our vantage point in the Milky Way.  

It is more common now, however, to consider the universe to be finite, though indefinite, and expanding into infinity. As for the inhabitability of worlds, it has been pointed out that since there are probably millions of planets in our galaxy which have physical conditions like the earth, little reason exists for presuming that they are uninhabited.

Not only is Cyrano's universe infinite; it is also eternal, or, rather, the matter which makes it up is eternal. Thus the earth is eternal. Cyrano reasons that man had recourse to the story of creation because of his inability to imagine a world making itself. There is a labyrinth of as yet unanswered questions about matter, because, Cyrano says, the distance between nothing and one atom is infinitely great; so one must make assumptions. If one assumes God as creator, then two assumptions are necessary, first that matter was created and second that the world was created. If one assumes that matter exists eternally with God, only this one assumption is necessary since the universe can arrange itself into worlds. Imagine, Cyrano suggests, that there exists an infinite universe...
composed of an infinite number of atoms of different shapes. These atoms join by chance. With a large enough number of atoms, the formation of heavenly bodies is very probable. Cyrano himself points to the similarity between this theory and those of Epicurus and Democritus. He also uses these two as well as Pythagoras, Copernicus, and Kepler as authorities to support his ideas about the inhabitability of other worlds.

This theory of creation has its modern adherents. In the 1940's, C. Weizsäcker formulated the theory that the sun was formed through the condensation of interstellar matter (a mixture of gases and dust with a present mean density of about one miligram of matter in one billion cubic miles of space); a large quantity of this matter did not become part of the sun but remained rotating outside the sun because of the differences in the rotational states of the different gases. Over a period of some hundred million years, enough dust particles had collided with other dust particles to form planets. This theory is supposed to hold true not only for this planetary system but for practically all solar systems.

Cyrano is unwilling to make a definite statement about how, from the collision of atoms, suns and planets were created. He sees two possibilities. Perhaps the planets themselves were suns at one time but later burned themselves out. On the other hand, planets may have been created by explosions on the sun which caused matter to fly out into space, and he supports the idea that moons are bits of the
planets they revolve around. The macula on which Drycona lands is an example of a little planet thrown off by the sun, and he uses this macula's development to show how various occurrences, explained on earth in terms of God, could be the result of natural causes. The macula, when it was first thrown off by the sun, was in a state of chaos, but after a time it took shape as a small satellite of the sun. When this happened, much water was formed as a condensate, and a tremendous inundation resulted, a deluge which covered the whole surface of this little planet. By the time Drycona visited the macula, much of it had dried off and was covered with mud from which inhabitants were emerging in a progression (the longer they remained in the mud, the more highly developed they were). The rest of the surface was covered with seas.

Although the heliocentricity of the solar system and the infinity and eternity of the universe are Cyrano's primary scientific subjects, he does consider some others. On the sun Drycona, after his expulsion from the bird's kingdom, becomes involved in conversation with trees from Dodona. These oaks are able to talk because they are descended from oracular trees; otherwise their means of communication would be the rustling of their leaves. These trees tell Drycona a number of Ovid-like stories about lovers which serve the purpose of leading up to an explanation of magnetic attraction as the action of atomic particles. The love stories and the
discussion of magnetism are connected by the use of erotic imagery to describe magnetic attraction, and by a play on words, the French word for magnet and that for loving being the same, aimant. Magnets, the poles, the northern lights, and the possible relations among them are also discussed, though in fanciful terms.

Additionally Cyrano raises several problems connected with Descartes' theories of the universe. Mainly he is bothered by the principle of plenum, the idea that the universe is full of matter and that no empty space or void exists. Cyrano wonders how atoms can move in the plenum, and if matter is divided into innumerable little squares as Descartes postulates, what fills the spaces between the angles of the squares. These problems are brought up in a conversation between Drycona and Campanella on the sun. Though Drycona questioned the principle of plenum, Cyrano does not intend simply to criticize Descartes. He has Campanella talk a bit about Descartes, particularly about how Descartes made a great contribution to man's understanding of the structure of the universe. Also Descartes is described as being very respected by the philosophers on the sun.

Campanella when he first meets Drycona, knows exactly what Drycona is thinking because he adopts Drycona's posture and expression. Campanella explains his ability in this manner:
This connection between mind and body serves to reinforce what Cyrano said elsewhere about the interrelatedness of physical and mental states. Campanella learned about this method of knowing what another thought from Socrates' daemon, which counselled him before he appeared before the Inquisition. Socrates' daemon claimed to have appeared to Faustus, Cardano, La Mothe le Vayer, and Gassendi as well. Socrates himself is on the sun, acting as supervisor of morals in the Province of Philosophers.

Cyrano's psychology is a materialistic one, and all sensation is described in terms of Epicurean atomistic theory. Memory, imagination, and judgment are also a function of the atoms that make up animals. Cyrano's only description of his atomistic psychology is allegorical. On the sun Drycona sees three rivers that run side by side. The first river is called Memory, and it is filled with echos and with monsters. The one next to it is Imagination; philosopher's stones, sirens, phoenixes, and the like are found there. These two rivers vary in width; where one is wide, the other is narrow. The last river is Judgment, which is bordered by hellebore, a plant thought to be a cure for madness. It moves with great slowness, its waters coming and going, turning eternally
upon itself. The more the atoms that form an animal are wet by one of these rivers, the more the animal is characterized by the quality the river represents. Thus Cyrano uses the allegory not only to popularize atomistic explanations of behavior, but also to remind the reader that the sun is the starting place for all of life. Campanella makes the explicit statement "que le Soleil est votre père, et qu'il est auteur de toutes choses."*

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Again and again Cyrano emphasizes heliocentricity, both in terms of cosmology and of the totality of life. The sun, the center, is the source of life, the point around which all life revolves, both physically and spiritually. Thinking that the earth is the center only illustrates man's pride; instead of realizing that man is a part of the life process in which all things are related (e.g., the earth nourishes the tree which produces the acorns that nourish the pig that nourishes man, who in turn enriches the earth), man imagines that the universe is made just for him, as if the sun were there simply to make the cabbages grow.

Cabbages, themselves, may be more important than man is willing to admit, as Drycona finds out. Some people on the moon will eat only those things which have died a natural death. Socrates' daemon explains this to Drycona, and it begins the explanation by asking whether the cabbage is not as much a
creature of God as man. If one admits that the cabbage is a
creature of God, then there is no reason to say that God loves
men more than cabbages. Rather, a case can be made for God's
loving the cabbages more. A cabbage has no original sin; it
is free from passion and cannot offend God, while man not only
can, but does offend God. Besides, the cabbage has done
nothing to merit death, and it is a crime, anyway, to kill
something that can not defend itself. According to orthodox
theory, the cabbage is annihilated at death, but if one kills
a man, he lives again; so maybe it is more humane to kill men
than to kill cabbages. On the other hand, if everything be
part of a universal intelligence or soul, then it is possible
that cabbages know things that man does not know. Though
Socrates' daemon admits its inability to prove cabbages have
beautiful thoughts, it is certain that no one can prove they
do not. Because cabbages cannot scream, talk, or cry, one
ought not to be too sure that they cannot think or feel. 23

The last part of this argument in favor of cabbages would
have appealed to Drycona, since one of the reasons moon people
thought he was not a man was his not knowing even one of the
moon languages. There are two languages on the moon. One,
spoken by great and important people, was similar to music
while that of the common people was communicated by movements
of the body and facial expressions. Drycona lived at court
for a time, as part of the queen's menagerie, and finally
learned some of the musical language. His accomplishment
then split the town into two factions, those who believed
that Drycona was human because he had learned to speak and those who still held that he was not human. The priests strongly opposed the belief that Drycona was human because he was not made like men on the moon. Moon people walk on all fours because God, according to the priests, made them with their heads turned toward earth in order that they might be able to contemplate the earth in all its goodness. Also God wanted people to have a firm stance. Drycona, in contrast, walks dangerously on two legs with his head in the air as if he were in a state of continuous supplication. Drycona could not, then, be a man, and those who argued for his humanity were excommunicated.  

Man's pride is frequently criticized in L'autre monde. The young man on the moon sees pride as the only source for man's belief that he alone among living things has an immortal soul, and, again, it is pride which leads man to think that he alone reasons. The young man denies that only man reasons, and he wants to know why God would make man the sole possessor of both reason and immortality. He thinks this situation an embarrassment of riches which, if true, indicates that God is unjust; for a just God, the common father of all, would not abandon everything but man to nothingness. The trees of Dodona criticize man because of his pride and, in addition, because of his lack of intelligence and sensitivity. People, the trees say, are not acute enough to tell how different various trees sound, and they are displeased
by man's denial of the existence of reason and a sensitive soul in trees. But the most vocal critics of man are the birds.

When Drycona arrives in the birds' territory, he is imprisoned, and many want him executed immediately, on the grounds that he is a man. Some of the birds argue that he ought to know the reason for his execution and that a trial must be held. The advocates of immediate death counter that it would be impossible for Drycona to understand reason:

... cela seroit bien ridicule de croire qu'un animal tout nu, que la Nature même en mettant au jour ne s'étoit pas souciée de fournir des choses nécessaires à le conserver, fût comme eux capable de raison.

Cooler heads prevail in the community, although the elders advise the rest of the population that man is both stupid and vain. Man admits that sense perception and reason are linked; yet though he has the most faulty perceptions of all creatures, he considers himself the superior animal. Man is a monster who has the ambition to command or exterminate all animals.

Drycona is befriended in his plight by a magpie, who tells him much about the birds. This magpie was taught human language, had been fed bread and cheese on earth, and so is inclined to take Drycona's side. Even the magpie thinks, however, that man, of all the animals, is the one that ought to be purged from a well-run state. Nevertheless, the bird is willing to help Drycona and advises him not to admit being
a man. Drycona, acting on this advice, pretends he is a monkey, raised from infancy in captivity. His trick is unsuccessful, though, and the birds prepare to try him. Birds assemble for the trial, but it is called off because of bad weather. Criminal trials are never held in bad weather in this kingdom because birds become moody and ill-tempered when the weather is unpleasant; the court does not want the accused to suffer because of the judges' own discomfort. When the weather improves, the prosecutor begins his case, one which is brought by a bird that was shot and that asks for men's death in order to prevent more incidents like his. There are two questions involved in the trial, whether Drycona is a man, and if this be granted, whether he should die because he is a man. The prosecutor quickly takes care of the first question; Drycona must be a man because he laughs, cries, and has teeth, among other things. Furthermore, Drycona's morning prayers are thought by the birds to be some sort of magical invocation; the prosecutor then argues that only man is bad enough either to use magic or to need it. Taking up the question of whether Drycona should die, the prosecutor says it has never been questioned that all creatures are born to live in society. Yet man seems to be born only to break up society. If this can be proved, then perhaps nature has made a mistake, and men should be exterminated. 28

The prosecutor opens his arguments against man by stating what he considers a law: equality is fundamental to the main-
tenance of government. Men, though, are inclined to servitude and even sell people into slavery. Not only that, men are so afraid of being without a master they make up an omnipresent god, or a series of gods that can be found in the water, the air, fire, and under the earth. They even make gods of wood. Perhaps, too, men believe in immortality more from the fear of being without someone to tell them what to do after death, than from a fear of non-being. Men cannot stand equality; though servile in character, they pretend they are superior and use superiority as an excuse for massacring animals, especially birds. Men think they have the right of life and death over birds. Some feel free to ambush, imprison, and eat birds while others seem to think that it is a sign of nobility, of all things, to allow birds to go free. So insensitive and stupid are men that they think the sun comes up to give them light for shooting birds, that birds fly only to give men moving targets, and that birds have entrails simply to provide man with a way of predicting the future. All of this is the result of man's insupportable pride. Since man evidently is not reasonable, he should not be condemned for his stupidities, but some actions must be the result of an evil will. For example, men kill birds without being attacked first and eat birds even though other nourishment is available. For such actions men must be held responsible and should be punished.
In the birds' Kingdom, when the birds are assembling for Drycona's trial, Drycona sees an eagle and presumes that the eagle must be the king. The magpie corrects this impression, saying that such a presumption illustrates an aspect of man's foolish behavior. Man allows the largest, strongest, and crudest to head a government, and he expects everyone else to do the same. The birds' government is very different, however. It is an elective monarchy, with a new sovereign being chosen every six months, and the birds choose the weakest, the gentlest, and the most peaceful bird for king they can find. They choose a weak bird so that if he does something wrong, the rest of the birds can be avenged. They choose a gentle king that hates no one and that no one hates. They choose a peaceful bird in order to avoid war, for war is the means to all injustice. Every week the king receives the estates, which apparently are comparable to the French estates, and the estates air any complaints they may have. If, during the meeting of the estates, any three birds are dissatisfied with the king's government, the king is deposed and a new one is elected. Also during the meeting of the estates, if any bird knows that the king is guilty of a capital crime, that bird may kill the king. The bird must, however, be able to justify himself afterwards, or he, too, will die. This never happens, though, because the kings are always humble and peaceful. In fact, Drycona is told, when the present king was called upon to settle a dispute between
two sparrows, the court advisers had a hard time getting the king to understand of what enmity consisted. Another way in which birds and men differ is in their ideas of what a really bad crime is. The worst crime for birds is to be unworthy of a friend for ten years. This crime is punished by the bird's being condemned to be king of another king of birds. He is sent away from his own kind on the grounds that he will then have the responsibilities of leadership without the pleasures of a familiar society.

Although Cyrano is not recommending that the birds' type of monarchy be substituted for that of France in the mid-seventeenth century, the description of the birds' government, especially when read in conjunction with Cyrano's specifically political writings, does indicate a set of ideas which Cyrano considers applicable to earthly government. There seems to be no reason to suppose that Cyrano favored an elective monarchy; he stressed, instead, the importance of good advisers for the king. Since the two strong leaders in France during Cyrano's lifetime, Richelieu and Mazarin, were Minister of State rather than royalty, it is not surprising that he would emphasize the quality of advisors. Cyrano might not have recommended the weakest, gentlest, and most peaceful man in France as advisor to the king, but it is clear that he hoped France would have a leader who would not oppress the people, particularly if the people had no recourse against this oppression. Frequent meetings of the Estates General could be a means of re-
course. They would not have to meet once a week, but since the Estates General never met during Cyrano's lifetime, any meeting would be an improvement. France's domestic situation would also be improved if the kings' advisors were not the objects of so much hatred and if they did not follow so war-like a foreign policy (for France was at war throughout Cyrano's adult life). Additionally, Cyrano may have wanted, in place of a king responsible to the people, ministers who would be so responsible, though this is not clear. It is, however, quite probable that he wanted ministers subject to law. The king of the birds could be punished for capital crimes, and one can say with certainty that Cyrano would have liked to see this principle applied to French ministers of state. He could have wanted the principle applied to kings as well, but since Louis XIII and Louis XIV, during Cyrano's lifetime at least, were not quite so much the wielders of power as their ministers were, this application was less important.

One is able to infer a certain amount of political criticism from descriptions of imaginary kingdoms, but Cyrano also has some specific criticisms. He says, for example, that kings are kings only because they have subjects who make up the state and produce those things which make the state powerful (whether goods or armies). Yet the government, instead of helping the people in order to make the state more prosperous, oppresses them. France may be glorious and rich,
but the people are suffering and need relief. Order, liberty, and peaceful commerce need to be established. The mechanics of government could be improved, too. When Drycona is imprisoned in Toulouse, he is put into a terrible dungeon in which he has to bribe the guard in order to get even the most miserable of food. Only the influence of important friends gets him into more comfortable quarters. Penal reform is not one of Cyrano's main points, but Drycona's escape from the dungeon does illustrate a jurisdictional problem. Drycona escapes by tricking the jailer, but the town is soon aroused and tries to recapture him. Both local and state guards participate in the search, but there is absolutely no cooperation between them. Instead, there is commotion and even rioting as the rivalry between two groups causes more excitement than Drycona himself. At one point Drycona is seized by the Archers of the Grand Prévôt, but a group of townspeople come along and fight with the Prévôt's men over who has the right to capture Drycona. In the confusion, Drycona is able to get away, but not far enough, for he is finally captured and returned to prison.

France, therefore, is faced with problems both large and small, if the people are generally oppressed and if, within one community, jurisdictional questions cause rioting.

War was a reason for many problems within the French state. It was a source of unrest and a constant irritant to the well-being of the state. Cyrano, to emphasize the pointlessness and absurdity of war, gives an account in "Les états
de la lune" of how wars are fought on the moon. In the first place, before a war begins, elected arbiters designate the length of time combatants have to arm and to move their troops as well as the number of participants and the place of battle. Equality is their guiding principle:

... il n'y a pas dans une armée un seul homme plus que dans l'autre, les soldats estropiés d'un côté sont tous enrôlés dans une compagnie, et lorsqu'on en vient aux mains, les Marechaux de Camp ont soin de les exposer aux estropiés; de l'autre côté, les géants en tête les colosses; les écrivains, les adroits; les vaillans, les courageux; les débiles, les faibles; les indisposés, les malades; les robustes, les forts; et si quelqu'un entreprisait de frapper un autre que son ennemi désigné, à moins qu'il n'ut justifier que c'était par méprise, il est condamné de coward.33

After the battle a count is made of the number killed and wounded; whichever side has the fewer casualties wins. If the casualty list should be even, the winner is decided by drawing straws. This type of fighting is not what is really important for the triumph of a state on the moon. Instead, the important battles are those fought among the learned:

Un savant est opposé à un autre savant, un esprit é et un judicieux à un autre judicieux. Au reste le triomphe que renporte un État en cette façon est compté pour trois victoires à force ouverte.34

Drycona's reaction to the manner of waging war on the moon is one of humor and astonishment. He explains how wars are fought on earth and is asked if the manner of waging war on earth does not indicate that problems there are settled by right of force. Drycona says yes, but adds that justice is a factor. His moon interlocutor comments
that if this be the case, a disinterested arbiter could settle problems without the need for war; or if the arbiter should find that one side has as much right as another, then either the status quo could be maintained or representatives of each side could settle the question with a card game. Any of these alternatives are better than war, especially since there is no reason for princes to have thousands of men, who are worth more than the princes, maimed or killed. Many people on the moon consider their method of warfare unsatisfactory, but they have not been able yet to avoid clashes from time to time; so warfare still exists. Moon people emphasize equality in battle because they value fairness. Also they think there is no difference between victories in which the quantity and quality of combatants are different and those in which one side attacks an unarmed and otherwise undefended enemy. Even equality is an unsatisfactory principle, though, since if the sides are equal one could win only by trickery, which is a form of treason, or chance, in which case victory is as valuable as throwing higher numbers of points in a dice game.35

Cyrano may have enjoyed battles for a while, but by the time he wrote "Les états de la lune," he must have changed his mind about the value of war. His statements about victory indicate that his feelings toward war were less than sympathetic. Cyrano can hardly be called a pacifist, but it does seem likely that he had developed a revulsion against all the misery pro-
duced by constant warfare. This lunar conversation about war can be considered a plea to his fellowmen to consider why they were fighting and what fighting could accomplish. It also appears to be a way of asking that needless bloodshed be stopped.

It may seem curious that Cyrano, the duelist, should question the value of France's attempts to become glorious through battle. The contrast between approving of dueling and disapproving of war disappears, however, if one assumes that private and social morality are two different things. Exposing oneself to danger on the grounds of honor is very different from a ruler's or general's request that a number of men (most probably excluding the man who makes the request) expose themselves to danger in order to capture territory. This difference seems to be forgotten by many people today, but Cyrano apparently recognized it. Moreover, it is not certain just how he did feel about dueling. Although in the letter, "Le duelliste," he boasts of his prowess, he also says that he has been fighting as a second, and in "Contre un poltron," he takes the position, albeit somewhat sarcastically, that dueling is pointless. It is possible that while Cyrano was a skilled duelist, he was not so enthusiastic about dueling as some of the tales about him would indicate. Another possibility is that the tales about Cyrano's dueling are largely fictitious, or that if he dueled, he did so only infrequently. Richelieu made dueling illegal, and one might
expect that a duelist of the fame legend credits to Cyrano would have gotten into trouble. The ordinance against dueling was not strictly enforced; so someone who dueled infrequently would not have legal difficulties. On the other hand, it seems likely that a renowned and open duelist would be punished as an example to others. Nothing which has been read about Cyrano indicates that he had any legal problems because of his dueling.

Cyrano valued life, both in philosophical and in concrete terms. On the moon, noblemen wear a bronze phallus as noblemen in France wore swords. When Drycona asks about this practice, he is told that it is a far greater sign of nobility to create life than to destroy it:

... les grands de votre Monde [the earth] sont enragés de faire parade d'un instrument qui désigne un bourreau et qui n'est forge que pour nous detuire, enfin l'ennemi juré de tout ce qui vit; et de cacher, au contraire, un membre sans qui nous serions au rang de ce qui n'est pas, le Prométhée de chaque animal, et reparerateur infatigable des faiblesses de la Nature! Malheureuse contrée, où les marques de generation sont ignominieuses, et où celles d'aneantissement sont honorables. Cependant vous appelez ce membre-là des parties honteuses, comme s'il y avait quelque chose de plus glorieux que de donner la vie, et rien de plus infâme que de l'ôter!37

On the moon, as may be expected, sexual morality is considerably different from that on earth. Sexual relations are completely free, and a woman can even sue a man for refusing her. The young man on the moon finds earthly emphasis on chastity hard to understand. He thinks that it is unnatural and particularly condemns religious celibacy. Socrates'
daemon, however, jokingly defends continence on the grounds that otherwise man would have quickly become so enervated that the world would have ended after Adam's great-nephew. More seriously, the daemon says that continence functions on earth as a way of keeping the population in proportion to the food supply. 38

Drycona also finds out about sexual mores in the Kingdom of Lovers on the sun. There sex is a serious part of life. All girls of thirteen and boys of sixteen live for a year in a state dormitory. During the year, they experiment with love and sex, and at the end of this period, doctors decide which man should marry, how many wives he can have (the limit is forty), and what sort of woman a man should have for a wife. Though the system does begin with a year of freedom, thereafter regulations are enforced in the interest of health and eugenics. A form of eugenics is also practiced on the moon, but its purpose is only to give Cyrano an opportunity to defend his nose. On the moon a large nose is considered a sign of a spiritual, courteous, affable, generous, and liberal man. Those with flat noses are expected to have opposite characteristics, and they are castrated because moon people want to prevent the reproduction of bad traits. Health, however, is important on the moon, but instead of having doctors to cure the sick, lunar inhabitants have what Cyrano calls physiognomists to keep people well. The physiognomist makes decisions about such things as diet and sleeping
conditions. As far as Cyrano was concerned, anything, whether doctors with a clinical interest in sex or physiognomists, would be better than doctors on earth, who, Cyrano thought, served only to make men miserable. His letter, "Contre les médecins," is a long diatribe against doctors, who torment a man's body and later murder him.  

Another frequent topic in Cyrano's work is family relations. Cyrano probably did not get along well with his father, and much of his commentary on family life revolves around differences between generations. Also, it should be remembered that Cyrano died at thirty-six, and "Les états de la lune" was finished around the time he was thirty. It is the young who are treated with respect on the moon, and fathers obey their sons as soon as the sons have reached the age of reason. The young are respected and listened to because they have imagination to envisage new ways of doing things and strength to accomplish their goals. The audacity and ardor of the young heighten a project's chances of success; and, moreover, only the young have the enthusiasm needed to fight for justice and noble causes. Even on earth, Hercules, Achilles, Alexander, and Caesar did most of their work before they were 40 years old. The old, on the other hand, are too cautious, have too little imagination, and their prudence is nothing more than the result of apprehensive panic. Besides, one should honor intelligence rather than senility.

Moon people conclude that earthly customs requiring the young to respect the old must have been instituted by old
men who were afraid of losing their authority. Respect ought to be accorded only to those who deserve respect through their actions; and if bad people are respected, no good purpose is served, a likely occurrence if the young live under an injunction to respect their parents, no matter what sort of people the parents are. The argument that one owes one's being to one's parents is silly; Socrates' daemon goes so far as to say,

Encore je voudrais bien savoir si vos parens songoient à vous quand ils vous firent? Hélas, point du tout! et toutefois vous croyez leur être oblige d'un present qu'ils vous ont fait sans y penser. Comment parce que votre père fut si paillard qu'il ne put resister aux beaux yeux de je ne sais quelle creature, qu'il en fit le marche pour assouvir la passion... vous revererez ce volupteux comme un de sept Sages de Grèce. 41

Furthermore, one only gets one's body from one's parents, to whom one was born simply by chance. The daemon freely admits that this argument for children disrespecting their parents is exaggerated; exaggeration is necessary to redress the balance between generations, however, because parents now have a tyrannical hold over their children. The parent-child relationship must have been a bitter one for Cyrano, for such complaints recur. The power which the old have over the young is one of the forms of slavery the prosecutor in the birds' kingdom refers to when he discusses the servile nature of men. 42

Money was a source of a number of Cyrano's problems and may account for some of the bitterness he directs toward
parents. Cyrano's father, Abel de Cyrano, may not have supplied any aid when the younger Cyrano was in financial difficulties, and it is not unlikely that Abel de Cyrano cited the financial support already given to Savinien de Cyrano when he was a youth. Savinien de Cyrano tries to work out a system in which such incidents would not occur. On the sun, in the Kingdom of Lovers, the state will raise a child if the parents are financially unable to do so. State upbringing is rare, however, because the state annually budgets money for family allowances which are given to parents for the education of their children. 43

A common form of inheritance on earth, primogeniture, is also criticized by Cyrano. Primogeniture is a form of injustice, and fathers make a mistake when they try to perpetuate themselves by leaving everything to the eldest. In God's eyes, the eldest and the youngest are equally valuable, and fathers should follow God's example. In this case, Cyrano apparently was not criticizing his father. Though the possibility of course exists that Abel de Cyrano at one time considered settling his estate by primogeniture, by the time of Abel de Cyrano's death, Savinien de Cyrano was the oldest of the surviving children, and the estate was divided between Savinien and Abel II. 44

Respect for parents and inheritance do not seem today to be of quite the same importance as war, man's place in the universe, or the structure of the universe. Oddly enough,
Cyrano's statements about respect and inheritance must have contained elements of controversy because much of what he said on these subjects was deleted from the 1657 edition of *L'autre monde*, while his comments about war, man's place in the universe, and the structure of the universe survived Le Bret's editing in nearly complete form. The only topics considered in this chapter which were deleted were the discussion of chastity, one discussion relating man's pride and his belief in immortality (though the section on the cabbages survived), and the comments on respect and inheritance. Apparently, these were topics of some importance. Whatever their specific importance for the seventeenth century, they can be interpreted as a part of Cyrano's emphasis on freedom; the young should be able to express themselves more freely, and all children should be able to share in the economic freedom an inheritance could give them.

* * * * *

A great many topics have been considered in this chapter, and to a large extent these topics are interrelated. A short summary of the various ideas should be helpful, then, to anyone who wishes to grasp the pattern of Cyrano's thoughts about science and man.

In the first place, Cyrano is an ardent supporter of the concept that matter is made up of atoms. Since Cyrano studied under Gassendi, who was the foremost exponent of Epicureanism
in France at the time, his attitude is not surprising. The number of times atomism is used as an explanatory principle in Cyrano's works illustrates the extent to which he was influenced by this theory. Creation is explained in terms of the movement of atoms; so is magnetism. Men are made up of atoms as well, and they behave the way they do and have the sense perceptions they have because of the action of atoms.

Cyrano may not know why the earth rotates, but he is certain of both diurnal rotation and the revolution of the earth around the sun. A strong advocate of heliocentricity, he is important as a propagandist for the new science, one who sugarcoated astronomy with a bit of sex and a few impieties. Also, he advocates a particular methodology for science. The sceptics and Descartes had grave doubts about the value of sense perception and the extent of real knowledge. Cyrano maintained that both the senses and reason could be put to good use in science, neither being sufficient by itself. Furthermore, Cyrano saw the need for explaining natural phenomena in terms of natural causes. That is, the mechanism for change should be part of nature, not external to it. Therefore, God, at least the orthodox God, who is not a part of nature, should not be used in any attempts to understand nature.

Heliocentricity is a part of the new science Cyrano supports, but it has a larger significance in his writings.
The sun is the center, around which life revolves and upon which life is dependent, but it is also part of an infinite and eternal universe. Cyrano develops his ideas about the nature of the universe in two ways, both ways leading to statements about man.

Because man is related to the sun through his dependence upon it and because the sun is part of a larger system, man is in some way related to the whole cosmos. Here, again, atomism is important, for since man and the universe are composed of atoms (Cyrano assumes atoms to be the same throughout the universe), man is identified with the rest of the universe. He, like a star or a tree, is made up of atoms and, on this level, is no different from them. Differences stem solely from the number and kind of atoms in the objects. Thus man is a part of nature, just as a tree or a star is a part of nature. Physical phenomena have the same source and may share in a common intelligence, for if man, a conjunction of atoms, reasons, who is to say that another conjunction of atoms does not reason. Cyrano also raises the question of what reason is. Is it, for example, use of language? If so, who decides what is language and what is not. Or is reason simply something that many groups possess, even though one group denies that another possesses it? Man thinks that he alone reasons, but the moon people doubted Drycona's ability to reason, and the birds thought all men incapable of any but the most rudimentary forms of reason.
The other course Cyrano takes is a direct treatment of man's place in a heliocentric and infinite universe. If one no longer recognizes the earth as the center of all things, one must realize that man is not the focal point of the universe. Man needs to adjust his beliefs in order to have a more appropriate and better proportioned view of his place. He should no longer be like a nightingale on a spit, imagining that the roasting fire turns around him. Instead, man ought to see himself as part of a great whole and so lose his sense of pride. Man's self-centeredness and cruelty, his belief that his reason and perceptions make him superior, and his belief that only he is immortal should all disappear. Cyrano asks for an improvement in men's ideas and behavior, and he asks as well for a better life. Equality, responsibility on the part of political leaders, and an end to constant war are set forth as means by which man may better the way he lives, as are greater respect for life and greater freedom in ways of living.
V

CONCLUSION: CYRANO'S PLACE
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Cyrano's writings, especially those examined at length in this thesis, center around four main subjects: religion, reason, science, and man. Cyrano criticizes orthodox religious beliefs about the nature of God and the soul, offering his readers the alternative of an immanent vital force which acts in an eternal, infinite universe. Besides attacking the beliefs of the Church, he attacks the Church's stupid and sometimes evil priests and its repressive use of authority, which hampers the investigation and development of ideas. Cyrano thinks that reason and imagination should be free, whether this means allowing the development of a new set of scientific ideas or simply allowing a man his own beliefs.

Reason has a double function. It is a faculty of the mind, which should be unconstrained. It is also an approach to problems, and in this sense may be called reasonableness. The approach is used throughout Cyrano's work, for reasonableness is the main criterion by which Cyrano decides what is worthy of belief or support. Cyrano finds that some dogmas (bodily resurrection, for example) and many Biblical stories are not reasonable; so he ridicules them. Also, this type of reason, along with tolerance, is needed to combat such occurrences as the executions of innocent people charged with sorcery. Belief in sorcery or witchcraft is unreasonable, and Cyrano fights it with humor, logic, and common sense. Scientific theories are no more exempt than the activities of
the Church from Cyrano's use of the criterion of reasonableness. Acceptable theories must be reasonable ones that employ only natural causes as explanatory principles. Heliocentricity, with the diurnal rotation it involves, and atomism fit these requirements; Cyrano, therefore, both espouses and popularizes them. It should be noted, however, that reason as a faculty of the mind is also of immense importance to science because it must be used jointly with observation in the formulation of theories.

When Cyrano deals with man, what he is and his place in the universe, both forms of reason are important. He raises two questions about reason as a faculty. First, he wonders about the exact nature of reason, and second, dissatisfied with man's belief that he is the only possessor of reason, he brings up the problem of the extent to which reason may be found in the world. Although Cyrano never makes a straightforward statement that other beings in nature, besides man, reason, he does make his feeling clear that man does not have sufficient information to claim sole possession. A reason that suffuses the world would be consistent with but not necessary to Cyrano's belief in an immanent God, and Cyrano seems unwilling to carry his type of pantheism so far. In Cyrano's view, there may be reason in nature, but his God remains much more a god of life than a god of reason. Man's sense of superiority can be diminished by accepting the idea that reason might be found in nature, and Cyrano tries
to diminish it further by considering man in terms of the reasonableness of man's claims about himself. In doing so, Cyrano finds that man's self-centeredness is out of all proportion to his position in the universe; nor are man's beliefs in his superiority and immortality valid. Social organization, political behavior, and morality are also sadly lacking in rationality.

Cyrano's ideas are not entirely original, of course. He was greatly affected by current ideas. In order to determine Cyrano's place in seventeenth century intellectual history a consideration of how he was influenced by the dominant patterns of thought is necessary. The questions are to what extent he was a part of the sceptical tradition and to what extent a man who relied on the teachings of Italian nature philosophers.

Montaigne is the great figure in French scepticism, and a brief comparison of his ideas with those of Cyrano will quickly illustrate Cyrano's connections with scepticism. Montaigne, especially in the essay "Apologie de Raimond Sébond", questions man's rationality, asking both about man's possession of reason and about the reasonableness of his attitudes. Man's natural state, as far as Montaigne is concerned, is ignorance, and while man can try to gain knowledge, he will not be able to find meaning. Many facts can be compiled, but this body of material will contain so many different things that attempts to understand them will be in vain. Such attempts
are no more than presumptuous, and Montaigne agrees with Epictetus' statement that man can know nothing except his opinions. Moreover, man's abilities to perceive and to reason are faulty and changeable; so man should recognize that he is a poor, miserable creature, who cannot even rely on his senses because they, too, are faulty. Life is to be no more highly valued than reason. Though Montaigne softened somewhat his earlier Stoic belief that one should actively prepare to meet death and withdrew his support for suicide, his attachment to life never became a strong one. His later position was that if one lived well, one would naturally know how to die well and that death was not an important occurrence. To live well meant to Montaigne to live in temperance and justice; he thought, as well, that the state of wisdom was one of complete serenity. Such tranquility can be achieved primarily through obedience both to law, which one should not try to change, and to God. All evil, he notes, comes from man's first disobedience, i.e. his desire to know good and evil, and Montaigne considers that belief in knowledge is the scourge of man.¹

Cyrano can hardly be called a disciple of Montaigne; yet he did follow Montaigne's lead when dealing with the relative positions of men and animals. Cyrano recognized that man's claims to superiority were not firmly based, and the satirical spirit in which he treated man's illusions resembles in Montaigne's. This is the point at which Cyrano is closest
to scepticism. Otherwise, Cyrano separated himself from the stream of thought that Montaigne represents. His ideas about the value of life, about how man should live, about the virtue of obedience and faith are all radically different from Montaigne's. Cyrano glorified life, and the spirit of acquiescence that pervades Montaigne's essays is completely missing in Cyrano's works. Cyrano replaces faith with reason, nowhere writes of serenity as part of a good life, and generally takes the position that one should work for the improvement of man's condition. While Montaigne would like such an improvement, he apparently wanted any changes to come through changes in men's attitudes; Cyrano was willing to go further, to support changes in the political and social structure.

Cyrano also disagreed entirely with Montaigne's statements about the validity of scientific knowledge, even though he realized that both reason and sense perception were faulty. Cyrano never explicitly stated his epistemological position, but it is clear that his recognition of the limits of man's ability never resulted in anything approaching Montaigne's pyrrhonic doubt. Reason was not infallible, but it was worthwhile and could produce useful knowledge.

Cyrano's realization that reason or knowledge is fallible but still valuable links him with the Italian nature philosophers. No one of these philosophers stands out the way Montaigne does; so both Bruno and Campanella will be used for comparison. Bruno will illustrate the more philosophic
positions, and Campanella is useful because he lived in Paris for a while and because he is Drycona's guide in "Les états du soleil." Cyrano's ideas about the uses of reason and sense perception are similar to those of Bruno, who said that reason should be used to moderate sense impression and who wrote, "It is the part of the intellect to judge, yielding due weight to factors absent and separated by distance of time and by space intervals." At the same time, the senses should be used to stimulate and to aid reason.² Cyrano shared other of Bruno's ideas; Bruno, for example, believed in the existence of an infinity of worlds in an infinite, eternal universe. However, both of these men may have found this idea in Lucretius. Bruno was greatly influenced by Lucretius,³ and Cyrano, as one of Gassendi's students, would surely have read On the Nature of Things. Even if Cyrano were first influenced by Lucretius, Bruno's support of the concept of an infinity of worlds in an infinite, eternal universe may have reinforced Cyrano's belief. In addition, Bruno had a sense of the importance of life, which could, he thought, be found on worlds other than the earth; and the similarity of Bruno's and Cyrano's God is evident from this statement from De immenso:

The one infinite is perfect, in simplicity, of itself, absolutely, nor can aught be greater or better. This is the one Whole, God, universal nature, occupying all space, of whom naught but infinity can give the perfect image or semblance. ⁴

The similarity is further enhanced by Bruno's possible identification of sun and divinity; in one of his sonnets he uses
the phrases "sun" and "divine Light" as appositives.\(^5\)

The sun, of course, figured in Campanella's work, and the "City of the Sun" may have inspired "Les états du soleil." Yet Cyrano did not always follow Campanella's example. Campanella did not set out to popularize science, his city being on earth; he was more interested in setting forth an ideal social and political structure, which is also an allegorical one. The people in the City of the Sun are governed by magistrates chosen because of their evident proficiency. Campanella does not clarify the method of choosing lower-ranking officials, but the higher ones are chosen by the priests who are the heads of the government. Yet Campanella's city is not a theocracy in the usual sense, for the heads of state are Metaphysic, Power, Wisdom, and Love. Within this allegorical structure, there is a form of democracy since leaders of the bands into which the citizenry is divided meet regularly, and some of the magistrates may be changed if the people so desire. Nevertheless, because of the allegorical nature of the government, a valid comparison of ideas of government and society in Campanella's and Cyrano's writings cannot be made. Some specific points can be compared, however. Cyrano does not share Campanella's ideas about war, for Campanella pictures a state in which all receive military training and one which frequently fights with its neighbors, since the neighbors live impiously. The City of the Sun always wins. Nevertheless,
when the citizens are not being warlike, they show respect for life and believe in a sensitive nature. When the city was formed, many did not want to kill either animals or plants, but they changed their minds after they found that they would die of hunger if they were not willing to kill for food. While they recognized that such killing was an injustice, they felt that it was a necessary one. Moreover, learning, including scientific subjects, is emphasized in the training of young people, and the people do not believe Aristotle's teachings but do believe those of Socrates and Plato. Cyrano could easily have been influenced by Campanella's ideas about sensitivity in nature, and some on the moon agreed that it would be foolish to wait until animals and plants died before eating them. The closeness between Cyrano's and Campanella's evaluation of the teachings of Greek philosophers is clear.

Cyrano both agrees and disagrees with the concepts of God and the universe Campanella sets forth in the "City of the Sun." Campanella says that the world is not eternal but created by God; however, the universe is infinite and interrelated. Campanella states, "The world is a great animal, and we live within it as worms live within us." This simile is echoed by a philosopher in "Les états de la lune" who says that the universe is like an animal and man's position in it is comparable to lice that might have a human body for a world. Also, in "Les états du soleil" Campanella repeats a
statement made in "City of the Sun," that the sun is the
father. The sun, for Campanella as for Cyrano, is a mani-
festation of God, and the people in the City of the Sun
venerate but do not adore the sun. Yet the distinction is
a small one:

They contemplate and know God under the image of
the Sun, and they call it the Sign of God, His
face and living imago, by means of which light,
heat, life, and the makings of all things . . .
proceed.9

Although this part of their religious belief is consistent
with what Cyrano later said, there are some important differ-
ences. The people in the City of the Sun believe in immortality and a trinitarian, if unorthodox, God, whose forms are
Power, Wisdom, and Love.10

It is clear that Cyrano used the traditions of scepticism
and naturalism both. He rejected the main tenet of scepticism,
thoroughgoing distrust of reason, and only took the sceptics' ideas about the ridiculousness of man's belief in his super-
iority. His tie with naturalism is considerably closer, but
while he adopted a number of the ideas Bruno and Campanella expressed, his intentions were different. He was not expounding scientific ideas, but popularizing them, and though he
wrote fantasy, he did not write in allegorical terms, his
comments about society being somewhat more pertinent to seven-
teenth century Europe than Campanella's.

Additionally, Cyrano was influenced by French contempor-
aries. He learned about Epicurianism from Gassendi, and much
of his physics may derive from Jacques Rohault, a Cartesian. Naude's work on demonology must have shaped Cyrano's ideas about sorcerers and witches. There are, as well, minor borrowings which indicate fairly extensive reading and multiple minor influences. For example, Astolfo finds Paradise on the moon in Orlando Furioso and there encounters Enoch and Elijah, but the Paradise sections in Ariosto and Cyrano serve entirely different purposes. Also, Francis Godwin wrote of an imaginary trip to the moon, in The Man in the Moone, which was translated into French and published in Paris in 1648. Cyrano may have gotten the idea of moon people speaking in musical tones from Godwin, but this is the most important borrowing. The only other similarity is that on Godwin's moon, while people die natural deaths, there is feasting to commemorate death.

Nor should Lucian's influence on Cyrano be underestimated. Cyrano used little of Lucian's material directly. The only instance of this is that inhabitants of the moon in "Los états de la lune" eat, or more precisely, are nourished, by smelling their food. Cyrano, however, is closely linked with Lucian in spirit. He is like Lucian in his use of satire and irony and in his use of reason to discredit unreasonableness. Lucian ridiculed the power of the gods in "Some Awkward Questions for Zeus" by pointing out inconsistencies and logical flaws, and this sketch, as well as many others, could easily have served as models for many of Cyrano's criticisms, whether
religious or social. The main difference between Lucian and Cyrano is that Lucian showed the value of reasonableness but did not propagandize for or popularize specific ideas. Cyrano, of course, not only valued reasonableness, but also attempted to popularize scientific ideas, expounded a particular religious view, and recommended ways in which a better man (a tolerant, reasonable man who recognized his relatedness to nature) could live in a better world. In Cyrano's works, use of reason and respect for life, or being in all states, are the underlying themes.

* * * *

Now that Cyrano's ideas have been described and analyzed, one can clear up the matter of whether or not he was a libertin, and can go on to define Cyrano's place in seventeenth century intellectual history. Of the definitions of libertinage considered in the first chapter, Pintard's seems the best, in many respects. There is a rigidity to it which is not found in Spink; nevertheless, of Spink's two categories of libertins, only one, the one that is similar to Pintard's definition, is a valid one. If one accepts Pintard's definition, then there is no reason to call Cyrano a libertin. Cyrano was a free thinker, but otherwise his relationship with libertinage as Pintard characterizes it is tenuous. Cyrano did follow the libertins in supporting heliocentricity and atomism and in fighting superstition. He did not, however, adopt a fideistic position, favor absolutism, or distrust people as a
Instead, Cyrano has been compared with Diderot by several writers because of his boldness in developing materialistic theories, and it has been pointed out that Cyrano was one of the few who was not afraid to speak out in support of his beliefs.  

Jacques Denis indicates a way to separate Cyrano from libertinage (though Denis considers him a libertin). Denis says that except for Cyrano, 

... on peut dire que le caractère de tous les libres penseurs d'alors est de n'aimer que pour eux-mêmes la philosophie et la liberté.  

Denis considers this attitude the reason for the impotence of libertinage, and he adds that the libertins could not have really loved truth or liberty since they tried to keep these only for themselves. Harvey makes a similar point. He contrasts Cyrano with Gassendi and Descartes, saying that Cyrano alone was not timid on the subject of liberty. Also Harvey thinks that Cyrano's main contribution was to the development of an ethic in which freedom and reason were important.

Additional reasons exist for separating Cyrano from libertinage. He is not really part of the group because of some of the issues he discusses—politics and social organization, for instance. Only Naude, of the four libertins discussed in the first chapter, was interested in politics, and his interest was generated by his fear that the state would collapse. Cyrano, on the other hand, instead of trying to salvage as much as possible of the present state, wanted
to improve it. Cyrano can also be distinguished from the *libertins* because of the way in which he discusses issues. He showed an unusual readiness to handle new ideas and displayed what has been called exceptional independence of thought. He openly criticized established patterns of belief and behavior and revealed a strong anti-authoritarian attitude. Both his criticism and his attitude are foreign to *libertinage* since most *libertins* expressed criticisms only among friends and thought that a strong authority was necessary to control the people.

Furthermore, Cyrano can be removed from *libertinage* on the grounds that he popularized science and a materialistic philosophy. The *libertins* did not. In the first place, a popularizer cannot be imbued with the distrust, almost fear, of the people that many *libertins* showed, for there is no reason to spread ideas if one does not consider people capable of using them. Besides a certain trust in human abilities generally, the role of popularizer also indicates an optimistic view of the world and of the future, since it is pointless to propagate for beliefs that are not thought helpful and that will not produce change. That is, in contrast to Pascal, one should consider man and the world and

...prendre possession, dans la bonne santé de l'âme, au nom de l'humanité, de ce nouvel univers et de ce silence éternel de l'espace infini que ne les effrayait pas.19

Where Pascal feels anguish, Cyrano sees opportunity, and
because of his optimism, his belief that man can be more reasonable and can lead a better life, he turns toward the future instead of the past and tries to change behavior and ideas. Cyrano did not share in the libertins' indifference toward the world, just as he did not belong to the libertins' cult of antiquity.

Cyrano, therefore, is so different from the libertins that he cannot usefully be considered part of libertinage. He is a free thinker, but the technical use of the term libertin is not applicable. It might be argued that he could be placed with the Enlightenment philosophes because of the similarity, already noted, between him and Diderot. Cyrano's manner of presenting his material is like Diderot's, especially in the latter's "Supplement to Bougainville's Voyage" and "D'Alembert's Dream," and Cyrano's position on such questions as science, morals, and being is close to Diderot's. Nevertheless, though Cyrano could be called, without injustice, a seventeenth century Diderot, grouping Cyrano with eighteenth century philosophes would be as much of a mistake as placing Cyrano with the libertins. If he is to be classed with any others, he should be grouped with Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) and Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657-1757). Chronologically, such a classification is quite as reasonable as considering Cyrano a libertin, for there is no greater difference in age between Cyrano and these two men than between Cyrano and the four libertins who have been discussed.
A spirit of critical rationalism, applied to religious belief, sorcery, and morality, links Cyrano to Bayle and Fontenelle. Bayle in his *Dictionnaire* argues that reasonableness should be the criterion by which morals and religion are judged. In "David," he criticizes David's morals in terms of what is reported in the Bible, and besides making literal scriptural interpretation appear ridiculous, he uses reason to show that David's actions were not good; murder remains murder, even if the murderer happens to be the Lord's annointed. "Pyrrho" is a development of the idea that Christian theology is not rational and also an argument against the acceptance of what Bayle considers unreasonable evidence. Fontenelle in *Origine des fables* and *Histoire des oracles* treats myths and religion in a similar fashion. Fontenelle thought fables arose from man's ignorance, his imagination, and his desire to tell a good story. Oracles and pagan religion took hold among people because people were excited by mystery and the marvelous, in addition to their having a need for certainty. Moreover, some people (e.g., priests and priestesses) had positions to safeguard, and material interests were involved. When these sections of Bayle's and Fontenelle's works are compared with Cyrano's writings, particularly those on Christian belief and sorcery, the similarity is striking. Fontenelle, however, did use a comparative approach that is absent in Cyrano's work, except when Cyrano made imaginary comparisons. Also Cyrano was bolder than either Bayle or Fontenelle; he
neither buried his criticisms in footnotes nor hesitated to draw explicit parallels.

Cyrano is particularly similar to Fontenelle as a popularizer of science, especially Copernican astronomy. Fontenelle, in his *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes*, argued for many of the same things that Cyrano had. He wrote of stars being worlds or suns with worlds around them, explained the revolution of the planets around the sun, and commented that the geocentric idea of the universe was simply an illustration of man's vanity. Not only did he think that there were inhabitants on other worlds; he even raises Cyrano's point that people on the moon may call where they live earth and where man lives, the moon.²¹

There is, however, an important difference between Cyrano's defense of the new science and Fontenelle's. Cyrano did not have a consistent rationale for his defense. Sometimes his ideas about the universe were recommended because they were reasonable; sometimes they were simply stated as matter of fact. When he did provide a rationale, it was the mystical one of the interrelatedness of the universe. Much of Fontenelle appears more modern than Cyrano because Fontenelle did have a consistent theory and because the theory is much closer to what many people today believe. Fontenelle used mechanistic, rather than organismic, imagery, comparing nature to an opera in which the mechanism for things seen in the performance was hidden backstage, and he supported Coperni-
can theories because they were uniform and simple. This shift in rationale is probably an important one for the development of science, for if the interrelatedness of the whole of nature is emphasized, it becomes hard to justify separating a part of nature, small enough for man to comprehend, from the whole. If one considers nature as a mechanism, however, one is almost encouraged to take it apart and see how it works.

Fontenelle has been described as a transitional figure who was important because he extended scientific method to the study of man and human affairs, and this extension has been considered the first step in the development of the philosophes movement. If science is taken to mean a process whereby reason and observation are used to formulate a hypothesis which is then tested against phenomena, Cyrano also applied a scientific attitude to the study of man and human affairs. Like Fontenelle, he was interested in science and man's behavior both.

Cyrano should be considered part of the vanguard of the Enlightenment, just as Bayle and Fontenelle are. He is somewhat less sophisticated than they and seems rather more foreign to a modern reader because of his pantheistic naturalism. Nonetheless, it is far better to classify him as an early philosophes than as a libertin in the technical usage of that term. The libertins turned their backs on the future, and one may call libertinage the dying breath of the Renaissance.
Cyrano, instead, like Bayle and Fontenelle, is one of the transitional figures that give continuity to intellectual history. One after another, first Cyrano, then Bayle, then Fontenelle, they illustrate and encouraged the changes in ways of thinking which took place between the Renaissance of the sixteenth century and the Enlightenment of the eighteenth.
FOOTNOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY
FOOTNOTES

Chapter I


8. Ibid., I, 560.


12. Ibid., see pp. 60-62.


39. "Modernisme," pp. 45-48; *Libertinage érudit*, I, 567-568. Besides *libertinage*, Pintard also uses the term *libertinage érudit* to distinguish the philosophers and thinkers from the libertines. In his work, however, he does not concern himself with the libertines.


Chapter II


5. Ibid., pp. 163-167.


10. Ibid., I, xxviii-xxx.

11. Ibid., I, xxx-xxxi.


14. Oeuvres diverses, p. 33. Here and wherever else necessary in quotation from Cyrano, I have changed spellings to conform with modern usage.


20. Ibid., I, xli-xlii.
23. Oeuvres diverses, p. 96.
29. Cyrano, Oeuvres diverses, p. i.
32. Ibid., II, 247-248.
33. Ibid., II, 248.
34. Ibid., II, 252-278.
35. Ibid., I, lxii, lxxvi-lxxvii, lxx-1xxii, lxxxvi.
36. Ibid., II, 278-279.
37. Ibid., I, lxxxvi, II, 288-289.
38. Cyrano, Oeuvres diverses, p. 95.
42. Ibid., pp. 31-32, 43-56.
44. Ibid., II, 279.
53. Ibid., I, xci.
56. Ibid., I, xci-xcii.
57. Ibid., I, xciii.
58. Ibid., I, xciii.
60. Brun, *Cyrano, sa vie*, pp. iii-v.
64. Ferdinand Castets, *Cyrano de Bergerac: conférence prononcée au Cercle Artistique de Montpellier* (Montpellier, 1900), pp. 18-19. Hereafter cited as *Conférence*. 
65. Ibid., p. 51.


68. Busson, La Pensee Religieuse, p. 43.


70. H. G. Harvey, "Cyrano de Bergerac and the Question of Human Liberties," Symposium, IV, i (May, 1950), 123. Hereafter cited as "Human Liberties."
Chapter III


2. Ibid., p. 106.


11. Ibid., pp. 28-29.


13. Ibid., p. 56.


17. *L'autre monde*, pp. 65-67; *Oeuvres diverses*, p. 120.


20. Ibid., p. 59.

21. Ibid., p. 64.

22. *Oeuvres diverses*, p. 47.
Chapter IV

1. L’autre monde, p. 169.
2. Ibid., pp. 13-14.
3. Ibid., p. 13.
4. Ibid., p. 19.
5. Ibid., p. 162. See pp. 19, 161-162 for Cyrano’s account of changing gravitational pulls.
6. Ibid., p. 150.
7. Ibid., pp. 148-149.
8. Ibid., pp. 11-12.
9. Ibid., p. 15.
12. Gamow, One Two Three…Infinity, pp. 286-293.
14. Gamow, One Two Three…Infinity, pp. 286-293.
15. L’autre monde, pp. 150, 16-17, 153-157.
19. Ibid., pp. 36-37, 238.
22. Ibid., pp. 14, 100-101.
23. Ibid., pp. 76-79.
24. Ibid., pp. 57-59, 41.
27. Ibid., pp. 180-181.
28. Ibid., 132-133, 185, 188-190.
29. Ibid., pp. 190-192.
30. Ibid., pp. 185-186.
31. Oeuvres libertines, II, 276-278.
33. Ibid., pp. 60-61.
34. Ibid., p. 61.
35. Ibid., pp. 61-63.
37. L'autre monde, p. 98.
38. Ibid., pp. 63, 73-75.
39. L'autre monde, pp. 238-239, 97, 79; Oeuvres diverses, pp. 135-140.
40. L'autre monde, pp. 68-70.
41. Ibid., p. 71.
42. Ibid., pp. 71-73, 190.
43. Ibid., pp. 239.
44. L'autre monde, pp. 99-100; Oeuvres libertines, xxvi, II-lviii.
Chapter V


5. Ibid., p. 248.


7. Ibid., 178.


10. Ibid, p. 179.


14. See Denis, Sceptiques ou libertins, p. 71; Faguet, Histoire, p. 271; Busson, Pensee Religieuse, p. 289, 313.

15. Sceptiques ou libertins, p. 73.


BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Cyrano's Works


This is one of a number of recent editions in which spellings have been brought up to date. The full text is given, with originally deleted material italicized, but no variants are included.


This edition contains all of Cyrano's "Lettres diverses," "Lettres satiriques," and "Lettres amoureuses," "Entretiens pointus," "Le pédant joue," and "La mort d'Agrippine." Some variants in manuscripts and editions are included.


This is the most nearly complete of any edition of Cyrano's work. The Bibliothèque Nationale manuscript of L'autre monde is printed in full with the variants of the Munich manuscript and the 1657 edition. Sections deleted from the work when it was printed are indicated by italics. "Le pédant joue," "La mort d'Agrippine," "Entretiens pointus," the mazarinades and "Contre les fondeurs" are printed in full, but only a selection of Cyrano's "Lettres" are included. Lachèvre supplies a long biographical notice and a number of useful documents and appendices.


Aldington translates into English the complete text of L'autre monde and has a biographical introduction. No indication of deleted material is given.

II. List of Works Consulted


Atkinson is concerned mainly with terrestrial voyages.


--- *The Happy Beast in French Thought of the Seventeenth Century*. Baltimore, 1933.


Castots, Ferdinand, *Cyrano de Bergerac: conférence prononcée au Cercle Artistique de Montpellier*. Montpellier, 1900.


Harvey, N. G., "Cyrano de Bergerac and the Question of Human Liberties," *Symposium*, IV, i (May, 1950).


Magne shows errors of documentation in Rostand's play.


This is a review of Lachèvre's edition of Cyrano's *Les oeuvres libertines*.

Although the book covers the seventeenth century, "libertin" is not used in its technical sense; instead, Mongrédié writes of libertines.


Half of Pujos' book is a biographical sketch of Cyrano, and the other a summary of Rostand's play.

Rogers, Cameron, Cyrano. New York, 1929.

The author indicates in the preface that this book is intended as a biography, but it is largely fiction.


An essay contrasting Cyrano with Pascal and some documents on libertinage are included.