FUNCTIONAL RHETORIC IN JEAN GENET:
A STUDY OF VERBAL MANIPULATION IN
LES NEGRES AND LE BALCON

by

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B.A., University of Washington, 1967
M.A., University of Washington, 1968

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of French)

We accept this thesis as conforming:
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
April, 1976

Peggy Courtney de Broux, 1976
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ABSTRACT

Among twentieth-century French playwrights, Jean Genet is one of the more elusive. His major plays, Le Balcon, Les Nègres and Les Paravents, have elicited much literary criticism. However, seldom have critics closely examined the grammatical function of language in Genet's dramatic dialogue. This study attempts to focus upon one particular type of character, discovered through use of language, found in two of Genet's major plays, Les Nègres and Le Balcon. It is an assessment of the manipulating character who uses certain rhetorical devices while attempting persuasion of another character.

The method used borrows from Peter France's book, Racine's Rhetoric (1965), an analysis of language used in seventeenth-century theatre. France's study examines persuasive rhetoric under two different rubrics: persuasive language in which speakers express overt emotions and covert emotions. We are limiting this study to that dialogue in Jean Genet's drama which reveals emotions, leaving to another study its complementary side. Rhetorical devices are here further confined to three groups only: imperatives, exhortations and insults. The study searches Genet's dramatic dialogue for effective uses of these rhetorical devices.
The study examines such functional rhetoric in the two plays wherein manipulating characters are the most apparent, although similar techniques appeared earlier in Genet's shorter works, *Haute surveillance* and *Les Bonnes*. Role-playing, the most obvious in *Les Nègres*, is found to be closely associated with attempted manipulation. *Le Balcon* is next studied, as the persuading characters are less obvious.

The study finds that certain characters in *Les Nègres* and *Le Balcon* attempt—and at times effectively manage—persuasion of other characters by use of imperatives, exhortations and insults. Imperatives are most often used to define a role, to direct role-playing or to define a group goal. Archibald and La Reine use imperatives for these purposes in *Les Nègres*, as does Mme Irma in *Le Balcon*. We also watch L'Envoyé persuade Irma to assume the role of La Reine. Other manipulators in *Le Balcon* are Les Trois Photographes, who define roles for L'Évêque, Le Juge and Le Général. We find that Félicité employs exhortation in order to instill a sense of pride in *les nègres*. We also find that some exhortations—when single words or negatives—are ineffectual admonishment. Vertu attempts to sway Village's narrative in *Les Nègres*, but with negative results. In *Le Balcon*, effective exhortationists are Irma, who manages to frighten Carmen into remaining within *le Grand*
Balcon, and Roger, who attempts to keep Chantal from becoming the figure-head for the insurrection. Irma uses the repeated imperative—clear exhortation—and succeeds: Carmen remains. Roger uses the less forceful exhortation—admonishment—and Chantal eludes him. Even though the admonishing exhortation fails to sway its interlocutor, we find its use reveals a character's psychological motivation. The third rhetorical device, insult, is seen to operate effectively in Les Nègres, as the "hatred of white" is an integral part of the play-within-the-play. There is no equivalent theme in Le Balcon; thus, the use of insult there is reduced to sparse name-calling.

In so examining specific dialogue, the study adds depth to some of the rather puppet-like characters in two of Jean Genet's dramas, adding one facet to existing psychological analysis.

This type of textual examination of dialogue could be rewarding in a future study of its alternate side: dialogue which conceals the emotions. In addition, an evolution may be discovered by examining dialogue in Genet's last play, Les Paravents, where the manipulating character seems to go underground, exchanging role-playing for a more straight-forward type of characterization.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A Thesis Project always involves far more people than the writer, whose ultimate responsibility is, of course, to attempt not to do a disservice either to the subject matter nor to reference material used from the research undertaken. Whatever errors in logic or perception which appear here are the writer's own.

This project has undergone enormous changes since its inception. Several years prior to the incubating ideas, the writer "discovered" Jean Genet through the assistance of Dr. Norman Stokle's graduate seminar on the Theatre of the Absurd at the University of Washington, summer of 1967. Genet's use of language and dramatic form was at once intriguing, so much so that the first thesis idea involved a comparison study: a cycle seen in the drama of Samuel Beckett and Jean Genet which compared with the fictional world of William Faulkner. The scope of such a project precluded its completion, although I should like to thank Dr. Frank Jones, Professor of Comparative Literature and English, University of Washington, and Dr. Joseph Meeker, Chairman of Humanities, Athabasca University, for their continued stimulation of the writer's ideas and for their invaluable criticisms over a period of years.
Thesis Director, Dr. Floyd St-Clair, has given unlimited sympathy and encouragement to the project as it changed form and concept. The present work also owes a great deal to the careful reading and criticisms of both Dr. Harold Knutson and Dr. Frédéric Grover, Professors of French at the University of British Columbia.

And one's family must always put up with the writer's emotional and academic difficulties, as the thesis project wends along its sometime hillocky road. To my husband, Dr. Jay Courtney de Broux, the deepest gratitude for his perceptiveness and kindness. The paper would never have reached a conclusion without his encouragement and pragmatic critical opinion, nor without the understanding of my daughter.

A final note: one can never properly thank that tireless staff, librarians throughout the North American continent, but I would like to give my special thanks to Ann Hutchison, without whose persistent aid in obtaining Inter-Library Loans much of the research material would have been inaccessible.

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Vancouver, B.C. -- 1976
FUNCTIONAL RHETORIC IN JEAN GENET: 
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INTRODUCTION
RHETORIC IN GENERAL AND IN GENET

"Il devra d'abord séduire, ensuite convaincre" -- Genet, Les Nègres

Rhetoric has undergone a seemingly metamorphic career, from the orator's art in ancient Greece, through a formal academic discipline for school children, to a modern "catch-all" for any use of language. It has even retained the derogatory sense of bombast, although this describes only one of its many qualities. Anytime we examine language in a work of literature, we are dealing with one or another form of rhetoric, whether we so name it or not. A study of dialogue, for example, reveals rhetorical patterns which expose psychological motivations of speakers. Does a character use derogatory language? Flattering or commanding speech? Does the character change the tone of his speech by choice of vocabulary, carefully suiting his language to the occasion? Why? These are some of the questions literary critics may ask--and answer--regarding the functional
use of rhetoric in literature.

Some of the greatest figures in world literature can be characterized by their rhetorical patterns. Lear, Hamlet and Phèdre are striking users of metaphor, simile and apostrophe. Faulkner's Quentin Compson (The Sound and the Fury) typically breaks away from central narrative to include information periphrastically. Anouilh's Créon makes brilliant use of logical argumentation as he attempts to sway Antigone. Many of Akutagawa's and Harold Pinter's characters are masters of understatement (litotes). La Princesse de Clèves and Prince Genji both carefully fit their vocabulary to the occasion, as does one of the masters of irony in French literature, Laclos' Valmont. Diderot's neveu de Rameau brilliantly reveals paradox (antithesis) in both his character and his speech. Eliot's Prufrock reveals his hesitating character by choice of images. Baudelaire transforms poetic "ideal" into bird ("L'Albatros"), using metonymy effectively. Dostoevsky's Ivan uses graphic and moving narrative detail to frighten his brother, Aloysha Karamazov. Goethe's Werther revels in pathetic exaggeration, and Rabelais' Gargantua is a creative user of hyperbole, as his lists accumulate epithets. These are just a few examples from world literature which point to the striking uses of rhetorical device.
Traditionally, the art of rhetoric was divided into five categories, these categories meant to instruct the orator: "inventio, the discovery of all the available means of persuasion; dispositio, the plan of the speech; elocutio, style; memoria, memory; and pronunciatio, delivery."\(^1\) The two most relevant categories for an examination of dramatic dialogue are *inventio* and, especially, *elocutio*.

The modern use of the term, rhetoric, is many-faceted, aptly pointed out by Peter France when he writes:

After an eclipse dating back at least as far as the Encyclopedists, but made total by the success of Romantic views of literary creation, rhetoric has been showing signs of new life. In America, where the tradition of formal rhetorical training was strong, the revival of the subject has been proportionately vigorous, but Europe too has been touched by the movement. The word rhetoric is now an accepted part of the critical arsenal, even if it has to do service in a number of rather different causes.

(France, *RH & T*, p. 265)

Just how many "different causes" is only too evident, when one attempts to define "modern rhetoric." Leo Rockas, in his *Modes of Rhetoric*, concisely states the three stages through which this "rhetoric" has evolved, when he writes:

Rhetoric has meant the art of persuasion, of decoration and of composition. The first meaning is classical, the second medieval and Renaissance, the third modern. The modern rhetorician, if he
exists, may rightfully take up any matter of language or discourse left over when the logician and the grammarian have finished—and the three together still form a dubious modern "trivium."

A combination of two of these uses of rhetoric (excluding rhetoric as decoration) is suggested also by Peter France when he lists Edward P. J. Corbett, Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student (New York, 1965), and Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, Modern Rhetoric, 2nd edition (New York, 1958) as being practical guides to the use of rhetoric for speaking and writing. France advises that these volumes are "more practical books, mainly American, which set their advice on speech and writing in the ancient tradition" (RH & T, p. 265). France goes on to point out, "The second element in the revival of rhetoric is more interesting to the student of literature...the attempt to build on the model of classical rhetoric a modern science, whose principal aim is to describe the language of literature. In this, rhetoric is part of the cluster of subjects known as stylistics (from another point of view, stylistics is a part of rhetoric)" (RH & T, pp. 265-66).

We shall examine what means of persuasion Jean Genet finds especially useful in two of his major plays, Les Nègres and Le Balcon, by examining the style which he selects for his characters' use in these two plays.
Our method, then, will assimilate the traditional concept of rhetoric as an orator's art. In the study, we are converting the orator and his audience into the medium of drama, where each character is the classicist's "orator" and his intended onstage listener is the "audience" which he is attempting to persuade with particular linguistic techniques. Thus, this study will be based upon some older conventions as well as some which are newer.

One set of conventions applicable to the rhetorical language which Genet's characters use can be based upon a division between language which expresses overt and covert emotions. When used as attempts to persuade other characters, these techniques are useful in examining a particular type of character which appears with frequency in Genet's drama. As the scope for examining both overt and covert language is necessarily too large to be encompassed here, our study will limit itself to language used by characters to express their emotions openly.

Such a division was carried out by Peter France in his examination of rhetoric in Racine's drama. A guideline suggested itself in his volume, Racine's Rhetoric, Chapter Five: "Functional rhetoric--The Passions," where France described rhetoric used in Racine which we can apply
to the rhetoric in Genet. To summarize, the rhetoric of overt emotions based on France and noticeable in Genet's drama are:

1) COMMAND FORMS: Imperatives and implied imperatives.
2) EXHORTATION, commonly, repeated Imperatives.
3) INSULT and INVECTIVE.

These language structures particularly reveal the emotions of their speakers, and are derived from traditional rhetoric. By means of the above, the persuading character reveals to another character something which he desires or feels.

Other rhetorical devices—exclamation, the rhetorical question, apostrophe, hyperbole, change in person (tutoiement to vousvoiement, and vice versa) and the use of the historic present—will be pointed out in context where they intensify the techniques under direct study. However, three main techniques of rhetoric—Commands, Exhortations and Insults—have been isolated as being the most relevant to language which attempts active persuasion by one speaker upon another.

I : GENET'S USE OF IMPERATIVES

In Les Nègres and Le Balcon we shall examine how
certain characters in Genet employ various forms of the command in order to direct other characters. Significant examples of commands which are direct imperatives will be studied, both in the second persons and in third-person-commands. We shall also examine forms of commands which are indirect imperatives. Typical of the direct imperative is "N'ayez pas peur" (NEG, p. 52). The basic difference between the direct and the indirect command is the person to whom they are addressed. The second-person-commands (tu and vous forms) are explicitly directed to someone, as is the first-person, plural, command, which includes the speaker with his listener. The more indirect third-person, singular, command--often used as "imperial desire" by La Reine in Les Nègres, for example ("...qu'on reçoive la mère avec courtoisie," NEG, p. 121)--actually states a command. This type of imperative is often directed to a group rather than to an individual. The third-person imperative may even be directed to someone not present.

Other types of implied imperatives are 1) the infinitive form and 2) the future tense form when, within the context, it is quite clear that the speaker is expressing his desire for another to act in a certain way. An example occurs in Le Balcon when Mme Irma uses the future to inform Arthur how to play an approaching
role, "Tu resteras immobile, et on t'ensevelira" (BAL, p. 96). In other instances in Genet's drama, the use of the future tense as command follows closely upon a directly expressed imperative form.

Another implied imperative occurs in Genet when exclamations (both in fragmented phrases and in sentence form) imply that an action is necessary to the speaker. Again, this usage will have to be determined solely by the context in which it is used. Recurrent examples in Les Nègres, for example, are such short expressions as "Au secours!" "En place," "Je vous en prie," "A toi," or "Evêque!" (NEG, pp. 66, 81, 54, 103, 18). Within their various contexts, it will be clear that these single words or phrases are actually commands from one character to another.

Yet another implied imperative in Genet's dramatic dialogue occurs with certain uses of complex sentences where the verb in the independent clause imposes the use of the subjunctive in the dependent clause. However, for the purposes of apprehending persuasive rhetoric, this type of syntax must be judged as an imperative to another character solely within the context of its use. This type of imperative, as well as those above, is generally only a persuading command when addressed to someone else. However, we may sometimes
notice that the speaker includes himself in the group thus directed. For example, Archibald says, "nous devons mériter leur réprobation" (NEG, p. 46), Archibald including himself in the general command.

We shall observe another very special case where the command includes the speaker. This is the self-command, noticeable, for example, in the character Roger in _Le Balcon_ as he states what he, himself, must understand in order to play out the role of Le Héros: "Il faut que je me fasse une idée du Héros..." (BAL, p. 188). This type of character utters self-commands, "directing" a role envisaged mentally by that same character.

A final linguistic imperative at work in Genet will be seen in the use of certain verbs whose very sense (_interdire_, for example) makes their use a "commanding" one.

**IMPERATIVES EXCLUDED**

Since our study is not a linguistic search for all possible forms of the imperative, but rather it is a concentrated study of imperatives employed by characters in _Les Nègres_ and _Le Balcon_ who attempt to influence action or feeling in another character, it will be
necessary to exclude the following three types of commands which do not function in this manner:

1) Excluded are such imperatives as tiens, dites, etc., when they are used to urge conversations to continue; in such instances these imperatives are not being used in their strictest grammatical sense as actual commands.

2) Excluded are such commands where word-sense asks for permission, rather than expressing a desire of the speaker that someone else act (a direct contrast to such verbs as interdire, mentioned above). The verb, laisser, for example, may function in both ways; it may be a genuine imperative, such as "Ne me laisse pas seule au grenier" (NEG, p. 93); or it may be used as a plea for permission, often the case when Diouf uses it: "Laissez-moi...leur proposer un accord" (NEG, p. 46). There are other times at which context alone will regulate such an exclusion.

3) The third instance to be excluded has already been mentioned: there are times when the self-addressed command will not apply to any effort at self-direction.

The direct and indirect imperatives described earlier—with the above exceptions—will be fully explored
The study concentrates on these two plays for one major reason: a survey of Genet's dramatic work revealed that manipulators were more completely developed in these, his fourth and third dramas. *Haute surveillance* and *Les Bonnes* both contain characters who attempt manipulation and would be worth a study on their own. However, with *Le Balcon*, Genet's first full-length drama, this type of manipulating character becomes more obvious and provides more depth of observation than is available in the two earlier, hermetically tight dramas. In *Les Nègres*, the persuading character is clearest of all, which is why the study begins here, rather than with *Balcon*, a slightly flawed drama. Another reason to have chosen these two major plays (and not have included Genet's final full-length drama, *Les Paravents*) is that the emotional manipulation which we shall examine follows a path of its own: beginning in the very enclosed universe of brothel and court, where role-playing is absolutely essential, Genet's dramatic "world" expands from the "particular" (derived from his special background) where role-playing is absolutely necessary, to
the more "universal," as in Les Paravents, where all masks have fallen. Thus, we shall explore evident manipulation, stopping at the point where Paravents begins: drama in which manipulation becomes subtle and psychological, perhaps verbally absent in great part.

II : GENET’S USE OF EXHORTATION

We shall examine how characters in Genet use exhortation to direct other characters. Although dictionary definitions do not express the form which an exhortation takes, we shall discover that speakers commonly use repeated imperatives in order "to incite by words or advice... to urge strongly" (Webster's New International Dictionary, 2nd edition, 1953); or "to admonish earnestly; to urge by words to laudable conduct" (The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 3rd edition, 1947); or "to urge, advise or caution earnestly; admonish urgently" (American College Dictionary, Random House, 1958). Close examination of the above—slightly varying—definitions reveals that these definitions, themselves, employ a repetition of idea, the infinitives used as near synonyms. Thus, it is not surprising to note, for instance, that Peter France limits examples of exhortation in Racine's drama to repeated imperatives, and he
describes both the rhetorical question and the exhortation as "two figures which, though capable of expressing passion, are essentially persuasive figures" (RR, p. 233).

We shall examine the repeated commands used by Genet's characters and other linguistic patterns which indicate exhortation. We may find that the intent of the speech is to urge another character to a certain action or feeling, using rhetorical language to maintain a persuasive position. We may also find that single words or negative statements contain exhortative intent. This may occur as either incitement or admonishment.

III: GENET'S USE OF INSULT & INVECTIVE

The third method of using rhetoric to express direct emotion comprises the study of insult and invective. The two words are not exactly synonymous; however, they closely resemble one another and work, linguistically, in the same way. Both are forms of hyperbole. William F. Irmscher defines invective as exaggeration in this manner: "When exaggeration is applied to personal attack, the result is invective—a particular kind of abuse." Again comparing definitions from Webster's, Oxford, and The American College dictionaries, in order, Webster's defines invective: "A violent or railing denunciation or accusation;
something uttered or written in a harsh or bitter spirit, intended to cast opprobrium, or denunciatory expression." Oxford's is almost exactly the same definition: "A violent attack in words; a denunciatory or railing speech, writing, or expression. . .vituperation." The choice of adjectives is only slightly different in The American College: "vehement denunciation; an utterance of violent censure or reproach."

The definitions given for "insult" appear quite parallel: Webster's, "To treat with insolence, indignity, or contemn, by word or action; to affront wantonly"; Oxford's gives: "To assail with scornful abuse or offensive disrespect; to offer indignity to; to affront, outrage"; and The American College says insult "implies such insolence of speech or manner as deeply humiliates or wounds one's feelings and arouses anger."

The difference between "invective" and "insult" is often in quantity of language: invective often being a prolonged, cumulative attack, whereas an insult is quite often effected with a single word. In each case, speakers use language to hurt, denounce or reproach. We will notice that insults tend to be set in language which would affect the listener's emotions ("outrage," "insolence," "indignity," "contempt," "humiliates" or "arouses anger"). As a means of manipulating others, this type of language
is particularly appropriate for speakers who wish to persuade. E. L. Shostrom describes the following under the rubric, "Manipulating the Feelings of Others":

1. **Anger**. A manipulator can, by his own anger, intimidate and create fear in others. . . Other clever manipulators use the feeling of anger by getting people to hate.

2. **Fear**. Eugene Burdick suggests that a manipulator works fear along with hate. "He sits at the console and gives 'em what he thinks they need; a little fear today, a little hate tomorrow . . ." /Burdick, The Ninth Wave (Boston, 1956), p. 90/

3. **Hurt**. The author of *How to Be a Jewish Mother* /Dan Greenburg (Los Angeles, 1965), pp. 15, 16/gives examples of how a manipulative mother might use hurt to control her children. . .

The following key phrases illustrate the use of hurt to control:

a. "Go ahead and enjoy yourself" (and don't worry that I have a headache).

b. "Don't worry about me."

c. "I don't mind staying home alone."

d. "I'm glad it happened to me and not to you." /13/

Shostrom also lists **trust** ("The typical 'con artist' uses trust to make a sale. . .") and **love** ("as a manipulative technique is illustrated by such phrases as "If you love me you would... '") (MAN, p. 44). We suggest we may find that Shostrom's first three categories (anger, fear, hurt) result when Genet's persuasive characters employ rhetorical insults and invectives. The linguistic device used will vary, dependent upon the particular result desired according to context. /14/
In Genet's drama, we may often find the tone of whole passages reflects invective when used by a character who is attempting persuasion. In other instances, single words may attack the feelings of the listener. In *Les Nègres*, for example, Bobo uses the single epithet, "Imbécile" (*NEG*, p. 42), for Village, which may prove typical of the insult as used by Genet's characters. We shall examine insult as rhetorical figure only when it appears to be used to pique another character into action.
CHAPTER ONE

Les Nègres

I: IMPERATIVES

"Les villages désolés
l'Afrique écartelée"
--Diop, Hammer Blows

Les Nègres,¹ Genet's second full-length drama, is a complex play with dual plots and roles which require that the actors play dual sets of characters. The more obvious plot concerns a crime which members of a black "cast," les nègres, enact in order to receive judgment from a white Cour, who are blacks disguised by white masks. Various members of the black cast are appointed their roles: Village must commit the rape/murder; Diouf, an elder member of les nègres, is appointed the role of the white victim. Two leaders, Archibald and Féllicité, urge the black actors to play their roles "properly," "according to the text." Two of les nègres, the lovers Village and Vertu, resist playing their "proper" roles and almost force the leader, Archibald, to exile them among the white audience. The masked blacks are La Reine and her retinue, who sit in
judgment until the plot reverses itself and they find themselves being judged, following Diouf's "giving birth" to dolls which represent each member of la Cour. The secondary plot, which is known only through hearsay, concerns "real" blacks who are judging a criminal among themselves, and when the liaison character between the two plots, Ville de Saint-Nazaire, makes this second judgment clear, we discover that all the role-playing onstage was being used to divert white attention from that "outside" act. Susan Taubes summarized these complexities concisely, when she says in "The White Mask Falls":

The play is set up so as to provide continual mirror effects as its action develops simultaneously on two planes: 1) the conflict between blacks and whites is given in the dramatic confrontation between the players and the public; and 2) it is mirrored on the stage where a group of Negro actors must re-enact before a white jury . . . the fictitious rape of a white woman. . . . The white-masked actors represent in caricature a group of white supremacists composed of a queen and her valet, a colonial governor general, and a missionary bishop.

By the play's end, the audience has discovered that all the parts were played by Negro actors; that they were viewing a circular ritual; and that the same ritual will be undertaken again the next evening, continuing cyclically. The 'surface' plot ends when les nègres lead la Cour onto enemy turf (Africa) and "execute" them.
The "outside" plot concludes when all the Negro players (les nègres and the unmasked Cour) hear from Ville de Saint-Nazaire that their own judgment is complete. The final moments present a paradoxical ritual, a mixture of black and white supremacy, as African rhythms give way to the orderly Western minuet.

* * * *

In Les Nègres, Jean Genet creates three obvious persuading characters: ARCHIBALD and LA REINE, the two leaders who characteristically use imperatives to direct. FELICITE, who uses commands to a lesser degree, dominates others through exhortive language, which will be examined in the next section of our study.

ARCHIBALD emerges as a "persuader" by his extensive use of the imperative--in all the forms which were defined in our Introduction. We shall closely scrutinize examples of his commands which occur in two types of situations. In the first, Archibald is director/prompter of les nègres, the group of actors in the play who are to narrate and pantomime a crime which one of their group, Village, claims as his own. Bobo, Neige, Diouf, Vertu and Félicité, the others in this group, involve
themselves in Village's narrative through various means: they 'correct' his version; they castigate him when he appears to be miming the feelings of their judges, *la Cour*; they give him support by providing insults when he calls on them for help. Throughout, ARCHIBALD directs them, ordering the tone of the narrative and criticizing ill-chosen vocabulary or gesture. He casts roles or allocates this duty to another. He, himself, enters into the 'performance' they are playing, and assists in the final version of Village's narrative. ARCHIBALD's last 'directing' duty is that of showing *la Cour* the exact spot on the stage on which to "die." In each case, ARCHIBALD habitually uses imperatives (direct or implied) to direct both groups acting in the 'performance.'

Secondly, ARCHIBALD also directs what is actually another group, which at first consists only of *les nègres*, plus the liaison character, Ville de Saint-Nazaire. This group stands aside from the 'performance' and discusses its private concern, which is judging one of its own people and--late in the play--picking a new leader for the revolution which dialogue implies is occurring off-stage. Near the end of *Les Nègres* we discover that *la Cour* has been a part of this same group, all along. Throughout the play, ARCHIBALD directs the others in the brief scenes
where they delay the 'performance' to discuss their 'outside' concern.

LA REINE is the leader of la Cour, which consists of Le Gouverneur, Le Juge, Le Missionnaire and Le Valet. As monarch, her imperatives are generally imperial decrees of her will, to be imposed upon les nègres. LA REINE also demands help from la Cour, and she occasionally commands the 'performance' of les nègres. By far her most important commands concern threats to les nègres, all uttered as the leader of the judging characters, that is, characteristic of her role as LA REINE. In addition, LA REINE and ARCHIBALD, together, direct the execution of her Court. We find that several members of her Court also use imperatives: Le Gouverneur utters stereotyped cliché-commands; Le Missionnaire insists upon prudence; Le Juge rules the 'judgment'; and Le Valet demands attention to the 'performance' and cautions la Cour during their voyage.

For purposes of analyzing the rhetorical techniques which these characters use effectively to 'direct' others, we shall arbitrarily use model examples of their language, taken out of the context of the normal sequence of the play.
ARCHIBALD, prompter of the play-within-the-play

As the character controlling the 'performance' which les nègres are to give for la Cour (the play-within-the-play), Archibald controls three things: 1) frequently he reminds his actors of the goal of their performance; 2) he insists upon the tone and vocabulary of that performance; and 3) he directs the actors' actions. First to be examined are those speeches in which he evokes the group goal.

Archibald uses an implied command (the future tense) when he first openly reminds les nègres, as actors, of the goal of their 'performance,' insisting that the color black be their vital force: "Le tragique sera dans la couleur noire! C'est elle que vous chérirez, rejoindrez, mériterez. C'est elle qu'il faudra gagner" (NEG, p. 28). This particular reference is later reinforced with another speech, which begins as a directive to Village, but which becomes a directive to les nègres, as a group, to "become black":
ARCHIBALD (grave): Je vous ordonne d'être noir jusque dans vos veines et d'y charrier du sang noir. Que l'Afrique y circule. Que les Nègres se nègent. Qu'ils s'obstinent jusqu'à la folie dans ce qu'on les condamne à être, dans leur ébène, dans leur odeur, dans l'œil jaune, dans leurs goûts cannibales. Qu'ils ne se contentent pas de manger les Blancs, mais qu'ils se cuisent entre eux. Qu'ils inventent des recettes pour les tibias...les lèvres épaisses...des sauces inconnues...Que si l'on change à notre regard, Nègres, ce ne soit par l'indulgence, mais la terreur!...

(NEG, p. 76)

There are many examples, above, other than the rhetorical imperative. In addition to using the commanding verb, "ordonner," and the many third-person commands--"Que les Nègres se nègent...Qu'ils ne se contentent pas...Qu'ils inventent"--Genet allows Archibald several other rhetorical techniques for moving his audience (Village and the other blacks). Archibald's repeated use of "que" turns this series of third-person implied commands into exhortation. He uses fairly long lists (there are five uses of prepositional phrases commencing with "dans," for example). Perhaps the most effective rhetorical device--metonymy--is also the most important, as Archibald converts the receiver of the speech from Village to the whole group by using "vos veines" and "sang noir" to
symbolize the group spirit he desires from these actors. These nouns become metonymic (i.e., symbolizing an abstract by its material attribute) when the next sentence orders Africa to circulate in them, pivoting attention from Village to the entire group. This same theme will again be repeated in Félicité's second exhortation which commences with "Dahomey" (NEG, pp. 110-11), which we shall examine in the next section.

Archibald not only commands his actors' feelings; he also uses implied commands to attain the group goal of deceiving their judges:

ARCHIBALD : C'est par l'élongation que nous déformerons assez le langage pour nous en envelopper et nous y cacher : les maîtres procédant par contraction. (NEG, p. 41)

* * *

Nous devons séduire : de la plante des pieds jusqu'à leurs oreilles, notre langue rose... se promène avec science et silence autour de nos beaux indifférents. La phrase convient-elle? (NEG, p. 42)

We notice, here, that Archibald now includes himself in the first, implied, command, "nous déformerons," as well as in the second command, "nous devons séduire." Neither is as strictly a "command form" as the formal imperative. However, in this context, Archibald is insisting upon deceit as an action that he desires they (and he) take in the future, thus the use of the future
produces an implied command. A little further, his language is more directly commanding, as he orders the group not to forget that they must merit their condemnation, another desired goal:

ARCHIBALD: N'oubliez pas ceci : nous devons mériter leur réprobation, et les amener à prononcer le jugement qui nous condamnera. Je vous le répète, ils connaissent notre crime...

(NEG, p. 46)

At this particular moment in 'the play, we have not yet heard Archibald's persuasive exhortation to les nègres to "be black" (quoted above). The audience and la Cour know only, at this moment, that Archibald continues to insist to his actors that they must play their parts well, so that their judges will be convinced they are guilty. Some lines later, he more specifically states that it is in the theatre that they will dominate, as that is all that remains to them: "On nous l'a dit, nous sommes de grands enfants. Mais alors, quel domaine nous reste! Le Théâtre!" (NEG, p. 57). And here he begins to describe, metaphorically, why they are in the process of playing roles: "Nous jouerons à nous y réfléchir et lentement nous nous verrons, grand narcisse noir, disparaître dans son eau" (NEG, p. 57). However, Village, who objects, remains oblivious to the metaphor.
Here we mark an inversion of the process mentioned above: Archibald pivots the direction of his command from the group ("nous jouerons") to Village, directly interpreting Village's role for him, telling him how it should be played by emphasizing that Village's drowning (which is also, collectively, their own) is meant to set the Whites' teeth on edge and to haunt them:

ARCHIBALD: . . . Il ne demeurera de toi que l'écume de ta rage. Puisqu'on nous renvoie à l'image et qu'on nous y noie, que cette image les fasse grincer des dents!

VILLAGE: Mon corps veut vivre.

ARCHIBALD: Sous leurs yeux tu deviens un spectre et tu vas les hanter. (NEG, pp. 57-58)

Here, Archibald again uses the third-person implied command, "que cette image les fasse grincer des dents," as well as verbs which imply the future ("devenir") and the "near future" ("va les hanter"), thereby commanding Village—-and the group, as Village becomes a symbol for all, here.

Archibald's command to "be black" ("Je vous ordonne d'être noir"), quoted above, comes somewhat later in the play and serves as a primary motivation which Archibald urges upon the group regarding the reasons for their deceiving their judges and for performing the play-within-the-play. His last command which reminds the group of their goal is, in fact, an explanation that they achieved that
goal. Just before the entire cast (including la Cour) resume role-playing, donning masks, etc., he stops them in order to thank them for their performances. Here, Archibald again reminds the cast--this time all of the players--of their purpose, just before he orders them to resume the 'performance':

ARCHIBALD (l'arrêtant) : Un moment... mes camarades. Vous avez bien joué votre rôle. (Les cinq Nègres retirent les masques et saluent.)... peut-être soupçonne-t-on ce que peut dissimuler cette architecture de vide et de mots. Nous sommes ce qu'on veut que nous soyons, nous le serons donc jusqu'au bout absurdenment. Remettez vos masques pour sortir, et qu'on les reconduise aux Enfers. (Les cinq remettent leurs masques.) (NEG, p. 179)

* * *

Archibald's second type of commands concerns maintaining the required 'tone' of the script within which he, as their metteur en scène, insists they must remain. He makes this explicit when he says to Village, "C'est à moi qu'il faut obéir. Et au texte que nous avons mis au point" (NEG, p. 29). The very first instance of Archibald's insistence that they maintain a certain toné concerns gesture, rather than language, as he chides Neige for having
not only disturbed the 'props' (she took flowers from the catafalque) but for having made a disturbing gesture, "elle crache la fleur après avoir mordue." At this gesture, Archibald says, "Pas d'inutiles cruautés, Neige, Ni d'ordures ici" (NEG, p. 26). When Bobo follows a similar line and goes outside the bounds of the required tone in her exhortation evoking African heritage, Archibald steps in to divert attention away from her and toward Vertu, commanding Bobo to be quiet, "(À Bobo) Laissez parler Vertu" (NEG, p. 32). Although here Archibald does not directly reprimand Bobo for her language, as he had Neige for her gesture, both actresses are quite evidently not within the required tone of the text, so it is Archibald's duty to arrest them in mid-air. He later orders Bobo to retract a vulgar word ("baver"), insisting upon the tone their ritual must have.

The most evident example of this type of manipulation occurs when Village utters the dangerous word, "père." Archibald stops him immediately, insisting that the word is too jarring. What we understand, by implication, is that this actor approaches dangerously close to describing his "hidden," outside life, which will later be forbidden again by Archibald:

VILLAGE : . . . Ah, le temps merveilleux où l'on chassait le Nègre et l'antilope! Mon père m'a raconté...
ARCHIBALD (l'interrompant) : Votre père? N'utilisez plus ce mot. En le prononçant il vient de passer dans votre voix, monsieur, comme un tendre sentiment. (NEG, p. 38)

Although the impression, here, is that Village, in saying the word, risks becoming tender in his narrative, rather than cruel, we shall see in a moment that there is a double danger: Village must invent another word, must use periphrase, in order to avoid revealing both a tenderness for the father his narrative names as well as his "own" father (that is, the father of the "actor" who is Village). Genet again allows Archibald a combination of rhetorical devices to influence Village's use of language:

VILLAGE : Et comment me conseillez-vous d'appeler le mâle qui engrossa la nègresse de qui je suis né?
ARCHIBALD : Je m'en fous. Faites ce que vous pourrez. Inventez, sinon des mots, des phrases qui coupent au lieu de lier. Inventez non l'amour, mais la haine, et faites donc de la poésie, puisque c'est le seul domaine qu'il nous soit permis d'exploiter. . . Procédez avec délicatesse. Ayez l'habileté de ne choisir que des raisons de haine. Retenez-vous de trop magnifier notre sauvagerie. Redoutez d'apparaître comme un grand fauve : sans avoir leur estime, vous tenteriez leur désir. . . (NEG, pp. 38-41)

Archibald begins deceptively, commanding Village to do as he pleases ("faites ce que vous pourrez"), but then he
proceeds to elaborate what he should, in fact, do. The one repetition of the command, "inventez," gives this speech an exhortive tone, in addition to the imperative one. Archibald also clearly calls for Village to use hyperbole by his insistence on circumlocution of the word, "père." His next line, in fact, demands that very clearly:

VILLAGE: Minute. Le mot de père, par quoi pourrai-je le remplacer?
ARCHIBALD: Votre périphrase conviendra parfaitement.  

(NEG, p. 41)

Here, stressed with an implied imperative (the future), the self-consciousness about language is the most apparent in the entire text, and it is here that Archibald addresses these actors to deform the language in order to hide behind it, "...déformerons assez le langage..." quoted above.

There are two more important instances where Archibald insists upon language's remaining true to the text which they are following. In one more instance, he warns Village to take care not to reveal more than he should, interrupting him twice in his narration: "Attention, Village, n'allez pas évoquer votre vie hors d'ici," just at the point where Village was using vocabulary which might have revealed his personal feelings for Vertu,
"Quand je vous vis..." (NEG, p. 53). Archibald stops him yet again when Village comes too close to speaking of "l'amour" when he uses the word, "coeur," often the metonym for "love":

VILLAGE: . . . Il suffirait de peu de chose pour que me réjouissent votre visage, votre corps, vos mouvements, votre coeur...
ARCHIBALD: Prenez garde, Village!
VILLAGE (à Vertu): Mais je vous hais! . . .
(NEG, p. 55)

A few moments later, Archibald warns Vertu with the same type of command, for similar reasons. As she implies that her 'real' life is that of a prostitute, and she, alone, really knows shame, Archibald interrupts her with a command:

VERTU: Qu'on sache donc que la cérémonie de ce soir aura sur moi moins d'efficacité que celle que j'accomplis dix fois par jour. Je suis la seule à aller jusqu'au bout de la honte...
ARCHIBALD: N'évoquez pas votre vie.
(NEG, p. 56)

As this command is an exact repetition of the earlier one given Village, the meaning of Archibald's command is quite clear.

* * * * *

Archibald's third 'director's duty,' and perhaps
the most obvious, is to direct the actions of *les negres*. He dons his 'director's cap' during the very opening moments of the play, as he orders Neige to bow (to *la Cour* and to the audience), "saluez, madame" (*NEG*, p. 18). The very direct second-person imperative is typical of this type of command which Archibald uses to direct various actions. Archibald also typically uses the implied command (first-person plural). He orders them all to smoke cigarettes (to hide the odor of the corpse\(^5\)), "Grillons tous une cigarette. Enfumons-la" (*NEG*, p. 34); he insists they not listen to Diouf's pleading for conciliation between the two groups with the commands, "tâchons de suggérer le désert. Bouclons-nous. . .Effaçons-nous," at the same time commanding Diouf to go ahead, "parlez" (*NEG*, p. 46).

One of the most important of Archibald's commands to Village is the simple, "Entrez dans la chambre" (*NEG*, p. 112), coming close to the end of Village's narration-pantomime of the murder. It is Archibald's command, "entrez," taken up by Neige, which signals the commencement of a lyric and ritualistic recitation by Vertu and Neige. This moment of ritual accompanies the final moments of the disappearance of Diouf, followed by Village, behind the screen where the rape/murder is to take place.
Following the 'crime' is the 'judgment.' Again, Archibald directs the actors, commanding them, "Accroupissez-vous" (NEG, p. 141). He even addresses the occasional command to la Cour, commanding them to be prudent ("Soyez prudents," p. 145).

Following the 'judgment' which turns the world of la Cour upside-down, Archibald gives explicit stage directions to each member of the white Court as he 'dies.' The first "victim" is Le Gouverneur, who is commanded by Archibald, "Viens mourir ici" (NEG, p. 171). Archibald also finalizes the death ritual by pronouncing, "Aux Enfers" (NEG, p. 171). The next to be sent "aux Enfers" is Le Juge (NEG, p. 173); Le Missionnaire is sent, by Archibald, "A l'abattoir!" (NEG, p. 175). For Le Valet, all Archibald need command is "Aux Enfers" (NEG, p. 176). And his last command, "Remettez vos masques pour sortir, et qu'on les reconduise aux Enfers" (NEG, p. 179), is reserved for La Reine, who remained aloof from these proceedings, in a sense. The group command includes her with the others of la Cour who are already "dead."

Archibald uses one last type of imperative within the 'performance.' When Village's narrative is failing because of lack of insult, Archibald initiates a series
in which the phrase, "A vous," will focus a spotlight, first on one actor, then another. Archibald gives the floor to Vertu, "C'est à vous, Vertu. Et faites-les les insultes sonner, haut, clair, droit" (NEG, p. 85). The ritual begun with this implied command, the 'magic phrase' passes from character to character: Neige takes over, then gives the floor to Bobo ("A toi," NEG, p. 87); Bobo announces, "A nous deux!" (NEG, p. 87); Archibald intervenes and throws attention to Village, "A vous, Village" (NEG, p. 87). Village then reaches a point in his narration when he needs other actors to help play parts, and he begins the 'casting' of parts by appointing Félicité as la Mère of Diouf-Marie; Archibald then assigns the role of "boulanger" to Bobo; Le Missionnaire cues Archibald, whose gesture suggests the returning husband of Diouf-Marie; and Bobo is cast as the sage-femme by Village (NEG, pp. 92, 93, 97, 103). The very last role to be assigned occurs near the end of the play, and it is Archibald who casts Diouf-Marie in a second female role, "Mère des Héros morts" (NEG, p. 178).

* * *

ARCHIBALD, director of the off-stage judgment

Structurally, Archibald is seen most often as the
"prompter" whom we have just examined, appropriately so, as the majority of the play takes place either within the play-within-the-play or in conversation discussing how their roles in that play should be acted. Archibald also commands these same characters in their lives outside the 'performance.' He again directs actions, keeps them to the text, and reminds them of a goal: the goal which they share when they shed their roles briefly to discuss the strategy for judging a traitor and for finding a new leader. Typically, these brief discussions commence with the entrance of the liaison character, Ville de Saint-Nazaire, or upon some one of les nègres' noticing his presence.

Archibald commands this character to leave during the initial ceremony of introduction, pivoting attention momentarily away from les nègres and the play-within-the-play. He warns Ville de Saint-Nazaire to maintain secrecy, "Tout, étant secret, il faut foutre le camp," and commands him to his liaison post, "Allez, mais allez donc les prévenir. Dites-leur bien que nous avons commencé. Qu'ils fassent leur travail comme nous allons faire le nôtre. Tout se passera comme à l'accoutumée" (NEG, p. 26). In these directives to Ville de Saint-Nazaire, Archibald sends word to the mysterious "outside" group,
directing them through this messenger with the third-person command form, "Qu'ils fassent leur travail."

At Ville de Saint-Nazaire's next appearance, the mystery surrounding this "outside" action is lifted only a little, as Archibald forbids him to tell too much about the off-stage trial:

VILLE DE SAINT-NAZAIRE (il se baisse et ramasse le revolver posé sur la boîte de cireur) : Avant tout, l'interroger...
ARCHIBALD (l'interrompant) : Ne dites que ce qu'il faut dire, on nous épie. (Tous lèvent la tête et regardent la Cour). (NEG, p. 44)

Archibald also prevents Village's and Diouf's objections, keeping these characters under control with both direct and indirect commands, "À Village Laisse. Dans la colère tu vas te trahir et nous trahir" (NEG, p. 44); "À Diouf Une fois de plus je voudrais que vous sachiez que vous perdez votre temps. Vos arguments sont connus ... Vous parlez d'amour. Faites-le, puisque nos répliques sont prévues par le texte" (NEG, p. 45). Here we notice that Archibald keeps the characters 'to the text' not only in the 'performance' but also in their private lives, a characteristic which underlines his pivotal position in the play. It is Archibald, not Ville de Saint-Nazaire, who is the real link between the two groups. Ville de Saint-Nazaire is at first but a messenger, not a
leader. Archibald remains the leader, controlling his entrances and exits: "Quand le tribunal sera en place, reviens nous prévenir" (NEG, p. 44); "Partez! Rentrez dans la coulisse. Emporez le revolver, et allez faire votre besogne" (NEG, p. 45). Upon this occasion—as happens a few other times—Village reinforces Archibald’s command: "[À Ville de Saint-Nazaire] Pas de mais. Obéis à monsieur Wellington" (NEG, p. 45).

Ville de Saint-Nazaire next emerges during Félicité’s first "Dahomey" exhortation and remains quiet until noticed by Archibald. This occurs following the crucial point in the play: Village ends his narrative and is pulled behind a screen by Diouf, where the rape/murder takes place (described by Le Gouverneur and Le Juge). Archibald scolds Ville de Saint-Nazaire for having appeared too soon, and the moment has arrived when we are very briefly allowed to realize that la Cour is also a part of the "outside" plan. As Archibald commands la Cour, "Gardez vos masques!" (NEG, p. 115), we realize Archibald’s power over characters other than les nègres, which subtly hints again at the conspiracy to be clarified in the next few moments. Archibald allows Ville de Saint-Nazaire’s report of the impending execution to continue, advising les nègres to be aware of what is at stake, commanding them to remember their goal: "Réfléchissez : il s’agit de
juger, probablement, de condamner, et d'exécuter un Nègre. C'est grave" (NEG, p. 115).

Ville de Saint-Nazaire supports Archibald's view—a sergeant supporting his lieutenant—and gives his own command, ". . . nous ne devons plus jouer quand nous sommes entre nous. Il faudra nous habituer à prendre la responsabilité du sang—du nôtre" (NEG, p. 116). Archibald then commands him to leave ("Retourne près d'eux"), but concedes to Ville de Saint-Nazaire's request to remain ("Alors... restez," NEG, p. 116). At this point, Archibald directs the rest of les nègres to return to the 'performance,' urging them to help Village: "Et vous, taisez-vous. Village travaille pour nous. Aidez-le en silence, mais aidez-le" (NEG, pp. 116-121).

Archibald's role as leader is strengthened by being doubled by Ville de Saint-Nazaire during the next scene outside the play-within-the-play, as Ville de Saint-Nazaire repeats the 'group goal' which Archibald had urged:

Ville de Saint-Nazaire : . . . Il faudra nous habituer à cette responsabilité ; exécuter nous-mêmes nos propres traîtres. (NEG, p. 160)

* * *
Notre but n'est pas seulement de corroder... l'idée qu'ils voudraient que nous ayions d'eux. Il nous faut aussi les combattre dans leurs personnes de chair et d'os...

(NEG, p. 161)

Using the subjunctive substitute, faire in the present and the future, followed by infinitives, Ville de Saint-Nazaire's implied imperatives repeat and strengthen the group goal which Archibald had required.

Just following these commands, all of the characters, la Cour unmasked and les nègres, demand a description of their new leader, then look to Archibald to decide the disposition of Diouf, caught between the two groups. Archibald makes the decision, commanding Diouf to remain, "Alors, reste" (NEG, p. 164), and calls for both groups to resume their roles again and finish the performance, according to the text, "...nous devons achever ce spectacle, et nous débarrasser de nos juges... (À celle qui était la Reine) comme prévu" (NEG, p. 164). The 'former queen' calls for the masks, and Archibald gives the cue, "Commencez" (NEG, p. 165). This is his last imperative as leader of the "judgment." Since the execution has taken place and a new leader chosen who "devra d'abord séduire, ensuite convaincre" as Ville de Saint-Nazaire described him (NEG, p. 162), Archibald
can put aside his own role of leadership. He has been replaced, off-stage, dans la coulisse, and can retire the influence he exerted through rhetorical language.

* * *

LA REINE, director of la Cour

La Reine uses imperatives, both direct and indirect, with both groups who are taking part in the 'performance.' Acting her own role in that 'performance,' La Reine typically addresses three differing kinds of commands to her own group, la Cour: 1) either she calls them for help or advice, commanding them to her side in queenly style; or 2) she orders actions; or 3) she uses imperial decrees to express orders she wishes accomplished.

Her first command, "Evêque! Evêque in partibus!" (NEG, p. 18), interrupts Archibald's explanation of the 'performance' we are to see. L'Evêque leans towards her and we find that all she wished was to ask the question, "Vont-ils la tuer?" (NEG, p. 18), which she repeats again in a few lines. As these speeches occur during the opening moments of the play, her commands indicate primarily
that la Cour is "on call" to La Reine. Her next order to them comes from fear, not curiosity, as she realizes that Vertu is speaking for her. Here, La Reine has joined in Vertu's description of "la Reine Occidentale," though she is apparently asleep and hatching civilization (according to Le Juge, p. 62). She startles awake and cries for help from la Cour:

LA REINE (soudain éveillée) : Assez! Et faites-les taire, ils ont volé ma voix! Au secours...

(NEG, p. 66)

At this moment, we see two types of commands together in La Reine's appeal: she insists that she has heard enough ("Assez!") and imperially orders "someone" to silence les nègres ("faites-les taire"). At the same time, realizing Vertu is mimicking her position as Queen, she calls for help ("Au secours"). Before any of la Cour has that chance, Félicité attacks them with her first "Dahomey" exhortation. Again, La Reine appeals for help. However, this time La Reine calls upon various cultural products of Western civilization, rather than her immediate court, brushing aside Le Valet's fear for her life. Her use of "A moi" in the following carries the same valence as the phrase, "au secours," aimed earlier directly at la Cour:

LE VALET : Madame se meurt!

LA REINE : Pas encore! A moi, vierges du Parthénon, ange du portail de Reims, colonnes valériennes,
The next command which La Reine utters is an indirect one, reported to la Cour by Le Valet, who—when asked what she has said—quotes La Reine:

LE VALET : Au moins, sauvez l'Enfant! Et qu'on reçoive la mère avec courtoisie. Elle aura donc faute, mais elle est Blanche.

"La mère," here, is Diouf who has already played out his role of the murdered Marie. We notice the typical, imperial subjunctive command, "qu'on reçoive la mère," La Reine's reported directive to la Cour. When she reappears onstage, La Reine again alludes to Diouf, giving la Cour a motivation for the judgment they must pronounce: "Voici celle qu'il faudra descendre venger," she says, as she and Diouf appear on the upper-level platform of la Cour (NEG, p. 125). Here, she uses the future, an implied command form.

Her next command is again one of typical 'royal will,' imposed with the subjunctive command, "Qu'on apporte la Nuit!" (NEG, p. 136). She asks the impossible: that one turn day into night just so that she may see the local African dances, as la Cour has now descended to
Africa for the judgment. When the full inversion of position is achieved, and Félicité makes it quite evident that la Cour is now in the power of les nègres, La Reine meets the challenge, remaining firm until threatened by Félicité with becoming a very un-queenly pet, at which she again commands her court to help her: "Gouverneur! Général! Évêque! Juge! Valet!" (NEG, p. 152). In the next breath, La Reine threatens les nègres with more royal commands, "Qu'on les passe au fil de l'épée" (NEG, p. 152). She repeats the threat, a bit later, warning les nègres of her intended commands in the near future, "Je vais vous faire exterminer" (NEG, p. 153). No one character of la Cour obeys this implied and rather vague command. They do, however, freely give La Reine advice (in command form) about other methods of influencing les nègres (NEG, pp. 153, 154, 155).

One of La Reine's last directives to la Cour is a direct command to Le Gouverneur, the first to be "executed." Here, as leader, La Reine assists Archibald in the execution ritual, although it takes three such commands from La Reine to move this first "victim":

LA REINE (se levant) : C'est à vous, monsieur le Gouverneur. (NEG, p. 166)

* * *

(avec beaucoup d'autorité) : Silence. C'est à moi de parler, et de donner mes ordres.
(Au Gouverneur) : Je vous l'ai dit, c'est à vous, monsieur le Gouverneur.

LE GOUVERNEUR : D'habitude, dans ces circonstances, on tire à la courte-paille...

LA REINE : Pas d'explications. Montrez à ces barbares que nous sommes grands par notre souci de la discipline, et au Blancs qui nous regardent, que nous sommes dignes de leurs larmes. (NEG, p. 169)

* * *

Ah, ah! Je vous tiens. (Au Gouverneur) Gouverneur, en route! (NEG, p. 170)

In this scene, La Reine also uses two of the phrases which are a part of this ritual execution, "C'est à vous" and "En route." In addition, she uses the direct command, "montrez," to influence her group's actions, just as Archibald had insisted that his group use certain vocabulary and tone. La Reine's last command to her own group is quite direct, ordering their exit:

LA REINE (à sa Cour) : Debout! (Tous les quatre se lèvent.) Venez avec moi aux Enfers. Et qu'on s'y tienne bien. (Elle les pousse devant elle comme un troupeau.) (NEG, p. 179)

* * *

LA REINE, director of les nègres

La Reine also assists the continuity of performance
by periodically directing members of les nègres. In some instances she, like Archibald, directs their 'performance.' For example, La Reine requires both Archibald and Village to continue their performances, "Continue" (NEG, p. 24) and "Continuez, jeune homme!" (NEG, p. 30). She even addresses a command to Félicité, her direct rival, "Commence" (NEG, p. 146), as the two queens prepare for their verbal battle.

More effective, however, are La Reine's commands to les nègres which direct their thinking about herself (and about les blancs, by extension). These commands occur during her confrontation with Félicité and during the ritual "execution." For example, as La Reine and Félicité discuss the roles they will each play in the future when les nègres will have gained supremacy, La Reine reminds the black queen that all of her witchcraft (symbolized here by herbes) cannot help, nor can Félicité and the other blacks turn to La Reine for help:

LA REINE (elle et Félicité vont se parler comme deux femmes échangeant des recettes de ménagère) : Oui, c'est vrai. Mais toi, à ton tour tu vas te fatiguer? Et ne compte pas sur moi pour t'indiquer des remontants. Vos herbes ne suffiront pas.

FÉLICITÉ : Je veux bien crever de fatigue. D'autres m'aideront. (NEG, p. 156)
As they continue their verbal battle, La Reine again insinuates the power her group will have as slaves, commanding Félicité to envisage her own future under such conditions, "...vous serez forts. Et nous, charmeurs. Nous serons lascifs. Nous danserons pour vous séduire. Songe à ce que tu vas faire? Un long travail..." (NEG, p. 157). As La Reine ironically forecasts that les blancs will be "charmeurs" who dance in order to seduce (the 'stereo-typed vision' we have already seen les nègres enact during their 'performance'), she urges Félicité to think about the problems involved in being the masters. She goes on to question her, "Que cherches-tu? Non, non, ne réponses pas : que tes fils ne connaissent pas les chaînes?" (NEG, p. 157). Then La Reine demands Félicité's attention, posing questions and answering them herself, while she continues to insist that Félicité follow the argument ("écoute-moi... suis-moi... souris un peu!" NEG, p. 157).

During the execution ritual, La Reine sends another command to les nègres, urging her Valet to "Dites-leur au moins que sans nous, leur révolte n'aurait pas de sens..." (NEG, p. 176). And upon her own "demise," La Reine warns Félicité again about the future, forcing her to imagine les blancs not dead but dormant: "...nous partons, mais
dites-vous que nous resterons engourdis dans la Terre comme des larves ou des taupes, et si un jour... dans six mille ans... " (NEG, p. 180). This vision which La Reine predicted is briefly indicated musically: the power of les nègres over les blancs will take place, but the circle is closed as the music of Western culture supercedes African culture, symbolizing a rise in power. The rulers (les nègres) will, in their turn—as predicted by La Reine—be ruled again.

* * * *

Secondary directors

LE GOUVERNEUR makes use of "imperial commands" similar to La Reine's imperial decrees. However, his commands are either stereotyped clichés involving the behaviour of les nègres or suggestions to other members of la Cour as to how their roles should be played.

Typical of his stereotyped remarks proclaimed as general commands are: "Broyer du Noir!" (NEG, p. 20); "Ils vont la [la morte] cuire et la manger. Qu'on leur retire les allumettes!" (NEG, p. 35); "Qu'on les [Village et Vertu] empêche de poursuivre" (NEG, p. 62). Typical
of Le Gouverneur's directing the roles of la Cour are:

"Au Valet Taisez-vous, foutu gamin perdu par l'amour de l'exotisme" (NEG, p. 31); "À la Reine Madame, Madame, réveillez-vous! . . . Qu'on la réveille . . ." (NEG, p. 62); and, again, "Madame, sautez du lit!" (NEG, p. 63). Later, Le Gouverneur reminds la Cour of their duty, that of judging les nègres: "Nous devons aller les châtier, les juger, et le voyage sera long et pénible" (NEG, p. 122). When they at last arrive in Africa, Le Gouverneur issues warnings, telling la Cour how to react: "N'avancez plus.18 Prudence, circonspection, mystère. Tout est marécages. . ." (NEG, p. 134). Le Gouverneur is also the first of la Cour to recognize their inverted position, "... c'était un piège, il faut faire face?" and, imitating Félicité's ritualistic language, he commands Le Valet to take up the ritualistic phrases, "C'est l'Aurore! (Au Valet.) A vous!" Le Valet completes the rite by responding with the ritual word, "Cocorico!" (NEG, p. 139).

LE MISSIONNAIRE's commands generally call for group action or group thinking among la Cour, in reaction to some threat from les nègres. He commands them all to pray, "Tous, à genoux devant cet auguste chagrin" (NEG, p. 35), while les nègres build their smoke-screen about
the catafalque. When Ville de Saint-Nazaire reproaches Village with not having yet negrified la Cour,\(^1\)\(^9\) Le Missionnaire interrupts, commanding la Cour to prepare for their journey: "En route! . . .Préparez le manteau, les bottes. . .le cheval de Sa Majesté. . .il faut y aller" (NEG, p. 127). He continues with the more general command, "qu'on entonne une messe de Palestrina. . .Alors, en avant... marche!" (NEG, p. 128). Le Missionnaire tries to reassure La Reine, who is frightened by noises, "bruits de feuilles, de vents" (NEG, p. 137), telling her, "N'ayez pas peur, madame, ils n'oseraient pas. . .ici je commande. . .Vous êtes sous ma protection" (NEG, p. 138).

As Le Juge commands les nègres to tremble before him, Le Missionnaire again urges prudence, "au Juge Soyez prudents. Ils sont roués, sournois. . .ils ont un télégraphe secret. . ." (NEG, p. 141). Twice he reprimands Le Valet, first telling him to bring the throne, and stop trembling (NEG, p. 139); secondly, as they realize the degree to which they have been tricked (no coffin, no corpse, no crime!), Le Missionnaire again directs Le Valet’s role: "Ne riez pas! Vous voyez bien ce qu'ils font de nous?" (NEG, p. 143). The last of Le Missionnaire’s commands again reminds the group to be prudent; as Le Juge and Le Gouverneur become enraptured with their ideas of how to execute their judgment,\(^2\)\(^0\) Le Missionnaire
LE JUGE directs mainly during the trial which he begins with the subjunctive (indirect command): "Qu'on dresse le Tribunal!" (NEG, p. 139). Then he directs les nègres in their manner of approaching the bench, insisting at first that they abase themselves completely, "Couchez-vous. Vous approcherez sur le ventre" (NEG, p. 140). As Archibald intervenes, Le Juge allows les nègres simply to crouch, but insists upon their showing signs of fear, directing their acting:

LE JUGE : . . . (D'une voix tonnante) Mais d'abord, tremblez! (Tous ensemble, orchestrés, les Nègres tremblent.) Plus fort! Tremblez, allons, secouez-vous! N'ayez pas peur de faire dégringoler les noix de coco qui pendent à vos branches! Tremblez, Nègres! (Les Nègres, tous ensemble, tremblent de plus en plus fort.) Assez!... Assez!... (NEG, p. 141)

Like Archibald telling his actors how to stay within their roles, Le Juge directs the gestures and emotions of those whom he will judge.

Even LE VALET takes part as a director. He insists that Le Gouverneur rehearse his role, "Apprenez votre rôle dans les coulisses" (NEG, p. 23), and he directs
Village how to play his role, "Allongez et multipliez les soupirs, charmant nègrillon!" (NEG, p. 30). In his growing admiration for les nègres, Le Valet commands la Cour to listen: "Qu'on ne les condamne pas d'abord, mais qu'on les écoute. Ils ont une spontanéité exquise . . ." (NEG, p. 31). And, like the other members of la Cour, Le Valet warns of the dangers they are encountering when they first arrive in Africa: "Attention au bourrin! Qu'il ne bute pas . . . que la traîne du manteau de la Reine, ni que votre (il rote) jupon . . . n'accrochent pas les cactus. . . . Attention... attention... là... là..." (NEG, p. 133).

* * *

In the preceding we have examined the various persuading characters of Les Nègres as they used rhetoric in the command forms (both direct and implied imperatives). This examination has shown the main tendency of ARCHIBALD to be the metteur en scène, directing the tone of the play-within-the-play. To a lesser degree, ARCHIBALD directed the actions of the outside revolt. His commanding language helps to reveal his psychological motivation, as a dramatic character. ARCHIBALD is concerned that les nègres achieve their goal of mystifying their judges, la Cour, while carrying on their own private
judgment. LA REINE rhetorically insisted upon actions requisite to the roles la Cour were playing, aided by other members of la Cour (the "minor directors"). While playing her own role, LA REINE threatened les nègres through her commands to believe in the coming cycle of events in which les nègres are to take the place of la Cour and then, in their turn, are to be dominated again. Her language reveals motivation for this character who symbolizes the "White Ethic," as monarch of la Cour. Like ARCHIBALD, LA REINE, a "proper monarch," leads her set of actors toward their own group goal: to judge les nègres in the play-within-the-play.

* * *

II : EXHORTATION

FELICITE and VERTU are the two characters in Les Nègres who most frequently use the rhetorical device of exhortation (the use of repeated imperatives, direct or implied) in order to persuade others to take a designated action. Yet the two women use exhortation in quite differing ways: FELICITE evokes a consciousness of 'blackness' in the three speeches which commence characteristically with "Dahomey." At the same time, her speeches directly evoke aid from les nègres. VERTU, on
the other hand, uses exhortation to admonish Village. At first quite gently, then with swelling terror, VERTU attempts to stop Village's narration before he can arrive at the critical moment of the rape/murder. Another contrast between these two types of exhortationists concerns the intended listener. In FELICITE's use of repeated imperatives, her commands are aimed at a group, as are Archibald's in the one speech already discussed which revealed the repeated imperative. VERTU's commands are directed to Village--the individual--who also uses exhortation, himself, while playing his designated role of rapist/murderer. We shall first examine the language of Les Nègres' most powerful exhortationist, FELICITE, whose three "Dahomey" speeches contain some of the most evocative rhetoric in Les Nègres.

* * * * *

FELICITE, exhortationist of les nègres and la Cour

The first time we encounter Félicité as more than just another member of les nègres occurs as she suddenly cuts off La Reine's call for help ("Au secours. . .") by her own commands to les nègres to come to her aid. We shall notice, here, that her audience is not only les
negres onstage, but "Negres de tous les coins du monde": 21

(Soudain, Félicité se lève. Tout le monde la regarde, se tait, et l'écoute.)


Although the command form of the verb, entrer, appears only twice, the other command forms suggest parallel movement: toward her--"venez," twice; "penétrez," once; indirect commands are the repetition of the place-name, "Dahomey," the command for help, "A mon secours," and the subjunctive clause, "que me gonfle votre tumulte," all of which reinforce Félicité's desire that other blacks approach. Not only approach, but penetrate. At this point, Genet has Félicité make use of another rhetorical technique which is intended to move her audience: with the use of metaphor, Félicité transforms herself into an abstract being, beyond the concrete being who is a black actress, member of the cast, les negres. Using
juxtaposition of imperatives suggesting penetration and of the penetrable images evoked by the epithets attached to "narines," this black queen's language changes her from actress to sensuous body openings: "la bouche, l'oreille. . .narines." At the same time, the metaphoric epithets are reminders to les nègres of 'blackness'--"pavillons ténébreux, tunnels, grottes"--and are, by extension, a repetition of the general theme begun when Archibald announced early in the play, "Le tragique sera dans la couleur noire!" (NEG, p. 28). A suggestion of black magic tinges her hermetic phrase, "Géante à la tête renversée, je vous attends."22 Thus, we discover that Félicité's first major speech contains many of the themes which emerge later in the play, at the same moment that the speech's intent is an important buttressing of the 'black spirit' of les nègres. The speech is indirectly aimed at Village, as well as the group, because he is the representative of les nègres in this 'mock' trial. Although it is quite a bit shorter than the second "Dahomey" speech, Félicité here exhibits her power--through language--over not only les nègres but la Cour (over La Reine, in particular). She reveals the position she will maintain throughout the play. La Reine's reaction, at this moment, reveals the powerful effect Félicité's language--both metaphoric and
exhortative--has had upon her: "(très solennelle et presque défaillante) Ariane, ma soeur, de quel amour, je meurs..." (NEG, p. 69).

Intervening between Félicité's first and second "Dahomey" speeches is Archibald's directive to les nègres to "be black" (NEG, p. 76). We have already pointed out the exhortative language used by Archibald. If we contrast just the first two lines from Archibald's speech with Félicité's, we now readily see that the power of the theme, "be black," is reinforced by repetition of idea. Archibald had said, "Je vous ordonne d'être noir jusque dans vos veines et d'y charrier du sang noir. Que l'Afrique y circule" (NEG, p. 76). Notice that the metaphoric language of both Félicité and Archibald turns upon biological images: blacks entering black noses, mouths, nostrils (Félicité) and Africa, equating "black;" circulating in their blood (Archibald.)

Félicité's next appearance as exhortationist occurs as Village persists in hesitating to conclude his narrative/pantomime. Heralded by other characters who command Village to enter ("BOBO/Entre dans la turne, flennard!" and "TOUS/Entre dans la chambre," NEG, p. 109), Félicité commences her second "Dahomey" exhortation in which this very command, "entrez," appears nine additional times. It is her longest tirade. The speech which we
will quote in its entirety can be divided into four
different movements, each one aimed at a slightly
different audience.

The first portion, signalled immediately by the
repetition of the words "Dahomey" and "A mon secours,
Nègres," is directed again at blacks everywhere. Al­
though seemingly close to stream-of-consciousness, the
speech is quite ordered: Félicité makes abundant use of
contrasting "lists" of blacks, princes listed with their
"opposites," workers, etc., in carefully planned sets of
parallel antitheses.

At this point, the speech takes an introspective
turn: Félicité contemplates the color black, commencing
with the solid image of feet, then transforming the
physical to the abstract image of feet of all colors
(black, white, blue, red, green, yellow).

The third movement remains introspective at first--
an apostrophe to Africa. Félicité then evokes the black
heritage she shares with the others, which moves the
intended listener from herself to the listening black
cast.

After a moment of concentration--a gesture which
suggests a seer approaching a trance--the fourth movement
begins as Félicité again speaks in metaphor, abstractly
describing herself (*Afrique* and *les nègres*, symbolically)
as "un bloc de nuit," which, in the last line, becomes
"nous," as she predicts that les nègres will go down strolling through the hypnotized spectators.

For purposes of more clearly discussing this long speech (NEG, pp. 110-11), we shall present it divided into the four movements suggested above, pointing out particular exhortations in each section, along with the other rhetorical techniques employed in this fine monologue.

In part one, the dominant exhortation is the command form, "entrez," previously signalled twice by Bobo and Tous:


(NEG, p. 110)

In addition to the repeated command, "entrez," Genet has Félicité use an accumulation of other verbal commands which duplicate the general theme of "come, all blacks," the same rhetorical technique used in Félicité's first "Dahomey" speech. This use of periphrase (expanding a given statement by repetition of idea) adds urgency to the speech, as a whole. A majority of the periphrastic verbs are direct commands: "mettez-vous," "remontez," "sortez," "passez," "restez debout," "serrez-vous," "posez" and "marchez." The implied command usage of phrases is effectively combined with verbal forms. The direct command, "entrez à cheval," is expanded by implication when immediately followed by "au galop" and "hop," both of which are repeated at least once. Also implied is an extension of the black audience: Félicité is speaking both to les nègres onstage and to blacks everywhere, which is emphasized by her use of the contrast-
ing lists: a) blacks are described as rivers (metaphorically fashioned of gold) contrasting with mud, wind and rain; b) blacks are "princes," contrasted with workers in factories and fishermen; c) blacks are both the victors and the vanquished; d) various pariahs are invited: grave-robbers, hermaphrodites and barbarians. As the catalogue ends, Félicité continues to use parallelism, repeating verbal forms: "Je ne peux vous décrire tous, ni même vous nommer tous," then noun forms, "nommer vos morts, vos armes, vos charrues..." (NEG, p. 110).

In the second movement of the speech, the intended audience changes to Félicité, herself. It is an introspective contemplation, synthesizing a material part of the body ("pieds") with an abstract vision of color:


(NEG, pp. 110-111)

In allowing Félicité's imagination to suffuse 'les pieds' with a spectrum of color, Genet reiterates one of the more subtle themes in this "black versus white" battle. According to Félicité, above, and Genet, himself, in the
epigraph to *Les Nègres*, "...qu'est-ce que c'est donc un noir? Et d'abord, c'est de quelle couleur?" (NEG, p. viii), racial color is not a stable normative; it is, in fact, quite elusive and changeable.²⁵

There follows, in the *third movement*, another break in Félicité's chain of thought as she invokes Africa, although there is a continuity of technique. Félicité proceeds from self-question (above) to apostrophe, both of which at first appear to be said only for her own benefit. Upon examination, however, the epithets and metaphors which describe the object of the apostrophe—Africa—must surely be intended to further buttress *les nègres' pride of race*:

*FÉLICITE:*. . . . Tu es là, Afrique aux reins cambrés, à la cuisse oblongue? Afrique boudeuse, Afrique travaillée dans le feu, dans le fer, Afrique aux millions d'esclaves royaux, Afrique déportée, continent à la dérive, tu es là? Lentement vous vous évanouissez, vous reculez dans le passé, les récits de naufragés, les muées coloniaux, les travaux des savants, mais je vous rappelle ce soir pour assister à une fête secrète. (NEG, p. 111)

The sudden mention of a clandestine rite, following the imaginative descriptions of African history, laced with shipwreck and colonial museums of Western acculturation are intended for two different audiences: the references
should startle the listening Cour as well as command action from les nègres.

The last movement of the speech, introduced by the trance-like gesture, "Elle regarde en elle-même," transforms Africa (and, by extension, les nègres) into "night." Félicité directly commands this image (Africa/blacks/night) not to leave the stage, and indirectly commands the audience to watch, using the subjunctive. She ends by suggesting that this hypnotizing "bloc de nuit" will later leave the stage, to stroll among the powerless spectators:

FELICITE: ... (Elle regarde en elle-même.) C'est un bloc de nuit, compact et méchant, qui retient son souffle, mais non son odeur. Vous êtes là? Ne quittez pas la scène sans mon ordre. Que les spectateurs vous regardent. Une somnolence profonde, visible presque, sort de vous, se repand, les hypnotise. Tout à l'heure nous descendrons parmi eux. Mais avant...

VILLAGE: Madame... (NEG, p. 111)

Village's "Madame" interrupts Félicité's mystical moment in which the earlier hint of witchcraft practices is furthered by the reference to the hypnotizing influence of this "bloc de nuit": "Somnolence profonde..."
répand, les hypnotise."

As metaphorical language ceases, more direct language takes its place. In moments Félicité's command, "entrez,"
is repeated by various speakers, intended now specifically for Village. Archibald is first, "Entrez dans la chambre,"followed by Neige, "Entrez, entrez... délivrez-nous du mal. . .." (NEG, p. 112). Village's repetition of "Madame... Madame...", spoken in five separate sets (combined with the ritualistic chants of Neige, Bobo and Vertu), accompanies his final disappearance off-stage. With the aid of exhortation from Félicité and Archibald, the dramatic climax anticipated in the play-within-the-play is achieved.

Félicité uses exhortative language in two more major speeches: her final "Dahomey" speech and the moment where she claims that all things sweet and white will become black. Both of these speeches occur during the verbal battle between the two queens. The first is again a call to les nègres for aid, as the two women hesitate to begin their battle. The retorts pass back and forth: "reculez" / "Commence" / "A toi!" / "je peux attendre" (NEG, p. 146). At last Félicité begins:
FELICITE (les mains aux hanches, et explosant): Ah, vraiment? Eh bien, Dahomey! Dahomey! Nègres, venez m'épauler. Et qu'on ne laisse pas escalader le crime. (À la Reine.) Personne n'aurait la force de le nier. Il pousse, il pousse, ma belle, il grandit, verdit, il éclate en corolles, en parfums, et c'est toute l'Afrique ce bel arbre, mon crime! Les oiseaux sont venus s'y nicher et dans ses branches la nuit s'y repose.

(NEG, pp. 146-151)

Exhortation is explicit, with the now-familiar "Dahomey," followed by implicit exhortation: the verbal command, "venez," though not repeated in this speech, is a repetition from the two previous "Dahomey" speeches (having occurred twice in the first, once in the second). And again Genet allows Félite the imagistic use of metaphor, exactly following the same pattern set in the two other speeches; the conversion, here, transforms "Africa" into a "tree." Both of these, in turn, represent what Félite calls "mon crime." The crime, however, becomes the crime of les nègres, already carried out by Village. Therefore, Félite and "son crime" become the symbol of all blacks, intended to frighten La Reine, la Cour, and... the white audience. The last line of the speech further links together the previous image of les nègres as "la nuit" by repetition of this image, harbored by "l'Afrique ce bel arbre... dans ses branches la nuit s'y repose."
There are intervening speeches which again repeat the metaphor of "la nuit," now the symbol of les nègres. As the dialogue continues, the color contrast becomes more prominent. Félicité says to La Reine: "Si vous êtes la lumière et que nous soyons l'ombre, tant qu'il y aura la nuit où vient sombrer le jour... Sotte, que vous seriez plate, sans cette ombre qui vous donne tant de relief" (NEG, pp. 152-53). This is a heightening of the theme, "be black," with the added argument that without les nègres ("cette ombre") the whites could not exist. Later Félicité retorts to La Reine, "nous étions la Nuit en personne. Non celle qui est absence de lumière, mais la mère généreuse et terrible qui contient la lumière et les actes" (NEG, p. 154). Félicité is again employing rhetorical language in her attempt to conquer La Reine, as the metaphor, "la Nuit," personifies les nègres. She again uses antitheses, contrasting light and dark (symbolic of les blancs and les nègres).

Félicité's last speech (NEG, p. 155) which exhibits a prominent use of exhortation also repeats the symbol of "la nuit," which is used to introduce the idea that its opposite—things white—will become dominant, when transformed into black. Félicité begins with exhortation in the form of the repeated command,
"regardez," then continues on another rhetorical level, using metonomy to transform an abstract, "le noir," into the more concrete images of priests and orphans. Félicité then predicts an implied antithesis: that sweetness and good will become "le noir." Notice that the catalogue of "white" combines both the material (lait, sucre, riz, colombes, opéra) and the abstract (ciel, espérance):

FÉLICITE : Regardez! Regardez, madame. La nuit que vous réclamiez, la voici, et ses fils qui s'approchent. Ils lui font une escorte de crimes. Pour vous, le noir était la couleur des curés, des croque-morts et des orphelins. Mais tout change. Ce qui est doux, bon, aimable et tendre sera noir. Le lait sera noir, le sucre, le riz, le ciel, les colombes, l'espérance, seront noirs—l'opéra aussi, où nous irons, noires [sic], dans des Rolls noires, saluer des rois noirs, entendre une musique de cuivre sous les lustres de cristal noir... 

(NEG, p. 155)

Implied commands (the use of the future: sera, seront) add forcefulness to the other rhetorical devices of exhortation, metonomy and metaphor. Félicité's speech announces the future domination of black over white, both metaphorically and physically. \(^{27}\)

* * * *
While Félicité exhibits characteristics of a powerful seer, influencing those about her, Vertu appears to be in direct contrast. Vertu attempts little persuasion of the other blacks; her use of exhortation is limited to speeches attempting to dissuade Village with quiet admonishment. Unlike Félicité, Vertu has no long speeches; her admonishing exhortations occur in brief instances. The first of note happens when Archibald has ostracized the couple, sending them away, although they actually remain onstage, while the others retire to one side: "Archibald, Bobo, Diouf, Neige, Félicité s'éloignent, se détournant et cachant leurs visages dans leurs mains, cependant que soudain une dizaine de masques blancs apparaissent autour de la Cour" (NEG, p. 61). It is these "masques blancs" that bring about Vertu's admonishments, as she urges Village to speak softly (or not at all), since they are being overheard:

VILLAGE (à Vertu) : Vertu, je t'aime.
VERTU : Procédons doucement, Village.
VILLAGE : Je t'aime.
VERTU : C'est un mot facile à dire... Mais tu parles d'amour et tu nous crois seuls?
Regarde (elle montre la Cour). (NEG, p. 61)

Vertu advises caution, "procédons doucement," and makes
Village aware of the listening masks.\textsuperscript{29} A few lines later, as Village panics, shouting to \textit{les nègres} (who are simulating inattention, faces hidden in their hands), Vertu offers him comfort, using command forms to assuage Village's fear: "Ne crains rien... Tais-toi. Aimons-nous d'abord, si tu en as la force" (\textit{NEG}, p. 62). These admonishments suggest quiet restraint.

Her last admonishments to Village are cast in almost repetitive language: "Ne continue pas" (\textit{NEG}, p. 97); "cesse" (\textit{NEG}, p. 98); "Tais-toi" (\textit{NEG}, p. 99), although the feelings which are revealed at this later time are quite different.

In the interval between the two scenes, Village's narrative/pantomime begins, and we hear Village, himself, using exhortation in his role as rape/murderer of "la morte," pantomimed by Diouf-Marie. Village repeats one command, "écoutez," several times, always in the same context: he is commanding his "victim" to listen to his sexuality:

\textbf{VILLAGE}: ... C'est un pays lointain, madame, mais que tout mon corps pourrait vous réciter.
\textit{Ecoutez chanter mes cuisses! Ecoutez!}
\textit{(NEG, p. 91)}

He interrupts the tale, insisting Diouf-Marie wear a skirt, then goes on, in exact repetition: "Je continue. \textit{Ecoutez chanter mes cuisses, car... mes cuisses}
la fascinaient" (NEG, p. 92). Again, there is an interruption of the tale: la Mère plays her role, shouting for attention and pralines; la Boulanger enters and leaves. Village begins his tale of fascinating his victim again; each time he progresses a little closer to the climactic moment when he will describe the act—a moment which Vertu attempts to stop with exhortation. Following the last interruption, Village's exhortation parallels Félicité's, technically, as he uses repeated commands ("écoutez") then metaphor to describe sexual excitement:

VILLAGE (reprenant le ton du récit solennel) : J'étais donc tapi dans l'ombre. Et je lui murmurai : écoutez chanter mes cuisses. Ecoutez! (Il fait saillir sous son pantalon sa cuisse.) Ce bruit, c'est le miaulement des panthères et des tigres. Elles plient? Mes léopards s'étirent. Si je me déboutonne, c'est un aigle des Grands Empires qui fondra de nos neiges jusqu'à vos Pyrénées. Mais... je ne tiens pas à me déboutonner. Les feux s'allument. Sous nos doigts secs, les tambours... (NEG, p. 94)

Vertu remains silent, here and during the continuing narration, as Village adds more details, la Mère calls again and the sister (Suzanne) adds more action. These various actions finally culminate in Vertu's interruption. She will halt Village after he has described shutting the windows and causing snow to fall: "Galant,
je fermai la fenêtre. La neige tombait sur la ville" (NEG, p. 97). As the inference has already been established between the sexual act and "la neige" (above, an eagle melts snows, followed by the image of heat, "les feux s'allument"), the repeated reference to "la neige" has special implications for Vertu. It is at this moment that she cries out: "Ne continue pas" (NEG, p. 97), frightened that Village will actually describe the sexual union and the murder. Her words have no effect. Bobo, in fact, urges Village to continue: "Mais regardez comme il se donne. Il écume. Il fume! C'est un mirage!" (NEG, p. 98), at which Vertu urges him again, with commands, to stop: "Village, je te le demande, cesse" (NEG, p. 98). And it is at this point that a gesture from Village clarifies another of Vertu's fears. Village continues his narrative, describing the white victim, but he does so looking directly at Vertu:

VILLAGE (regardant Vertu) : La limpidité de votre oeil bleu, cette larme qui brille au coin, votre gorge de ciel...

VERTU : Tu délires, à qui parles-tu?

VILLAGE (regardant toujours Vertu) : Je vous aime et je n'en puis plus.

VERTU (hurlant) : Village. (NEG, p. 98)

This admonishment, using Village's name as a command, clearly establishes Vertu's feelings, which have been
disturbed by Village's narration. As we have been led to think of the two as lovers from previous portions of the play where Vertu and Village spoke of loving one another, Vertu's attempt to exhort Village to "stop" is fitting to this character who is forced to listen to her lover describing his committing the sexual act with a rival, even if that rival be the "doomed" white victim.

Further, Village now seems to be confusing the two women, speaking of one while looking directly at the other. In fact, Vertu reprimands Village for using the same vocabulary with his 'victim' as he had already used with her:

VILLAGE (se tournant lentement vers le Masque. . .): 
Vos pieds dont la plante a la couleur des pervenches, vos pieds vernis sur le dessus, ils se promenaient sur le ciment...

VERTU : Tu me l'as déjà dit. Tais-toi.

(NEG, pp. 98-99)

Her exhortive appeal, "tais-toi," again goes unacknowledged. Village continues the narration and the white dolls (replicas of la Cour) are born to Le Masque. As the two are about to go offstage ("Ils avancent tous les deux, le Masque précédant Village, très lentement en direction du paravent"), Village says, "Sous vos robes vous portez bien quelque jupon noir plus soyeux que mon regard..."; here, Vertu, "tombant à genoux," makes her final exhortive appeal, again using only his name,
Vertu's admonishments fail; Village commands Le Masque, and the narrative/pantomime continues. Vertu's exhortations—attempts to alter Village's role of rapist/murderer—fail, whereas Félicité's appear to succeed. However, Vertu's opposition to Village's narration lends dramatic tension to the plot of the play-within-the-play, and she acts more independently than Village, not being "directed" how to play her role. As a persuader, Vertu remains ineffective. On the basis of evidence just examined in Les Nègres, we can tentatively conclude that exhortive rhetoric which is used to admonish fails to move its audience. At the same time, however, an examination of admonishing language has assisted in revealing the psychological motivation of a character. With regard to exhortation as used by Félicité (and to a small extent by Archibald), we have remarked the more effective use of the repeated imperative, forcefully employed by Félicité. Where Archibald directed actions and language with his rhetorical imperatives, Félicité appealed to listeners' emotions through her use of exhortative language. We noticed also that the "intended
audience" for her exhortations was far greater than one or two characters; Félicité's long monologues are directed toward la Cour and the theatre audience. In both cases, exhortation appeared to affect that audience.

* * *

III : INSULT AND INVECTIVE

Insult, the last type of persuasive rhetoric under discussion, provides the clearest insight into emotional motivations behind characters in Les Nègres. There can be no doubt about a speaker's feelings for another character when he starts a series of name-calling, for example. This type of personal attack carries the general intent of creating emotion in the listener as well as revealing the speaker's emotions. In Les Nègres the use of insulting language typifies the two supporting characters, NEIGE and BOBO, who prod Village's narrative by ridiculing or attacking Village personally. Their use of this type of rhetorical persuasion complements Félicité's use of exhortation just examined.

FÉLICITE, hereself, also uses invective; however, the object of her ridicule and insult is La Reine, not Village.
VILLAGE also employs this linguistic technique, though more indirectly. By implication, his denigrating descriptions of his victim and of 'her' actions (suppliant compliance with his arbitrary orders) will have an emotional effect upon his listeners—la Cour and the audience. The drama never allows anyone to forget that the victim, mimed by Diouf-Marie, is a White Woman. Insults directed at Le Masque represent insults directed at la Cour and the audience, by implication.

We discover that most abusive language in the play comes from characters among les nègres; it is a fairly one-sided attack. LA REINE, however, eventually rises to her own defense during the verbal battle with Félicité. And she, as well as a couple of her Cour, make ridiculing comments either about les nègres or to one another.31 Insulting language is not typical for characters in la Cour. It is more typical among les nègres, which again reinforces the continuing offensive which les nègres pursue in their battle for domination over la Cour, who remain defensive throughout the play. As the original sense of the word, insult, was "to leap upon," this rhetorical tactic is naturally more fitting to the aggressors, les nègres.

* * *
NEIGE and BOBO, the vituperatives

The use of insult and invective is more typical of the speech of NEIGE than of any other one character in *Les Nègres*. In fact, it is remarkable to the extent that the type of language she uses symbolizes the function of her character, especially in the play-within-the-play. Bobo even describes Neige's characteristics for us, emphasizing the role we expect of her. Early in the play, as Neige pouts about being constrained by the others—"On débute toujours contre moi"—Bobo answers by characterizing her: "Vous faites intervenir votre tempérament, vos colères, vos humeurs, vos indispositions, et vous n'en avez pas le droit" (*NEG*, p. 27). By this time, Neige has already revealed her tendency toward insult. Her first insult directed to Village is "Flic déjà!" (*NEG*, p. 26), aiming a verbal attack at him for catching her in mid-flight from Archibald (who had just chastised her for disturbing the coffin's flowers). This is quite a minor personal attack upon Village, but it sets the tone for the language which Neige will typically use when speaking to him.

Her more important function is to prod Village's anger in order to continue his "confession." Neige
repeatedly accuses him of insincerity, which in this case equals "betrayal of race." At one point, she exaggerates racial characteristics--instructing Village in his goal which should be blackness, e.g., pride in black physiognomy. At the same time, her language insults the listening Cour with the violent epithets she grants the "ideal hero," so her vaunting of blackness is a two-edged sword: accusative of Village because she impugnes his honesty, and threatening to la Cour because of its violence:

NEIGE (très hargneuse) : Si j'étais sûre que Village eût descendu cette femme afin de devenir avec plus d'éclat un nègre balafré, puant, lippu, camus, mangeur, bouffeur, bâfreur de Blancs et de toutes les couleurs, bavant, suant, rôtant, crachant, baiseur de boucs, toussant, pêtant, lècheur de pieds blancs, feignant, malade, dégoulinant d'huile et de sueur, flasque et soumis, si j'étais sûre qu'il l'ait tuée pour se confondre avec la nuit... Mais je sais qu'il l'aimait.

VERTU : Non!

VILLAGE : Non! (NEG, p. 42)

The epithets describing "un nègre" point out what Village should be proud of being: "balafré, puant, lippu, camus, mangeur, bouffeur, bâfreur de Blancs."

She first describes physical characteristics, then eating
habits. It is a "lesson in table etiquette": how to eat a White. Neige then proceeds to describe the "menu" in a series of denigrating epithets for White: "crachant, baiseur de boucs...flasque...soumis." Her insistence upon the image of cannibalism is reinforced by Archibald's later speech cataloguing the recipes for various bones: "Qu'ils inventent des recettes pour les tibias, les rotules, les jarrets..." (NEG, p. 76).32

The last lines, which repeat Neige's initial suspicion of Village's intent ("Si j'étais sûre...") end with her final accusation, "Mais je sais qu'il l'aimait." The accusation brings about reaction not only in Village, as intended, but also in Vertu. Neige now continues her use of insult by attacking Vertu: "Vous pensez donc être aimée de lui, vous, la nègresse soumise?" (NEG, p. 43). And she goes on, undaunted though Archibald objects, "Neige!", turning from invective to ridicule by reminding Vertu that it is physically impossible for a black to blush:

NEIGE (à Vertu) : Rosir, rougir d'émoi, de confusion, doux termes qui ne s'appliqueront jamais à nous, sinon vous verriez monter, à toutes pompes, la pourpre aux joues de Vertu. (NEG, p. 43)

The accusation Neige began above ("je sais qu'il l'aimait") continues to be her point of attack against
Village: she accuses him of loving—not hating—the white victim:

VILLAGE: . . . vous m'aiderez? M'exciter: vous m'exciterez?
NEIGE: Moi la première, parce que j'en ai assez de vos lâchetés.

. . . vous parlez d'elle avec tendresse.

VILLAGE: Non d'elle, mais de mon geste.
NEIGE: Vous mentez! (NEG, p. 71)

Neige then repeats the straight accusation that he is lying, personnifying his behaviour as Nostalgia, and ends her accusations with a simile which compares Village to a member of the Colonial forces:

NEIGE: Vous mentez. Quand vous parlez d'elle, sur vos grosses lèvres, dans vos yeux malades, il passe une telle douceur, une si poignante tristesse que j'entrevois, monsieur, apparaître en personne la Nostalgie. Ce n'était pas votre geste que vous me décriviez. . . ni la résistance de la chair au couteau en racontant sa paupière bistrée, ni votre nausée en évoquant, sur le tapis, la chute de son corps...

VILLAGE: Menteuse!
NEIGE: . . . ni [votre] misère en songeant à sa pâleur. . . vous récitiez un grand amour. Venu de loin. . . un immense amour venait mourir ici, lècher des chevilles blanches. Vous étiez, Nègre, amoureux. Comme un sergent de la Coloniale. (Elle tombe, épuisée... ) (NEG, p. 72)
Again, the rhetoric is aimed in two ways: the accusations against Village are meant to transform him from an individual into the proud representative of les nègres: the black who kills the white victim. On the other hand, the language describing a groveling Village ("amour venait. . .lècher des chevilles blanches") with its following simile comparing him to a Colonial Sergeant is aimed by implication at the listening Cour (and the white audience). Neige continues with the worst vision she can imagine for a black: changing color! And the accusation that Village was pondering changing color is followed by the implied reference to rotting flesh, "une peau verte":

NEIGE (comme cherchant d'autres insultes et les vomissant avec des hoquets) : Jurez! Comme d'autres changent de familles. . .de Dieux, jurez que vous n'avez pas eu l'idée de changer de couleur pour l'atteindre. Mais ne pouvant pourtant songer au blanc royal, vous vous êtes désiré une peau verte : elle vous est restée!

(NEG, p. 73)

Neige returns to this image in her last insult to Village, accusing him of personal cowardice (killing a white woman already dead):

VILLAGE : . . .Vous êtes sûrs que c'est utile d'aller jusqu'au bout?
NEIGE : Tout à l'heure vous n'hésitiez pas à
m'insulter, et vous n'auriez pas la force de tuer une Blanche déjà morte? (NEG, p. 85)
The taunt in Neige's accusation befits the role she has played throughout the play-within-the-play: that of prodding Village into accomplishing the rape/murder.

The last insult Neige voices occurs late in the play, as la Cour are being sent "aux Enfers." As she directs La Reine to take her place among the "dead," Neige again uses epithets to downgrade whiteness (and, by contrast, praise blackness): "... l'escalier de la mort est interminable. Et clair comme le jour. Pâle. Blanc. Infernal" (NEG, p. 179).

BOBO plays a minor role, complementary both to Félicité and to Neige. Her use of invective language occurs but three times. In the first instance, the speech is both exhortive and insulting, aimed directly at la Cour; in the second instance, Bobo repeats one of Neige's insults; in the third, she forms a chorus with Neige in which the two urge Village toward the final moments of his narrative.

Bobo's first attack begins with metaphoric language, describing the scent of the corpse in terms which exhort les nègres to be proud; then, turning directly to the listening Cour, she begins to describe their contrasting
lack of scent in graphic terms:

BOBO (à Archibald) : La puanteur vous effraie, maintenant? C'est elle qui monte de ma terre africaine. Moi, Bobo, sur ses vagues épaisse, je veux promener ma traine! Qu'une odeur de charogne me porte! Et m'enlève! (À la Cour.) Et toi, race blafarde et inodore, toi, privée d'odeurs animales, privée des pestilences de nos marécages...

ARCHIBALD (à Bobo) : Laissez parler Vertu.

(NEG, p. 32)

The insult, here, to la Cour derives from the tone of insolence Bobo uses in her choice of vocabulary, contrasting what is not normally celebrated (carrion: "une odeur de charogne me porte") with the odorlessness of the white race, using images generally considered unpleasant ("odeurs animales" and "pestilences de nos marécages"). Earthy, swampy odors continue to be celebrated by Bobo, as she notes their deprivation among the white race.

The next insults we hear Bobo use are directly spoken to Village, supporting Neige's accusation that he is lying:

VILLAGE : ... Je m'apporte. Je regarde un peu autour de moi...


(NEG, pp. 87-88)
Not only does Bobo openly attack Village for lying; she also calls him "sournois." Then, as she and Neige urge that Village follow Diouf-Marie offstage, she commands, "Entre dans la turne, flémmard!" (NEG, p. 109), emphasizing Village's hesitancy.

We can add to Bobo's name-calling that of Archibald, who calls Village both "Imbécile" (NEG, p. 42) and "monsieur le malin" (NEG, pp. 60-61). Félicité labels him "le plus lâche de tous les Nègres" (NEG, p. 111). In each of these instances, the use of an insulting epithet describing Village—sournois, flémmard, imbécile, malin, lâche—is intended to spur Village's anger so that he can play his role properly, according to the text.

* * *

VILLAGE, narrator of insult

Village also uses the language of invective as he describes the object of his crime. In addition, through commands ordering Le Masque to execute puppet-like gestures, Village's enactment of the prelude to the crime suggests the degraded position he insists upon with his representative of la Cour, his White Victim. All of
these insults, both direct and implied, occur at various places during Village's oft-interrupted narration.

Although the 'victim' is transformed several times throughout the narration, Village's physical description is consistently denigrating. At first, she is the "beggar who reeks of wine and excrement":

VILLAGE: . . . il y avait une vieille clocharde accroupie--ou allongée--sur un tas de guenilles. . .

* * *

. . . Elle puait le vin, comme toutes celles qu'ils rejettent sur les quais. . .

* * *

(NEG, p. 33)

. . . Je l'ai étranglée avec mes deux mains. . .

Un peu dégoûté à cause de la gueule de la vieille, d'une odeur de vin et d'urine, à cause de la crasse, monsieur Hérode Aventure a failli dégueuler. . . (NEG, p. 34)

The insult is further amplified by his relating that his accomplice, M. Hérode Aventure, was almost made ill from the smells.

Village's next insult is--like Bobo's--an insult by inversion as he contrasts the racial color of les nègres with that of les blancs. Village imputes that whiteness is watered-down wine, and he describes the color white as jackal-like: "Notre couleur n'est pas une tache de vinasse qui déchire un visage, notre visage n'est pas un
Village's comments denigrating paleness are then paralleled in Vertu's ironic praise of pallor. Village returns to a more definite insult regarding his victim a bit later by describing her as "la vieille garce" (NEG, p. 94); then she is directly addressed as "salope" (NEG, p. 99), and described as "captive et domptée. Car elle était habile et réputée parmi ceux de sa race" (NEG, p. 100). As we are in the midst of a narrative which is establishing Village's sexual power over his victim, the relatively colorless adjectives, captive, domptée, habile and réputée, carry disparaging innuendoes regarding the sexual "reputation" of his victim. Seconds later, Village enacts the gestures of dominating his victim with orders, as Diouf-Marie mimes "her" reactions. Village arbitrarily orders Le Masque to play the piano, then to stop:

VILLAGE : . . .(Au Masque) Jouez-nous donc une mélodie de Charles Gounod. (Docile, le Masque s'assied sur un invisible tabouret et joue, face au public, sur un invisible piano.) Stop! (Il cesse de jouer. . .) (NEG, p. 101)

Village then orders her to pray, directing her position exactly:

Following a series of commands during which he again addresses Le Masque as "salope!" (NEG, p. 105), Village addresses a parting insult to his victim: "Comme vous marchez bien, croupe familière et noble!" (NEG, p. 106). The familiarity of the phrase, "croupe familière," carries an insulting connotation not only for Le Masque, but also for la Cour. Village's insults, like Neige's, are double-edged broadswords attacking both an individual white and the group, la Cour.

* * * *

FELICITE and LA REINE: the verbal battle

The verbal battle that engages FELICITE and LA REINE reflects a variety of rhetorical language. We have already pointed to the use of exhortation by both queens. In the use of the rhetoric of invective, Félicité rules uppermost, attacking La Reine with ridicule and insolence.

Félicité begins by suggesting that La Reine is weak: "Dis que tu es incapable de trouver le premier mot," but La Reine stalls her, "Je peux attendre, j'ai l'Eternité pour moi" (NEG, p. 146). Félicité then
attempts intimidation with more insolence, vaunting her power in blackness and implying the weakness of whiteness, which she transforms into a groundfog: "J'aurai le cadavre du fantôme de ton cadavre. Tu es pâle, mais tu deviens transparente. Brouillard qui flotte sur mes terres, tu vas t'évanouir tout à fait..." (NEG, p. 152), closely followed by the outrageous threat that La Reine will become no more than a body wind: "Nous lâcherons un pet, vous serez à la porte" (NEG, p. 152). As La Reine retaliates with a counter-threat, "Je vais vous faire exterminer," Félicité uses the insulting epithet, "Sotte," and reminds La Reine of the importance the shadow (les nègres) holds in relation to the thing which casts the shadow (les blancs): "...que vous seriez plate, sans cette ombre qui vous donne tant de relief" (NEG, p. 153). At this point La Reine's power begins to drift away, not unlike "Afrique... continent à la dérive..." (NEG, p. 111). By the time Félicité has concluded her argument, using the metaphor of night for les nègres and weak light for les blancs, La Reine and les blancs (la Cour and the audience) have become a groundfog, without substance. The contrast between the two--light and the absence of light--is paralleled by Richard Coe to concepts found in Spinoza:
As in Spinoza, "all determination is negation": every positive implies a negative, and vice-versa. Positive and negative, Figure and Image, are inseparable, and all reality is the simultaneous coexistence of the two. Every Judge implies a Criminal, every Bishop a Sinner to be forgiven, and if there were no Sinners, then Bishops would cease to exist, their function having vanished.  

It is only with some intervening moral support from her Cour that La Reine at last summons retaliatory remarks in this "positive/negative" argument. La Reine provides a delayed counter-attack to Félicité's attack on her vanity: "Vous n'empêcherez, ma belle, que je n'ai été plus belle que vous! Tous ceux qui me connaissent pourront vous le dire. Personne n'a été chantée plus que moi. Ni plus courtisée, ni fêtée. Ni parée..." (NEG, pp. 153-54). La Reine then listens as Félicité outlines the coming power of les nègres with her exhortation which transforms the "good and sweet" from white to black. La Reine tries one last insult, calling Félicité "Idiote!" (NEG, p. 156). From this point on, the debate bounces evenly back and forth, as the two women argue about future generations.

La Reine uses insult in an interesting way in two other instances in the play. In the first, she ridicules les nègres by commenting to Le Gouverneur upon Archibald's appearance: "...mais laissez donc ce nègre parler:
voir sa pauvre bouche qui bâille, grande ouverte, et ces colonnes de mouches qui en sortent... (elle regarde mieux, penchée) ou qui s'y précipitent... (NEG, p. 24).

Although the ridicule is not spoken directly to Archibald, its impact is felt by him and the listening nègres. In the other instance, we are listening not to "La Reine," but to the "actress" who played her role, speaking outside the play-within-the-play. Here, she plainly states her opinion of "l'abominable vie des Blancs" to the audience:

CELLE QUI ETAIT LA REINE : Nous nous étions couverts d'un masque à la fois pour vivre l'abominable vie des Blancs, et pour vous aider à vous enliser dans la honte, mais notre rôle de comédien tire à sa fin. (NEG, p. 165)

This self-conscious description of role-playing blatantly explains to the audience that the sole purpose of the deceptive play-within-the-play was to arouse that audience's feelings of shame, although that shame is to be allayed by the distancing of play-acting.43

* * *

We have just seen that Neige and Bobo both made use of invective in order to urge Village's narrative. We also remarked the extent to which vituperation was helpful
to Village's manipulation of Diouf-Marie, his "victim." La Reine and her Cour were less prone to employ the rhetoric of insult. The insult's most powerful weapon is to produce anger in the listener. By this method we can conclude that in *Les Nègres* this type of rhetorical device is particularly useful in furthering the slight action of the drama.

* * *

**GENERAL SUMMARY, Imperatives, Exhortations and Insults in *Les Nègres***

What is the relationship between the use of rhetorical language and the dramatic movement of the play, *Les Nègres*? Although a few characters did not reveal themselves to be persuading characters, attempting to manipulate others by the various uses of Imperatives, Exhortations or Insults, the major characters used these rhetorical devices, which gave life to the movement of the drama. In addition, the examination of specific language used helped reveal some of the psychological motivation for those characters who used persuasive language.

With the use of command forms, Archibald revealed
quite rapidly that la Cour and the audience are intended to watch a play-within-a-play, as he directed les nègres in their roles. At the same time, Archibald desired that their play-within-the-play shock the listening whites (Cour and audience) into impotence, which revealed the psychological motivation for his actions and the type of dialogue chosen to fit his characterization.

When the importance of Ville de Saint-Nazaire's role as liaison between an "outside judgment" and the one occurring onstage was clear, the purpose of Félicité's exhortations to "be black" more clearly became a thematic part of both actions. Thus, Félicité's motivations can be joined to Archibald's. They are both leaders of les nègres with a common goal: to ridicule les blancs and to strengthen the black pride of race.

The use of both Imperatives and Exhortations also aided the pace of a drama in which not much action really took place. The use of rhetorical language— including metaphoric images—preserved continuity in what otherwise would be, perhaps, episodic bafflement. The characters' use of Invective supported the "hate of white" which empowered les nègres to conquer la Cour. This conquest was achieved not through logic, but through emotional persuaders: with fear, "witchcraft," and scorn. Thus, the use of rhetoric assumed an important
place in the over-all context of the play. As Insult and Exhortation heightened the proportions of the battle between the two queens (a debate made richer by metaphor), drama took place in the hall.

The use of rhetorical techniques not only helped Genet's characters to influence each other; his rich use of language became an integral part of the movement in a play which otherwise contains little dramatic tension. In addition, such language--when examined closely--has assisted the student of literature to bring to the surface the psychological motivations behind the actions and some of the dialogue of major characters in Les Nègres.
CHAPTER TWO

Le Balcon

I : IMPERATIVES

"C'est une image vraie, née d'un spectacle faux." -- Genet, Le Balcon

Directors of the Framing Play

The "framing tale" has been a device of French prose, as well as of other literatures, which was well-defined by the early seventeen-hundreds. Although Jean Genet, as a twentieth-century dramatist, does not use the "framing" device in the same way as the early prose writers did, that is, attempting to introduce a fiction under the guise of historical truth, he does--in a new sense--employ a similar tactic.

In Le Balcon, as in Les Nègres, Genet presents his readers and spectators with two levels of reality: a ritual takes places as play-within-the-play which is set within the limits of some "outer reality." In the case of Les Nègres, we noted the "outside judgment" which was handed down offstage and reported by the liaison character, Ville de Saint-Nazaire. We also noted the disparity
between les nègres and la Cour as 'actors'—with 'real lives' who quite often bicker among themselves and who must be directed back to the script by Archibald—and the roles which these same 'actors' portray within portions of a play-within-the-play.

Similarly, in Le Balcon we shall see just such a juxtaposition: the "framing play" concerns the day-by-day reality of the world outside the walls of Irma's Grand Balcon (a world of rebellion, led by Roger and Chantal) as well as the daily organization of life within that "maison d'illusions" (BAL, p. 71). Genet urges us to believe in this 'reality,' which will contrast with the plays-within-the-play: the various scenarios enacted within the chambers of the brothel. More importantly, the play-acting of those clients who come to enact the roles of Juge, Evêque, and Général will contrast sharply with these same characters when they "become" Juge, Général, Evêque and Reine. Madame Irma passes through an opposite transition, however. Irma travels from an "outer reality" as brothel madame to role-playing as La Reine in the "inner reality," and, in the last seconds of the play, she reverts to the Irma of the "framing play," once again existing in the "outer reality."

We shall notice that imperatives are used as
persuasive rhetoric in both the "framing play" and in the various plays-within-the-play. Let us first consider the characters who use persuasive rhetoric in the "outer reality," that is, the "framing play."

IRMA, scenario 'directrice' and 'boss' of Le Grand Balcon

In the beginning tableau of Le Balcon, Mme Irma controls her client, L'Evêque, and the scene itself with instructions to La Fille. All these directives are issued from Irma's position as "directrice" of the brothel and occur--it is understood--following L'Evêque's enactment of his particular scenario. Irma commands La Fille to remove the costume used by L'Evêque: "Défaîs-lui ses lacets. Déchausse-le. Et en l'habillant qu'il ne prenne pas froid" (BAL, p. 16). She directs the same commands to L'Evêque, himself, reminding him that his time is up. Irma uses both direct commands and the imperative adverb, "vite," which gains its command-form from the context:

IRMA: Approchez, on va vous déshabiller!
L'ÉVEQUE (suppliant, presqu'à genoux): Non, non, pas encore.
IRMA: C'est l'heure. Allons! Vite! Plus vite!
(BAL, p. 17)

With more commands Irma assures him of the inauthenticity of La Fille's "sins," which is essential, as they are part of the play-within-the-play: "(à l'Évêque) Mais
ne l'écoutez pas. Pour ses pêchés, soyez rassurés. Il n'y a pas ici... " (BAL, p. 18). Irma then defends her employee, commanding L'Évêque to stop questioning La Fille, "Mais laissez-la, avec toutes ces questions" (BAL, p. 19).

A bit later, following the additional time granted L'Évêque, Irma—efficient 'directrice'—again commands him to leave, "Ça suffit, maintenant. Il va falloir partir" (BAL, p. 22), using an indirect command. As L'Évêque continues to dally, Irma remains unrelenting in the situation, again commanding La Fille to disrobe him and insisting that this client assist in his own transformation (from role of Évêque to his 'real' life):

IRMA (à la fille) : Ne l'écoutez plus et déshabillez-le. (À l'Évêque qui est descendu de ses patins ...) Aidez-vous, vous êtes raide.

* * *

(à la fille) Passe-lui son veston...

L'ÉVEQUE (regardant ses fripes qui s'entassent à terre) : Ornaments, dentelles, par vous je rentre en moi-même... Le jugement dépend de moi et me voici face à face avec ma mort.

IRMA : C'est beau, mais il faut partir...

(BAL, pp. 23-24)

At last Irma effects his departure, managing L'Évêque's behaviour with both direct and indirect commands.

In the third tableau she plays a similar role, controlling the client, Le Général, by cutting short his
chivalric offer to go to the aid of someone they've heard scream. A Percival, Le Général offers to rescue the lady—"Je m'élançe... "—which Irma prevents by replying, "Pas d'histoires ici, calmez-vous. Pour le moment, vous êtes en civil" (BAL, p. 46). Irma takes part, as well, in directing the scenario details, which are, in this case, boots spotted with blood. When this client voices his suspicions that there is no blood (as he cannot see it), Irma responds quite pragmatically: "Il a séché. N'oubliez pas que c'est le sang de vos batailles d'autrefois" (BAL, p. 47). Here, not only does she attempt to control Le Général by allaying his fears; Irma also takes part—like another Archibald—in the script-writing of his approaching session with La Fille. This reveals the Irma who is in complete control of her Balcon, making sure her clients' wishes are confirmed during their sessions by having the chambers properly equipped.

A different 'directrice' appears in the fifth tableau. As Irma discusses the business affairs of le Grand Balcon with Carmen, she cuts short Carmen's discussion of Le Chef de la Police, which is an aside from Carmen's bookkeeping job: "reprenons nos comptes, veux-tu?" (BAL, p. 65). A bit later, Irma takes the same stance with Carmen, this time abruptly discontinuing Carmen's nostalgic description of the scenario she used to enact for the "comptable du
Crédit Lyonnais." Irma reverts "to business": "Assez. Il ne vient plus. ... Occupe-toi de mes additions" (BAL, p. 68). Irma, "the boss," commands Carmen, "the bookkeeper," back to work.

At the end of the same tableau, Irma retains a business-like calm, following the sudden shooting of Arthur, as she orders imperially: "Mais d'abord qu'on enlève Arthur. Je vais recevoir l'Envoyé" (BAL, p. 116).

This is the same Arthur whom Irma persuades with rhetoric earlier in the same tableau, as she commands him to search for Le Chef de la Police. This particular portion of the tableau emphasizes a discrepancy in the character of Arthur, himself, who appeared to be her chosen "macquereau," to whom Irma renders accounts. This bragging pimp changes to coward as Irma exposes his fear of the outside rebellion. Not only does she insist, with direct and indirect commands, that he locate Georges, le Chef de la Police. She also forces Arthur into a position and an action which reflect the extent of his cowardice: Irma commands him to kneel and spray her with scent. Her initial commands that he locate Georges are couched in less direct terms; she uses subjunctives as softened, indirect commands:

IRMA: ... Pour l'instant il faut absolument que tu ailles à la rencontre de Georges...
ARTHUR (d'une insolente ironie) : Tu dis, bien-aimée?

IRMA (sèche) : Que tu ailles à la rencontre de monsieur Georges. Jusqu'à la Police s'il le faut et que tu le préviennes que je ne compte que sur lui. (BAL, pp. 93-94)

Rather than obeying, Arthur continues to play the "mac."

Irma now becomes more demanding, using the familiar form of direct imperative:

ARTHUR (légerement inquiet) : Tu blagues, j'espère?...

IRMA (soudain très autoritaire) : Le ton de ma dernière réplique devrait te renseigner... Et toi tu n'as plus à jouer au mac tendre et méchant. Fais ce que je t'ordonne, mais avant prends le vaporisateur. (A Carmen qui apporte l'objet.) Donne-le lui (sic)7.9 (A Arthur.) Et à genoux!

ARTHUR (il met un genou en terre et vaporise Irma) :
Dans la rue?... Tout seul?... Moi?...

(BAL, p. 94)

The change in tone from "Que tu ailles" to "Fais ce que je t'ordonne" begins to affect Arthur, though he continues to hesitate, complaining that he had dressed to remain indoors. He protests—"Je n'ai que la soie pour me protéger..."—which has no effect on this Irma who demands ornaments from Carmen then again insists that Arthur carry out her earlier command, "Et toi vaporise" (BAL, p. 95).

Irma remains inexorable, despite Arthur's fears that he will be recognized. She commands, "Rase les murs. (Un
Prends ce revolver" (BAL, p. 95). Irma relents, somewhat, in view of Arthur's fear of the gun: "Pas de revolver," but she continues her insistence that Arthur finds Georges, "Mais enlève ton chapeau, va où je te dis, et reviens me renseigner" (BAL, p. 96).

At this moment, another aspect of Irma's role in this "framing play" emerges, and she notifies Arthur of an approaching role, instructing him exactly how to play the part, much as Archibald directs his "actors." Here, Irma uses the future as an indirect command:

ARTHUR : . . .Qu'est-ce que c'est?
IRMA : Je croyais te l'avoir dit : un cadavre.
* * *
. . .Tu resteras immobile, et on t'ensevelira.
Tu pourras te reposer.
* * *
. . .ne m'interroge plus. Va. (BAL, p. 96)
* * *
(ARTHUR sort, toujours à genoux.)
(BAL, p. 97)

Later in the same tableau Irma also instructs Georges how to play his role as Chef de la Police. Just as Irma cut short Carmen's dreaming, she arrests Georges' dreaming and instructs him in the practical aspects of "how to become" a hero:

IRMA : Il faut tuer encore, mon cher Georges.
LE CHEF DE LA POLICE : Je fais ce que je peux...
IRMA: ... Il faut t'enfoncer dans la nuit, dans la merde et dans le sang. (Soudain angoissée.)
Et tuer ce qui peut rester de notre amour...
LE CHEF DE LA POLICE (net): Tout est mort.
IRMA: C'est une belle victoire. Alors, il faut tuer autour de toi. (BAL, p. 102)

Like a skillful dramatic director, Irma analyzes the necessities of Georges' role, which will include killing their love as well as the rebels ("Il faut tuer... t'enfoncer... tuer ce qui peut rester... ").

In the last tableau (the ninth) Irma again directs the actions of her clients. As she directs their departure, Irma leaves behind her own role and again is Irma, 'directrice.' She issues direct commands to Carmen and outlines her own duties:

LA REINE /IRMA/: Vous passerez par la petite porte qui donne sur la ruelle. Une voiture vous attend. (BAL, p. 203)
* * *
/A l'Envoyé... Irma. Appelez-moi madame Irma, et rentrez chez vous. Bonsoir, monsieur. * * *
(BAL, p. 204)
... Carmen?... Tire les verrous, mon chéri, et place les housses... (Elle continue d'éteindre.) Tout à l'heure, il va falloir recommencer... tout rallumer... s'habiller... Redistribuer les rôles... endosser le mien...
(BAL, pp. 204-05)

At this moment a dramatic change in "audience" occurs, and
the full thematic impact of the entire play hinges upon
Irma's direct commands to the theatre audience, itself:

IRMA: . . . ( . . . face au public) . . . préparer le vôtre
... juges, généraux, évêques, chambellans,
révoltés qui laissez la révolte se figer. . . il
faut rentrer chez nous [sic: vous], où tout,
n'en doutez pas, sera encore plus faux qu'ici
... Il faut vous en aller. . . Vous passerez à
droite, par la ruelle. . . C'est déjà le matin.

(BAL, p. 205)

As the play ends on the above lines, Irma attempts direct
persuasion of the audience (or reader) with commands which
are both direct ("préparer") and indirect ("il faut ren­
trer," "il faut vous en aller," "vous passerez"). Rima
Drell Reck points to the audience-involvement implicit in
Irma's speech in her article, "Appearance and Reality in
Genet's Le Balcon," Yale French Studies' issue on "New
Dramatists" in 1962:

Genet the moralist strikes his double blow: play­
acting is a delight, but not so simple when the game
is for real; perhaps all the "roles" of society are
merely roles, that is, interchangeable, arbitrary
assignments in a general masquerade or ritual. Genet
has put society itself to the question and along with
it, all of us who live its masquerade "for real."

IRMA persuades Carmen

Within the "framing play" we have already noticed one
of Irma's relationships to Carmen: Irma dominates her
"bookkeeper" with imperatives. In the fifth tableau
we also see another Irma, one who dominates with rhetoric the inner Carmen. Irma uses fear-inspiring invocations in order to frighten a Carmen who is thinking of leaving le Grand Balcon (as Chantal has already done). Irma uses the future in order to create a frightening vision of what will happen to Carmen if she leaves. It is a useful method to manipulate Carmen's way of seeing herself in the future:

CARMEN: . . . tout en moi se tourne vers ma fille . . . Elle est dans un vrai jardin...
IRMA: Tu ne pourras pas aller la rejoindre et d'ici peu le jardin sera dans ton coeur.
CARMEN: Taisez-vous!

(BAL, pp. 68-69)

Irma's use of the future, above, becomes especially effective upon Carmen as she describes the possible fate awaiting both Carmen and her daughter. We shall note a bit later how very effective is a threat to Carmen's daughter.

In addition to "imagined terror," Irma also tries the ploy of flattery upon Carmen. As they speak of prostitution as a profession, Irma urges Carmen's "pride of
profession" with commands to transform that pride with brightness, "tu as raison, mon chéri, d'exalter ton métier et d'en faire une gloire. Fais-le briller. Qu'il t'allumine, si tu n'as que lui" (BAL, pp. 81-82). Irma urges this pride mainly to convince Carmen she should accept the new role offered her earlier: that of sainte Thérèse (BAL, p. 73). Irma even tries to make Carmen see herself as a heroine: "Dans toute révolution, il y a la putain exaltée qui chante une Marseillaise et se virginise. Tu sera celle-là?" (BAL, p. 83). As this vision seemingly fails to convince, Irma reverts to using Carmen's daughter in the argument, this time visualizing the "glory" of her death:

IRMA : Morte ou vivante, ta fille est morte. Songe à la tombe, ornée de marguerites et de couronnes en perles...
CARMEN : J'aurais aimé la revoir...
IRMA : Tu garderas son image dans l'image du jardin et le jardin dans ton cœur sous la robe enflammée de sainte Thérèse. Et tu hésites?...

(BAL, p. 85)

Here, Irma is again directing a role she wishes enacted in le Grand Balcon. The next lines reveal how personal is Irma's desire that Carmen remain in the brothel. As Carmen admits, "Vous savez bien que je vous suis attachée," the Sapphic relationship is further clarified by Irma's proferred "vision": "Je t'enseignerai les chiffres... que nous passerons des nuits, ensemble, à calligraphier"
(BAL, p. 85). Irma's motivation for employing flattering and threatening commands is now clear: Carmen is preferred above both of Irma's male lovers (Georges, the former lover, and Arthur, before whose role of "mac" Irma pretends to bow).

L'ENVOYÉ, catalyst between the "little people" and the "powerful"

In the seventh tableau the royal Envoyé stands as liaison between the world of the "framing play" and various illusions which at first take place as role-playing. Subsequently, when no longer role-playing, these characters become part of the "framing play." Initially, the clients whom we see enacting a chosen role in Irma's Balcon wish to be Evêque, Juge and Général in private, only. The fourth major client, Roger, also desires the privacy of le Grand Balcon in order to play the role of Le Héros. Except for the latter, these "little people" have no initial desire to live the roles which they assume in Irma's chambers. When they are role-playing, they form a part of the plays-within-the-play. However, once L'Envoyé has persuaded Irma to "become" La Reine, the "little people" follow her lead and "become" their roles. Thus, when Irma is convinced, the three clients follow her "example" (although Irma--unlike them--appears to be playing rather than "living" that role). Hence, the
catalytic quality of the liaison character, L'Envoyé.

L'Envoyé begins his direction of Irma quite subtly, only mentioning that La Reine is safe and will wait, "Rassurez-vous, Sa Majesté est en lieu sûr. Et mort, ce phénix saurait s'envoler des cendres... la Reine attendra le temps qu'il faut" (BAL, p. 140). Although his language is paradoxical regarding La Reine (here, as elsewhere), L'Envoyé implies she is dead by suggesting the rising of a Phoenix, as the Phoenix myth informs us that this fabulous bird dies in flames only to be reborn from its own ashes, within a predictable time.\(^{13}\) As his very next lines are addressed directly to Irma—"Je dois rendre hommage, madame, à votre sang-froid. Et à votre courage. Ils sont dignes des plus hauts égards..." (BAL, p. 140)—the object of L'Envoyé's mission obliquely becomes apparent. Obliqueness changes to clarity a few lines later, following praise of Irma's physique:

L'ENVOYE (l'examinant, la détaillant) : Bête superbe! Cuisses d'aplomb! Épaules solides... Tête...
IRMA (riant) : On l'a déjà prétendu... Je ferai une morte présentable... Mais si la Reine est morte...
L'ENVOYE (s'inclinant) : Vive la Reine, Madame.

(BAL, p. 141)

The significance of his exclamatory command, "Vive la Reine, Madame," is not missed by Irma; however, she remains
unconvinced, and even commands L'Envoyé to search for La Reine, "Je n'aime pas qu'on se foute de moi. Regainez vos histoires. . .Au lieu de rester là, à dire vos âneries, allez fouiller les décombres du Palais pour retirer la Reine. Même un peu rôtie..." (BAL, p. 141). As Irma remains unconvinced, even now, that she should accept the role, L'Envoyé gives her a script to follow, describing what qualities are needed: "(À Irma et lui passant la main sur la nuque) Oui, il faut des vertèbres solides... il s'agit de porter plusieurs kilos..." (BAL, p. 142). And he continues to demand she accept the role, despite the protests of a jealous Georges. L'Envoyé commands Irma to decide, at the same time prevailing upon Georges to accept her as La Reine. He also reminds Georges that he is, as yet, "unqualified":

L'ENVOYE (avec autorité À Irma) : Autour de cette amande... nous forgerons un royaume d'or et de fer. Mais il faut vous décider vite.
LE CHEF DE LA POLICE (furieux) : Avant moi! Ainsi Irma passerait avant moi!... Si je suis au pouvoir, je veux bien imposer Irma...
L'ENVOYE : Impossible. C'est d'elle que vous devez tenir votre autorité. Il faut qu'elle apparaîsse de droit divin. N'oubliez pas que vous n'êtes pas encore représenté dans ses salons.

(BAL, p. 143)

 Shortly, Irma makes her decision: "Ma décision est prise. Je suppose que j'étais appelée... et que Dieu me bénira."
Je vais aller me préparer dans la prière... " (BAL, p. 147). When L'Envoyé inquires whether everything is in readiness, Irma issues her first "imperial commands," "Prévenez Carmen! Qu'elle fasse brosser les costumes" (BAL, p. 147). The catalyst--L'Envoyé--has done his work. Having accomplished with rhetoric his persuading "mission," he directs both Irma and Georges with abrupt commands:

L'ENVOYÉ : . . . dépêchez-vous. Allez dans vos appartements. Brodez un interminable mouchoir... (Au chef de la Police.) Vous, donnez vos derniers ordres à vos derniers hommes. (Il va à un miroir... d'un ton canaille.) Et faites vite. Je perds mon temps à écouter vos conneries.

(BAL, p. 149)

Confirmation of the effectiveness of L'Envoyé's persuasion is immediately seen in the following tableau (the eighth), as L'Evêque, Le Juge, Le Général and Irma as La Reine appear on a balcony outside le Grand Balcon, in process of becoming their roles. The only incomplete transition from the "outer" to the "inner" reality is represented by Le Héros, Georges. We know that his role is still incomplete because his costume is of natural proportions, and he has not yet donned the cothurni, "Tous sont de proportion démesurée, géante--sauf le Héros, c'est-à-dire le chef de la Police--et revêtus de leurs costumes de cérémonie, mais déchirés et poussiéreux" (BAL, p. 151).
LES TROIS PHOTOGRAPHES create artificial "reality"

Les Trois Photographes who appear early in the ninth tableau are the most obvious persuading characters in Le Balcon. Their directions to each of Les Trois Figures enable the latter to appear to have begun "living" their chosen roles. Les Figures realized earlier that they are not really living their parts, although they were able to fool the crowd in the procession.  

L'Evêque clearly expressed the desire they all now have to live their roles, as with the future tense he "directs" his own role: "Pour moi, chef symbolique de l'Église de ce pays, j'en veux devenir le chef effectif... je vais signer des décrets et nommer des curés" (BAL, pp. 155-56). Yet L'Evêque is the first to show his fear and inability to become that very "chef effectif," and he needs direction from Le 1er Photographe.

Initially, L'Evêque appears to be commanding the situation by ordering the photographers to hurry. However, we soon realize Le 1er Photographe must take charge, as the commands switch from one to the other:

L'ÉVEQUE (sévère) : ... Il vous faudra opérer vite, et en silence si possible. Vous prendrez chacun de nos profils, l'un souriant, l'autre plus sombre.
LE 1ER PHOTOGRAPHE : ... (À l'Évêque.) En place pour la prière...
L'ÉVEQUE (sans bouger) : Dans une méditation ardente.
LE 1\textsuperscript{er} PHOTOGRAPHE : Ardente. Arrangez-vous.

L'EVEQUE (\textit{mal à son aise}) : Mais... comment?

(BAL, p. 157)

We notice with L'Evêque's last line that his earlier confidence disintegrates ("... comment?"). "Instruction" comes immediately through implied commands (noun phrases):

LE 1\textsuperscript{er} PHOTOGRAPHE : ... Alors, à la fois face à Dieu et face à l'objectif. Les mains jointes. La tête levée. Les yeux baissés...

(BAL, pp. 157-58)

Again L'Evêque is uncertain, "Comme ceci?" which his "director" answers with more commands:

LE 1\textsuperscript{er} PHOTOGRAPHE : ... Tournez-vous... un peu...

(\textit{Il lui tourne la tête.})

L'EVEQUE (\textit{en colère}) : Vous dévissez le cou d'un prêlat!

LE 1\textsuperscript{er} PHOTOGRAPHE : Monseigneur, vous devez prier de trois quarts.

(BAL, pp. 158-59)

Even a complaint from L'Evêque ("Vous dévissez le cou...") has no effect upon this director, who calmly orders him to present a particular profile.

The drama of the tableau is especially heightened, here, by the gestures of Le 1\textsuperscript{er} Photographe as he borrows the hand of Le Juge and the monocle belonging to Le Général to serve as proper "accessories" for L'Evêque:

LE 1\textsuperscript{er} PHOTOGRAPHE : ... Monsieur le Procureur?

(Le Juge s'approche.) Pour un \textit{sic} cliché, vous me prêtez votre main une minute
(d'autorité il le prend par la main et le place) mais, que votre main seule paraisse... Là... retroussez un peu votre manche... A l'Évêque.) Tirez la langue. Plus grand. Bien. (Il cherche toujours dans ses poches... Il regarde... A l'Évêque.) Ne bougez pas, c'est parfait. Vous permettez? (Sans attendre la réponse il retire de l'orbite du Général son monocle... Il oblige le Juge à tenir le monocle au-dessus de la langue de l'Évêque, comme s'il s'agissait d'une hostie, et il court...)

We notice that Les Trois Figures offer little resistance to the directions of Le 1er Photographe. Le Juge responds to "que votre main seule paraisse... retroussez un peu votre manche." L'Évêque obediently acts upon "Tirez la langue." And Le Général passively accepts the command implied by gesture, as Le 1er Photographe "retire... son monocle." Again, gesture directs Le Juge "à tenir le monocle..."

While Le 1er Photographe is arranging L'Évêque in a "proper" prayer stance, Le 2e Photographe prepares Le Juge, ordering both facial expression and hand position for this Juge who, shortly before, was so sure of his projects which would assure him of the "real" power of Judgeship: 17

LE 2e PHOTOGRAPHE (au Juge) : S'il vous plaît,
allongez un peu les traits de votre visage. Vous n'avez pas tout à fait l'air d'un juge. Une figure plus longue...

LE JUGE : Chevaline? Morose?

LE 2ᵉ PHOTOGRAPHE : . . . Et les deux mains de devant sur votre dossier. . . (BAL, p. 158)

Monsieur le Procureur, si c'était possible, un peu plus de sévérité... la lèvre pendante...
(Dans un cri.) Oh! parfait! Ne touchez à rien! ( . . . Le 2ᵉ PHOTOGRAPHE se glisse. . . )

Le Général is a bit more sure of how he wishes to appear (he suggests he needs a marshall's baton), yet commands from Le 3ᵉ Photographe are needed to effect the proper stance of Général; the moment requires Le Photographe's ingenuity to fashion a baton from a sheet of paper:

LE GENERAL : Malheureusement je n'ai pas de bâton...

LE 3ᵉ PHOTOGRAPHE (au Général) : Nous avons ce qu'il faut. Tenez, et prenez la pose. (Il roule une feuille de papier en forme de bâton de maréchal, il le tend au Général qui prend la pose. . . )

It is interesting to note, here, the parallelism between the "false details" (mentioned especially as Irma and Carmen discuss the various roles played out in the salons) which are obligatory to all of the scenarios enacted in le Grand Balcon and the false details.
introduced, above, by two of Les Trois Photographes. In the case of Le Général, the false detail which lends credence to his pose is the rolled-up paper representing "un bâton de maréchal," as noted. In the case of L'Évêque, the "host" is invented from the monocle commandeered from Le Général. Through both verbal commands and gestures Les Trois Photographes "invent" an "authentic" picture with "false" people and props. L'Envoyé comments rather fittingly, "C'est une image vraie, née d'un spectacle faux" (BAL, p. 161).

L'ÉVEQUE, director of Les Figures

The three "little men" who attempt to cross from their role-playing (in their private scenarios) into the "framing play" encounter much difficulty. One of them, L'Évêque, provides the other two with peer guidance. He is the most verbal of the three and recognizes early in the ninth tableau that there is no turning back. L'Évêque also defines the responsibilities of their new "lives," urging definite behaviour with commands: "Il dépend de nous que cette mascarade change de signification. Employons d'abord des mots qui magnifient. Agissons vite, et avec précision. Pas d'erreurs permises" (BAL, p. 155).

L'Évêque also realizes how much Les Figures actually
owe to their symbols of office: the costumes which represent Évêque, Juge, Général. As the other two rail against Georges (they command him to have patience while waiting for his role to be confirmed in Irma's chambers, BAL, pp. 168-69), L'Évêque commands Georges (as well as the two listening Figures) that they must make their ornaments serve them:

L'ÉVEQUE (au Chef de la Police) : . . . La pureté ornementale... ne se retrouvera plus... Nous allons vivre dans la lumière, mais avec ce que cela implique. Magistrat, soldat, prêtre, nous allons agir afin de réduire sans cesse nos ornements! Nous allons les faire servir! Mais pour qu'ils servent, et nous servent... Il faut que vous les reconnaissiez le premier et leur rendiez hommage. (BAL, pp. 171-72)

Despite the positive position taken, above, by L'Évêque, these "little men" continue to find it difficult to "live" their roles. Comments which Benjamin Nelson makes in his article, "The Balcony and Parisian Existentialism," perhaps clarify their difficulties:

The Great Figures are all now constrained to be the actual beings who wear these outfits; from this eventualty they shrink in fear, dreading to abandon the only hold they have upon existence, which is to be the image that Irma is becoming through metamorphosis. Genet is continually suggesting that once the metamorphosis has moved beyond a certain point, there is an actual loss (and an apparent gain) of vitality. Vitality can come now in two ways: vitality in the first sense is identified with nearness to actual existence in all its contrariety. There, one's every movement is cued by existence... In the second sense, however... significance
and vitality are acquired through a role. . . The Great Figures are forced into the frightening choice of having to live the parts of "Bishop," "General," "Advocate." They don't know what living means. They fear that every move they make, every word they utter may be the wrong one. They feel lost in the role.20

Nelson is, of course, discussing these characters from an existential point-of-view, examining their "choices," in Sartrean terms. Relative to our division between the "framing play" and the "inner reality," Nelson's point that there are two "vitalities," one bound to "actual existence," the other bound to role-playing, sharpens the discrepancy and the similarity between the roles these characters "live" and "act."

LE CHEF DE LA POLICE: Georges, the chauvinist

The greatest difference between Les Trois Figures and Le Chef de la Police lies in development of character. Whereas the "little men" already have designed and acted-out their visions of Evêque, Juge and Général, Georges' role within le Grand Balcon has yet to be written, as well as cast. He develops his scenario onstage, in opposition to their already scripted "plays," which were developed before Le Balcon ever commenced. For the most part we know this character only in the "framing play," while he is waiting to be added to the Nomenclature. His is a delayed appearance. He first arrives onstage as late
as the fifth tableau. Upon this arrival, he "predicts" his own future, directing his own "role" with the use of the future:

LE CHEF DE LA POLICE : . . . La révolte y est tragique et joyeuse, contrairement à cette maison . . . Donc, je joue ma chance aujourd'hui même. Cette nuit je serai dans la tombe ou sur le socle . . .

(BAL, p. 98)

Georges continues to visualize his "role," seeing it multiplied in Irma's mirrors, paralleling his notion that if he describes the role often enough (multiplying it with words), it will take substance:

LE CHEF DE LA POLICE (avec force) : Mon image grandit de plus en plus, je t'assure. Elle devient colossale. Tout, autour de moi, me la répète et me la renvoie . . .

(BAL, p. 101)

* * *

. . . Personne encore! Mais j'obligeraï mon image à se détacher de moi, à pénétrer, à forcer tes salons, à se refléchir, à se multiplier. Irma, ma fonction me pèse. Ici, elle m'apparaîtra dans le soleil terrible du plaisir et de la mort. (Rêveur) De la mort...

(BAL, p. 102)

The use of the implied future—with the verb, devenir, as well as the use of the future tense, obligeraï, apparaîtra—emphasizes the desires Georges has for the role he awaits. It is at this moment that Irma reminds him with implied commands that this role requires killing ("Il faut tuer
encore," p. 102). Moments later, the dream tomb taking on the proportions of a giant Alexandrian monolith, Georges commands Irma to be present in that implied future scene. We see from her quite pragmatic reply that Irma evades such fanciful manipulations:


IRMA : Je te remercie. (A Carmen.) Le thé, Carmen. (BAL, p. 103)

More realistically, Georges assumes his daily position of an officer accepting graft. It is in this portion of the tableau that he first appears quite chauvinistic, as he shoves Irma about, demanding his percentage of the day's gross. At this moment, Georges is responding emotionally to Irma's taunts concerning Arthur:

IRMA : . . . cela ne t'a pas toujours ennuyé que je t'apparaisse sous les apparences de ce corps magnifique /Arthur/ . . . Je peux te redire...

LE CHEF DE LA POLICE (gifle Irma qui tombe sur le divan) : Et ne chiaîe pas, ou je t'écrase la gueule. . . J'illumine la ville aux putains incendiées. (Très doucement.) Tu m'en crois capable?

IRMA (dans un souffle) : Oui, chéri.

LE CHEF DE LA POLICE : Alors, fais-moi les comptes. Défalque si tu veux le crêpe de Chine d'Apollon.22 Et dépêche-toi, il faut que je rejoindre mon poste. . . (BAL, p. 113)
The commands used by Georges--"fais-moi les comptes" and "dépêche-toi"--are in fine contrast to Arthur's earlier attempts to control Irma in the same tableau. Arthur posed questions or made statements, whereas Georges, above, gave commands in the same situation:

ARTHUR: Tu as fait combien, aujourd'hui?
IRMA (sur la défensive): Carmen et moi, nous n'avons pas fini les comptes.
ARTHUR: Moi si. D'après mes calculs, ça va chercher dans les 20,000.

In the seventh tableau, Georges attempts to force L'Envoyé to be precise in his description of La Reine. At first he insists only on clarity:

L'ENVOYE (impassible): La Reine ronfle et elle ne ronfle pas...
LE CHEF DE LA POLICE (toujours plus menaçant): Passons. Vous m'avez dit que le Palais était en danger... Que faut-il faire?... Où en est donc la révolution? Soyez clair.
L'ENVOYE: Jugez-en par l'état de cette maison et par le vôtre... Tout semble perdu.

As L'Envoyé remains impassive, disdaining precise language ("La Reine est debout sur une jambe au milieu d'une chambre vide et elle..."), Georges becomes impatient and more demanding with his commands, "Assez!... Pour moi, la Reine doit être quelqu'un. Et la situation concrète. Décrivez-la avec exactitude"
We have already noticed Georges' chauvinistic concerns which here again emerge, as L'Envoyé is in the process of convincing Irma to become La Reine. In addition to Georges' command, "Irma, ne l'écoute pas!" (BAL, pp. 142-43), Georges further reveals his chauvinism with the following protest: "Avant moi! Ainsi Irma passerait avant moi! Tout le mal que je me suis donné pour être le maître ne servirait à rien" (BAL, p. 143). It would seem Georges can no more accept Irma as having royal power over him than he can allow her an "equal partner" relationship in the business affairs of le Grand Balcon.

As often happens in Genet, this character attempts but does not succeed in his use of persuasive rhetoric.

*        *        *

Within the "framing play," which is the "outer reality," we have examined the imperative forms (direct and indirect commands) used by some of the major characters in Le Balcon. Madame Irma gave commands to both clients and prostitutes, as she pursued the daily business of running le Grand Balcon, her "maison d'illusions." We also studied Irma's attempts to retain Carmen in that maison, urging her with threats and with
flattery to remain. We discovered that the royal emissary, L'Envoyé, fulfilled a vital role by acting as catalyst, transforming Irma through persuasive language from the class of "little people" to a position of power (which she plays as in a role in the "inner reality," next to be observed). Once Irma consented to become "La Reine," we noted that the influence of L'Envoyé reached as far as those clients who formerly acted out the roles of Evêque, Juge and Général, in that Irma's acceptance encouraged their own. Les Trois Photographes were instrumental in helping Les Trois Figures to fill their "living" roles. We also noted that L'Evêque, once "living" his role, became spokesman for the other two Figures, directing them how to "live" their power positions. Finally, we examined the commands Georges, Le Chef de la Police, used to attempt supremacy over Irma and to force L'Envoyé to precise language. These actions occurred outside the plays-within-the-play; the following discussion will examine persuasive rhetoric inside the "inner reality," that is, within those plays-within-the-play.

DIRECTORS within the Frame

The play-within-the-play is less obvious in Le Balcon than in Les Nègres. Rather than two distinct sets of
characters enacting one play-within-the-play, in Le Balcon we have several plays-within-the-play (framed by the "outer reality"), performed by various sets of characters. As this complexity can be confusing, the discussions are ordered according to tableau. Those tableaux which are relevant are as follows: the first tableau presents the scenario of L'Evêque. The second tableau clusters around Le Juge; the third stars Le Général and La Fille; and the final scenario in tableau nine features Carmen, who instructs Roger as Le Héros, and then Georges, who steps into that role. The study attempts to examine only those portions of the above tableaux in which characters use persuasive rhetoric while role-playing, within the "inner reality."

le 1er Tableau

The client in the first tableau is L'Evêque, and the only commands we hear him voice occur somewhere in the fringe area between role-playing and being himself. Because his particular session is already finished by the time the drama begins, we cannot witness what he might have said to his "co-star," La Femme. What we do hear are his commands to Irma and La Femme to remain silent. When Irma inquires too closely into the "plot," L'Evêque commands silence:
IRMA : . . . Et qu'est-ce que nous avons accompli ce soir? . . . Adoration perpétuelle?
L'EVEQUE (grave) : Ne parlez pas de ça maintenant.
C'est fini . . .

(BAL, p. 14)

We note that this command is not sufficient. Irma remains inquisitive, which brings about an implied command from L'Evêque, the single word, "assez":

LA FEMME : . . . Ensuite ma confession...
IRMA : Après?
L'EVEQUE : Assez!
LA FEMME : C'est tout. À la fin mon absolution.

(BAL, pp. 14-15)

L'Eveque's primary insistence is upon secrecy and veracity (BAL, pp. 17-20). Near the end of the same scene, he demands extra time to contemplate his role ("Laissez-moi seul," BAL, p. 20), and Irma allows him a few more minutes alone, within his role.

le 2e Tableau

There are three characters who use persuasion in the second tableau, and during this scenario we are allowed to witness most of the "play," although it has already begun.

La Voleuse has the upper hand at the beginning, forcing Le Juge to crawl about, licking her boots. The speech is repeated almost exactly at the end of the tableau, creating a cycle which shows us that La Voleuse remains in final
control of the scenario action through her use of language, despite what occurs during the interim:

LA VOLEUSE (tendant son pied) : Pas encore! Lèche!
Lèche d'abord... (Le juge fait un effort pour ramper encore...) (BAL, p. 27)

* * *

(dans un cri) : Pas encore! Lèche! Lèche! Lèche d'abord! (BAL, p. 41)

The relative positions of the two characters (standing and crawling) is symbolised near the end of the scenario within the language which La Voleuse insists upon: she commands Le Juge to use vousvoiement:

LE JUGE : Dis moi où? Ne sois pas cruelle...
LA VOLEUSE : Ne me tutoyez pas, voulez-vous?
LE JUGE : Mademoiselle... Madame. Je vous en prie... (BAL, p. 39)

The moment he begins to comply marks the moment he will revert to his crawling position on the floor ("Il se jette à genoux," BAL, p. 39).

The second persuading character, Le Bourreau, takes charge of the scenario by controlling both La Voleuse and Le Juge. When the two of them--much like Village and Vertu--stray from the scenario, Le Bourreau reminds them of the requisite timing and dialogue, using both direct and indirect commands:

LE JUGE : ... dis-moi que tu es une voleuse.
LA VOLEUSE : Oui, monsieur le Juge!
LE BOURREAU : Non!
LA VOLEUSE (le regardant, étonnée) : Non?
LE BOURREAU : C'est pour plus tard.
LA VOLEUSE : Hein?
LE BOURREAU : Je dis : l'aveu doit venir en son heure. Nie.  

(BAL, pp. 28-29)

Le Juge then confirms this "stage direction." In affirming that La Voleuse must first deny the charges, so she can repent, Le Juge is repeating the "direction" just given by Le Bourreau, when he says, "Tu dois nier d'abord, puis avouer et te repentir" (BAL, p. 29). Also at this moment, Le Juge restates what the scenario requires of La Voleuse, using indirect commands, "De tes beaux yeux je veux voir jaillir l'eau tiède. Oh! Je veux que tu en sois trempée" (BAL, p. 29).

A bit later, Le Bourreau must again act as prompter (quite like Archibald), commanding La Voleuse not to use his "real" name (Arthur), which she had just cried out:

LA VOLEUSE (dans un cri) : Arthur!
LE BOURREAU : Qu'est-ce qui te prend? Ne m'adresse pas la parole. Réponds à monsieur le Juge. Et moi, appelle-moi Monsieur le Bourreau.  

(BAL, pp. 33-34)

Later Le Bourreau also uses a single noun, "Ta gueule!" to command La Voleuse to stop. The insult ("shut up!") implies an order to return to the script, as she was referring to the "outside" rebellion (BAL, p. 36). Here, again, his role is quite similar to Archibald's in Les
The third character to use persuasive rhetoric is Le Juge, whose "script" they are enacting. He commands actions of both La Voleuse and Le Bourreau, in keeping with defining his own role as Le Juge. In order to "prove" to himself that La Voleuse is a thief, he orders Le Bourreau to search her skirts, using the future tense (indirect imperative): "(Au bourreau.) Passe-lui la main sous le jupon, tu trouveras la poche, la fameuse poche Kangourou" (BAL, p. 27). Le Juge continues defining his own role through the use of indirect command to La Voleuse, defining her role at the same time:

LE JUGE : . . . Ecoute : il faut que tu sois une voleuse modèle, si tu veux que je sois un juge modèle. Fausse voleuse, je deviens un faux juge. C'est clair? (BAL, p. 30)

Later, Le Juge also directs how she must play that role, allowing Le Bourreau to whip her in order that Le Juge may intervene; this means, too, that she must deny the theft so that she will be whipped, so that he can, judge-like, intervene:

LE JUGE : . . . [à la Voleuse] Nous sommes liés : toi, lui, moi. Par exemple, s'il ne cognait pas, comment pourrais-je l'arrêter de cogner? Donc, il doit frapper pour que j'intervienne et prouve mon autorité. Et tu dois nier afin qu'il
te frappe. . . (BAL, p. 30)

The same insistence occurs twice more, as Le Juge directs his own future role—"J'aurai à juger tout cela. . . Je vais être juge de tes actes!" (BAL, p. 34)—and again as he emphasizes the role of La Voleuse in relationship to his own role:

**LE JUGE:** . . . Mon être de juge est une émanation de ton être de voleuse. . . Tu ne refuseras pas d'Être une voleuse? Ce serait mal. Ce serait criminel. Tu me priverais d'être! . . mon amour, tu ne refuseras pas? (BAL, p. 38)

In the latter speech Le Juge shows less control of his listener because he inverts his indirect imperatives with negation ("Tu ne refuseras pas d'Être une voleuse?"). In between the two above speeches to La Voleuse, Le Juge gained more authority by transforming himself into Minos, "Roi des Enfers," and Le Bourreau into Cerberus, the watchdog of his "Enger":

**LE JUGE:** . . . Toi, voleuse, espionne, chienne, Minos te parle, Minos te pèse. (Au Bourreau) Cerbère?

**LE BOURREAU (imitant le chien):** Houah, houah!

**LE JUGE:** Tu es beau! . . . *(Il lui retrousse les lèvres.)* Montre tes crocs? Terribles. Blancs. (BAL, p. 35)

Thus, we notice that Le Juge is most "in control" when he, himself, shifts to fantasy: **Minos** has more power than **Juge**.
The next play-within-the-play is presented in full. In addition, Genet also allows us to witness preparations for the scenario to be enacted. We have already remarked Irma's influence on this client, Le Général, before the scenario begins. We shall notice that a preoccupation with "dressing" for the part is followed by the required "undressing," which takes place within the scenario. La Fille's commands to Le Général generally concern his preparations for playing-out his role of "glorious, dying hero." Usually, Le Général's commands direct the reactions he desires of his "horse," Colombe, the role to be filled by La Fille. As there is approximately equal emphasis (equal dominance) distributed between these two, their commands will be examined together.

As La Fille commands this client to remove his street clothes, he counters by commanding her to her knees:

LE GÉNÉRAL : . . . Mon fier coursier! Ma belle jument, avec toi nous en avons gagné des galops!
LA FILLE : Et ce n'est pas fini! . . . Retirez votre pantalon et vos souliers, que je vous habille.
LE GÉNÉRAL (il a pris la badine) : Oui, mais d'abord à genoux! A genoux! Allons, allons, plie tes jarrets, plie...

(BAL, p. 48)

Then, seconds later, Le Général (another Archibald) directs how La Fille shall play her role:
LE GENERAL : ... maintenant, tu vas m'aider et répondre à mes questions. C'est tout à fait dans l'ordre qu'une bonne pouluche aide son maître à se déboutonner, à se dégâanter, et qu'elle lui réponde du tac au tac. Donc, commence par dénouer mes lacets.

(BAL, p. 49)

By this time Le Général has begun the transformation into his role by donning the caricatured costume of that role. 25

Next will follow La Fille's continuing commands to Le Général to disrobe, and his counter-commands that she help him:

LA FILLE : Qu'est-ce que je fais? Déboutonnez-vous.

(BAL, pp. 49-50)

Le Général's next command, an indirect one, orders his mount to be "costumed" with bit and bridle, "Tu auras le mors, la bride, le harnais, la sous ventrière. . . ."

(BAL, p. 50). However, once à cheval in his imagination, Le Général becomes carried away and must be brought back to this script--and the act of preparing for "death"--by this pragmatic "domestique." Her reminders bring him back to the subject of necessary props for the scenario:

LE GENERAL : Ecumer rose et pêter du feu! . . . les chemins poudreux, sur les monts. . . de l'aurore au crépuscule et du crépuscule...
LA FILLE : Rentrez la chemise. Tirez les bretelles . . . Vous voulez le sabre?
LE GENERAL: Comme celui de Lafayette, qu'il demeure sur la table... mais cache les vêtements... (BAL, pp. 50-51)

The short drift into "outer reality" ("cache les vêtements") disappears as Le Général commands that La Fille verify his "gloire" by counting his medals ("La tunique? Bien. Il y a toutes les médailles? Compte," BAL, p. 51).

La Fille again orders Le Général to costume himself, "Boutonnez-vous tout seul, mon général" (BAL, p. 52), so as not to delay her narrative of the fantasy most important to the scenario: descriptions of approaching war, the widowed, the war dead, then Death, itself (BAL, pp. 52-55). As La Fille describes Death, seated upon his shoulders, Le Général orders her to halt the narrative, "correcting" her timing: "Arrête, arrête, ce n'est pas encore le moment mais je sens que ce sera magnifique" (BAL, p. 54). Moments later they diverge from the scenario and discuss the "outer reality" (the insurrection), and it is La Fille's turn to correct the scene, recalling Le Général to the required text, "ça ne nous regarde pas. Continuez. Vous disiez... ensuite?" (BAL, pp. 54-55).

In his last long speech, Le Général combines directions to his steed, La Fille, with directions to himself. In the first section of this part of the scenario, he commands her readiness and his own path toward death (BAL, p. 55). In the latter part, he directs La Fille's actions and bids himself farewell:
LE GENERAL : . . . A toi, maintenant. Tu vas baisser la tête et te cacher les yeux, car je veux être général dans la solitude. . . pour mon image, and mon image pour son image, et ainsi de suite. Bref, nous serons entre égaux. Colombe, tu es prête? (La fille hoche la tête.) Alors, viens. Passe ta robe baie, cheval. . . Salut! (Il salue son image dans le miroir.) Adieu, mon général! (Puis il s'allonge dans le fauteuil. . . et salue le public, en se tenant aussi rigide qu'un cadavre. . .)

(BAL, pp. 55-56)

And he adds his final command, directing what La Fille should report:

LE GENERAL (sursautant) : Colombe!
LA FILLE (se détournant, en pleurs) : Mon général?
LE GENERAL : Ajoute que je suis mort debout! (Puis il reprend sa pose.)

(BAL, p. 56)

These two characters (using rhetoric to convince) enact kindly, rather than sadistic, roles. Their imperatives appear to have an affectionate tone, generally absent in Genet's theatre.

9e Tableau

In the final tableau there are two characters who direct others with imperatives during a scenario. Carmen is the first, while playing the role of guide for Roger, who has decided to emulate Le Héros, the role long-awaited by Georges, le Chef de la Police. Georges, himself, is the second, as he gives orders while playing the role which
Roger will have terminated with self-castration.

In contrast to the previous scenario assistants already examined, Carmen must direct almost every action as Roger enacts Le Héros. With short noun phrases, she directs his actions, insistent upon the "proper way" to smoke a cigar, for example:

CARMEN (s'approchant et lui tendant un cigare) :
Offert par la maison.
ROGER (il met le cigare à sa bouche) : Merci.
CARMEN (intervenant) : Le feu : là. Ici, la bouche.
(Elle tourne le cigare dans le bon sens.) C'est votre premier cigare? (BAL, pp. 185-86)

She corrects his vocabulary, as well, and with the future as indirect command, helps him follow this unrehearsed script:

ROGER (touchant les murs) : Ainsi, c'est mon tombeau?
CARMEN (rectifiant) : Mausolée. (BAL, p. 186)

Carmen then supplies Roger with stage directions, telling him where to go, and when to begin:

CARMEN : . . .(Elle monte l'escalier souterrain.)
Tout à l'heure, vous descendrez plus bas.
* * *
(BAL, p. 187)
. . . Tout est au point. C'est à vous de faire le reste.

ROGER (inquiet) : Tu sais, je cherche, moi aussi. . .
(BAL, p. 188)

Carmen orders the entrance of L'Esclave, who assists Roger in the balance of the scenario: "Approche!"
(L'Esclave entre en rampant)" (BAL, p. 189), and further directs Roger, insisting he ignore the outside world (the "outer reality") and that he make L'Esclave speak:

ROGER (très triste) : Oui. Tout est foutou... Et le plus triste c'est qu'on dit : "la révolte était belle!"

CARMEN : Il ne faut plus y penser. Et ne plus écouter les bruits du dehors... Ici vous êtes chez vous. (Montrant l'esclave) Faites-le parler. (BAL, pp. 190-91)

Carmen, above, has filled a position similar to Archibald's, "directing" a hesitating "hero" with rhetorical imperatives.

The only other true persuading character in the last scenario is Georges, as he issues imperial commands that he be brought food. He describes his future, "directing" the final portion of Le Héros' scenario. At this point, Georges has taken Roger's place in the mausoleum:

LE CHEF DE LA POLICE : . . .Qu'on prévienne les cuisines! Qu'on m'envoie pour deux mille ans de boustifaille!

* * *

. . .(Il montre le tombeau.) Maintenant je vais pouvoir être bon... et pieux... et juste...
Vous avez vu?... . . . (BAL, p. 201)

Georges' last command is to the entire group watching his scenario: "Pensez à moi!" (BAL, p. 202), as he shuts off all entrances to his "tomb."
We have examined imperatives used within the "inner reality" as persuasive language in Le Balcon. In general, their use, within each scenario, is similar to language used by les nègres when they joined into Village's narrative and enacted roles which helped him tell his tale. In Le Balcon's first tableau, L'Evêque insisted upon privacy; in the second, the three players cued one another (Le Juge directed the roles of La Voleuse and Le Bourreau; La Voleuse and Le Bourreau also directed Le Juge's role). In the third tableau, La Fille and Le Général told each other how to play their parts, using imperatives to effect the "proper" acting within the scenario. It is only in the last tableau that the scenario being played is unrehearsed. This time, Carmen directs Roger in the role of Le Héros. Later, Georges ends the scenario by commanding food before shutting off the tomb from the rest of the players.

The major difference in the way in which imperatives were used in the two "realities" lies in the goal of the characters in each "reality." In the framing play or the "outer reality," imperatives kept pace with everyday demands (Irma ran her business and used rhetorical imperatives to sway Carmen into remaining in le Grand
Balcon). Imperatives were also effective in transforming the clients from living their daily lives to living a role, guided by L'Envoyé into the transformation and assisted by Les Trois Photographes, once the roles were assumed as real.

In both realities, imperative language was used to affect the behaviour of others, both in and out of role-playing. There were duplications of the "director's duties" which we saw most often performed by Archibald in Les Nègres, as various characters in Le Balcon prescribed certain language or particular actions to fit the scenario of the moment.

II : EXHORTATIONS

The major users of exhortation in Le Balcon appear in the sixth tableau and are Roger and Chantal, whose admonishments to one another closely resemble Vertu's admonishments to Village. Other tableaux in which some degree of exhortive language appears, in the form of repeated imperatives or admonishments, are the first, in which L'Évêque exhorts Irma for solitude; the second in which Le Juge admonishes his fellow "players" and Le Bourreau exhorts Le Juge; the fifth in which Irma and Carmen admonish one another, and the ninth, where Georges,
then Carmen, are the exhortationists.

**Chantal and Roger : le 6e Tableau**

Chantal's opening lines are those of a lover, begging Roger to remember and to wait for her: "Garde-moi, si tu veux, mon amour, mais garde-moi dans ton coeur. Et attends-moi" (BAL, p. 117). As she tries to dispel his jealousy ("Tu es jaloux de qui, ou de quoi?") Roger admonishes her language use: "Chantal, je t'en prie, ne sois pas vulgaire" (BAL, p. 118).

Following the barter for Chantal as figurehead for the rebels, she continues to voice admonishments: "Rassure-toi, j'ai mon étoile" (BAL, p. 122); she also pleads with Roger to let her go and directs his thinking ("Nous ne serons pas séparés"): 

- **ROGER :** Encore une minute, mon amour. . .
- **CHANTAL :** . . .ma colombe, laisse-moi partir.
- **ROGER :** Je ne supporterai pas les minutes que je passerai sans toi.
- **CHANTAL :** Nous ne serons pas séparé. . .je murmurais des mots d'amour. . .et j'écouterai ceux que tu me diras. (BAL, pp. 124-25)

Chantal continues trying to convince Roger to allow her to leave, admonishing him not to be afraid, and describing—with the future tense—the vision of her own role as leader of the insurrection:

- **CHANTAL :** Ne crains rien, mon amour. . .Je leur
parlerai d'une voix sévère, je leur dirai ce que le peuple exige. Ils m'écouteront car ils auront peur. Laisse-moi partir.

ROGER (dans un cri) : Chantal, je t'aime!

(BAL, p. 125)

As Roger continues to raise objections, Chantal repeats "Laisse-moi partir" (BAL, p. 126) a third time, the repetition adding forcefulness to this admonishing exhortation.

Roger continues to try to change her decision: "Jamais tu ne sauras leur parler" (BAL, p. 127), using the future in the negative to describe his own interpretation of her future role. Chantal disagrees, replying, "Je saurai mieux que personne" and describes her aptitude for the role, even directing Roger's future (with indirect command, "tu seras fier..."):

CHANTAL : Je saurai mieux que personne.

* * *

J'inventerai les gestes, les attitudes, les phrases... tu seras fier de ma victoire.

* * *

... Eux, ils ne savent que se battre et toi que m'aimer. C'est le rôle que vous avez appris à jouer. Moi, c'est autre chose. Le bordel m'aura au moins servi, car c'est lui qui m'a enseigné l'art de feindre et de jouer. J'ai eu tant de rôles à tenir, que je les connais presque tous. Et j'ai eu tant de partenaires... 

ROGER : Chantal! (BAL, pp. 127-28)

Roger's exclamation, "Chantal!" is an admonishment in
exactly the same tone as Vertu's "Village!" As one of the rebels orders Chantal, "Assez... Va," Roger appeals to her one last time: "Chantal, reste!" (BAL, p. 128). However, exactly like Vertu and Village, the admonishments do not work: Chantal leaves, as did Village, "Chantal s'élöigne, emmenée par les révoltés" (BAL, p. 128).

Minor Exhortations: L'Eveque, le 1er Tableau

We viewed Irma as the curious "directrice" earlier, as she attempted to pry into the secrets of L'Eveque's scenario. In retaliation, L'Eveque uses indirect commands to exhort Irma to leave him alone:

L'EVEQUE (effrayé) : Non, non. Ces choses-là doivent rester et resteront secrètes. Il est déjà indécent d'en parler. ...Et que toutes les portes soient fermées. Oh, bien fermées, closes, boutonnées, lacées, agrafées, cousues...

(BAL, p. 15)

Once having ordered "que toutes les portes soient fermées," L'Eveque adds a catalogue of synonyms for "fermées" which reinforces his command by repetition. In addition, after being granted more time by Irma, L'Eveque orders her and La Femme away, using a series of commands which become exhortation by reason of their repeating the same idea ("sortez, laissez-moi, écoutez aux portes, rentrez /tout à l'heure/)":

L'EVEQUE : ... (A Irma, très doucement.) Sortez!
Laissez-moi seul!
As Irma returns too soon, interrupting his monologue, L'Evêque repeats the command, "laissez-moi," and adds the more urgent "foutez le camp":

IRMA (passant la tête par la porte entre-baillée) :
Vous avez fini?
L'EVEQUE : Mais laissez-moi, nom de Dieux. Foutez le camp! Je m'interroge. . .(BAL, p. 22)

The above exhortations have positive results: Irma leaves, for a time.

Le Juge and Le Bourreau, le 2⁰ Tableau

At the point mentioned earlier when La Voleuse commands Le Juge to keep his distance, Le Juge obeys her command and goes on to plead with her, admonishing her behaviour:

LE JUGE : Mademoiselle... Madame. Je vous en prie. (Il se jette à genoux.) . .Ne me laissez pas dans une pareille posture, attendant d'être juge?. . .
* * *
. . .vous ne me jouerez pas un tour pareil. . . Vous ne ferez pas qu'il n'y en ait pas? Comprends-moi bien : que tu te dissimules... que malicieusement tu me fasses languir. . .
(BAL, p. 39)
The use of the negative futures—"ne me jouerez pas... ne ferez pas"—emphasize what L'Evêque admonishes La Voleuse to do by stating opposite actions. He then plays his role more confidently and uses clear, affirmative commands, directing her role—"que tu te dissimules, que tu me fasses languir."

In quick succession Le Bourreau will take over the strong exhortations by repeating the command, "rampez":

LE JUGE : ... tu veux que je rampe?
LE BOURREAU (au juge) : Rampez!
LE JUGE : Je suis fier!
LE BOURREAU (menaçant) : Rampez! (Le juge... se couche à plat ventre et rampe...) Bien. Continuez. (BAL, pp. 39-40)

Le Bourreau repeats the command a third time:

LE JUGE : ... ce n'est pas condamner que je désire surtout, c'est juger... (Il tente de se redresser.)
LE BOURREAU : Rampez! Et dépêchez-vous, il faut que j'aille m'habiller. (BAL, p. 41)

At this point, La Voleuse closes the cyclic scenario, repeating the command, "Lèche!" three times in answer to Le Juge's imploring "dites-moi que vous êtes une voleuse..." (BAL, p. 41).

Irma and Carmen, le 5ᵉ Tableau

Early in the fifth scene, Irma "corrects" Carmen's
attitude toward their clients—"J'exige le respect des visiteurs. Visiteurs!" (BAL, p. 61)—yet this demanding statement does not prevent Carmen's analytical and unflattering retort concerning the returns Irma receives through *le Grand Balcon*: "Pour vous oui : le fric et les raffinements!" (BAL, p. 61). This comment brings out a conciliatory Irma who tries to charm Carmen through admonishments (in this case, a negative imperative): "*(elle se veut conciliante)* Ces yeux! Sois pas injuste. Depuis quelque temps tu es irritable" (BAL, p. 61).

As Irma goes on to mention that everything will improve—indicating "Monsieur Georges" will put things right—Carmen explodes into satirical retort, "Ah, celui-là" (BAL, p. 61). This exclamation brings forth another negative imperative from Irma, admonishing Carmen: "Ne dis rien contre le chef de la Police. Sans lui nous serions dans de beaux draps" (BAL, p. 62). A bit later, as Irma attacks the touchy subject of Carmen's dreams of her daughter, it is Carmen who uses admonishment to chide Irma:

IRMA : ... *(Rêveuse.*) J'ai mes fêtes... et toi, les orgies de ton coeur...

CARMEN : N'arrangent pas les choses, patronne. Ma fille m'aime. ... (BAL, p. 66)

Realizing she has an advantage, Irma continues to provoke Carmen, accusing her of planning to bring the daughter into the brothel. Carmen's use of her name—"Madame Irma!"—
exactly parallels the same admonishing use already noticed in Vertu in *Les Nègres* and Roger in another scene in *Le Balcon*:

IRMA : . . . *(Riant aux éclats.*) Ah, ça c'est trop fort, enfin, pour quelqu'un, mon bordel, c'est—à-dire, l'Enfer, est le Ciel! C'est le Ciel pour ta gosse! *(Elle rit.*) Plus tard, tu en feras une putein?

CARMEN: Madame Irma! *(BAL, p. 66)*

A bit later, Carmen reacts in the same way when Irma—continuing her psychological "attack"—suggests the daughter is dead:

IRMA : Ta fille est morte...

CARMEN : Madame! *(BAL, p. 84)*

Irma, in her turn, uses the same type of admonishment with Carmen:

CARMEN : Lorsqu'il sont avec leurs femmes... gardent-ils leur fête, très réduite, minuscule, dans un bordel...

IRMA *(la rappelant à l'ordre)* : Carmen! *(BAL, p. 72)*

Irma also uses admonishments with Georges, later in this same scene, chiding him for being impatient that his "role" has not yet been requested in the brothel: "Tu tiens toujours à mener ce jeu? Non, non, ne t'impatiente pas" *(BAL, p. 106).* She also admonishes Georges—again with negative imperative—for being disrespectful, "Ne vas pas déprécier ma maison" *(BAL, p. 108).*
As we have remarked the close relationship between Carmen and Irma has Sapphic overtones and as we have heard Irma refer to Georges as a former lover, her use of admonishments (as well as Carmen's) compare well with other lovers' admonishments we have already examined in Les Nègres.

Georges and Carmen, le 9e Tableau

Exhortation in the last tableau takes place in two instances: Georges--anxious to be represented and out of patience with Les Trois Figures---menaces Le Général and Le Juge:

LE CHEF DE LA POLICE : . . . je veux que vous me serviez. Mais, tout à l'heure vous parliez bien? Je dois donc rendre hommage à votre éloquence, à votre facilité. . . à la puissance de votre organe... (BAL, p. 177)

* * *
(il pousse le général qui culbute et reste assis par terre, ahuri.) Couché! Couché, mon Général!

LE JUGE : Ma jupe peut se retrouver...

LE CHEF DE LA POLICE (il pousse le juge qui culbute) : Couché! Puisque vous désirez être reconnu comme juge, vous voulez le demeurer selon l'idée que j'en ai?... (BAL, p. 178)

Georges begins, above, by commanding their servitude (with the subjunctive, "que vous me serviez"), then he uses the repeated imperative, "Couché," forcing two of Les Trois
Figures to the floor. However, he quickly expends his energy and admonishes them to accompany his vigil, awaiting representation in *le Grand Balcon*:

LE CHEF DE LA POLICE : . . . (. . . parraissant soudain très fatigué.) Attendez encore un peu. Pour le moment, je suis encore bourré d'actes à venir . . . mais dès que je me sentirai me multiplier infiniment, alors . . . j'irai pourrir dans les consciences. Et vous, alors, retrouvez vos jupons si vous voulez, et mettez-vous en route pour le boulot . . . Taisons-nous, et attendons... (Un long et lourd silence.) . . . (BAL, p. 180)

Carmen, now in her role as guide to Roger, also uses a combination of straight-forward exhortation and subtle admonishment, as she realizes the earnestness with which Roger is playing his "dying scene." At first, she issues the command to leave, directing his exit with urgency:

"Il faut rentrer," as they hear ominous off-stage sounds:

CARMEN : . . . Il est temps de partir, monsieur. La séance est finie. Pour sortir, vous prendrez à gauche. Le couloir... (On entend le bruit de l'enclume encore... . . .) Vous entendez? Il faut rentrer... Qu'est-ce que vous faites?

(BAL, p. 197)

It is also at this moment that Carmen begins to realize that Roger intends to castrate himself, and the commands are quickly repeated: "Il faut rentrer... " (BAL, p. 197) and "Je ne sais pas ce que vous faites. . . Mais vous devez
partir. L'heure est passée" (BAL, p. 198). At Roger's mention of Chantal, Carmen's urgency grows: "(soudain effrayée) Partez! Allez-vous-en vite!... Partez!" (BAL, p. 198). Exhortation rises with further commands to leave, "Venez!... Ne criez pas, monsieur, tous les salons sont occupés. Venez... " (BAL, p. 199). Roger ignores Carmen's exhortations; he remains, turning his back and making the gesture of self-castration (BAL, p. 199). Carmen's exhortations attempted—and failed—to deter Roger from his chosen "end" for Le Héros.

Roger's act, which brought about Carmen's exhortations, is difficult to place, thematically. Perhaps Genet's own description\(^2^9\) of his character's motivation will help clarify Roger's highly negative response to Carmen's exhortative language. In a reported interview with Marcel Breitman, published in Arts in May of 1957, Genet is quoted as saying: "D'ailleurs, mon point de départ se situait en Espagne, l'Espagne de Franco, et le révolutionnaire qui se châtrait c'était tous les républicains quand ils ont admis leur défaite."\(^3^0\) Although Genet's desired symbolism for the character, Roger, may remain obscured, we have pointed toward the effect desired by Carmen. If Roger were more clearly presented as a chagrinned Spanish Republican—as desired by Genet, according to the Arts interview—Roger's very active resis-
tance to Carmen's exhortations would be clearer (as would Georges' motivation for wishing to have Le Héros represent himself).

* * *

Of those characters using exhortation or admonishment in Le Balcon, only some are effectual: Le Bourreau's exhortations in the second tableau and Georges' commands in the ninth were the most effective. The remaining characters examined used admonishments—with the exception of Carmen, who employed exhortation in the above scene—with little or no success, which follows a pattern we have seen emerging. At this point in our study, we can propose the generality that pure Exhortation (repeated imperatives) allows Genet's characters to effect a desired reaction, whereas the 'sister commands' which are admonishing represent intended desires which rarely have an effect on the interlocutor.

III : INSULT

In Les Nègres we noted a rather abundant use of the insult in order to urge Village in his role of rapist/murderer. Neige, Bobo and Félicité were the prime users of insults aimed at Village. We also noted that Félicité
and La Reine used invective in their verbal battle. In most instances, insults were spoken only by role-players, within the play-within-the-play. In sharp contrast, we shall find that insults in Le Balcon appear in only one tableau (the fifth), and that they are used exclusively in the "framing tale," or the "outer reality." Irma and Georges are the two characters who attempt to move other characters with the use of insult.

Irma is the first to employ name-calling, using the insulting epithet when talking to Carmen about the daughter in the country: "Tu tiens toujours à aller la voir? Mais idiote, entre la maison et la campagne de ta nourrice il y a le feu, l'eau, la révolte et le fer" (BAL, p. 64). The epithet, here, is mild and affectionate, especially when compared with the name-calling previously examined in Les Nègres. In fact, even when Irma tells Carmen, "Tais-toi" (BAL, p. 66), a few lines later, the command seems but very mild invective. It is only when this same command is used by Carmen—who shouts, "Taisez-vous!" when Irma continues to insist that she will not be able to see her daughter again (BAL, p. 68)—that this particular use of language carries the crushing insult of a "shut up!"

Irma's use of insult is the more flamboyant when she speaks it out of the victim's hearing, as she describes
Arthur to Carmen:

CARMEN: Monsieur Arthur est là.
IRMA: Tu te fous de moi! Pas un homme, ça c'est mon accessoire... (BAL, p. 82)

Even so, Irma is ready to insult Arthur to his face, maligning him with a flat statement which implies how cowardly he is, "La trouille te paralyserait dans une cave" (BAL, p. 92), as Arthur so obviously fears to go in search of Georges. Irma continues to make fun of him in this scene, forcing Arthur to his knees, demanding that he perfume her (see above discussion, 97-98). During the scene, she continues to insult him, suggesting that he is so frightened that he should take the gun with him (BAL, p. 95).

Georges, le Chef de la Police, uses insult a bit more conspicuously than Irma in the same tableau. However, his insults generally reveal his anger without moving his listener to any particular action. For example, while he is trying to discover whether the role of Le Héros has yet been added to the scenarios of le Grand Balcon, Carmen makes a comment, "Le simulacre?" which enrages Georges into shouting "Idiote! Oui! Le simulacre du chef de la Police?" (BAL, p. 100). A few lines later, he accuses Irma of lying, when she insists that clients' visits are kept secret in her "maison d'illusions".
Here, Georges is simply irritated with an Irma who pretends naiveté. His accusation draws no reply; indeed, he continues with an introspective soliloquy about himself which does not invite reaction from Irma.

Irma reacts only when Georges brings up the subject of Arthur, insisting to Georges, "C'est toi qui me l'as imposé" (BAL, p. 112), going on to insist that she had not wanted any man "dans un domaine qui devait rester vierge... Imbécile, ne ris pas. Vierge. C'est-à-dire stérile" (BAL, p. 112). Georges' reply is a rather mild, "Tais-toi," the last insult which bears noticing in the play.

* * * * *

Judging from the above, the sparsity of use of insult as rhetorical device in Le Balcon reveals that its use is more practical when applied to role-playing, as we saw revealed in Les Nègres. In addition, the theme
of "hatred of white" which is so integral to the play-within-the-play in *Les Nègres* has no real equivalent theme in *Le Balcon*. Were we to have heard more from Roger's insurrectionists, themselves, insult as rhetorical device might well have been more abundant.

IV : GENERAL SUMMARY

**Imperatives, Exhortations and Insults in Le Balcon**

As was the case in *Les Nègres*, we have discovered that a remarkable use of various rhetorical devices in *Le Balcon* enabled major characters to attempt to persuade other characters.

Imperatives were used by Madame Irma in the "outer reality" to maintain control of daily events within *le Grand Balcon*. Still within the "outer reality," the royal emissary, L'Envoyé, used Imperatives to convince Irma to play the role of La Reine, at the same time converting--by extension--the role-playing clients (Evêque, Juge and Général) into those power figures. Imperatives employed within the frame, in the "inner realities" of the various scenarios, were quite similar in usage to the directions given by Archibald in *Les Nègres*, that is, these Imperatives quite often defined a role or directed a character to keep to the text. Each metteur en scène
required definite language or action.

The use of Exhortation was more limited in Le Balcon than in Les Nègres, although a pattern emerged. It was apparent, after the study, that the pure Exhortation was by far more effective at manipulating others than the imploring admonishment (a type of Exhortation), which was used mainly by couples in both plays.

The use of the Insult was found to be quite scant in Le Balcon, appearing as it does in only one tableau. Its use by Irma was more often playful than serious, and Georges' insults were extremely limited in number. We have suggested that the lesser use of this rhetorical device depends on the fact that those characters whom we see in Le Balcon are not involved critically in a battle for power, in the usual sense. Their dialogue and actions were completely contained within the walls of le Grand Balcon, and thus they never actually confronted any enemy, other than in the procession, which is described only through hearsay and not enacted onstage. Contrary to Le Balcon, Les Nègres takes place in more open space, and the insults hurled at Village are also intended for the ears of the listening "enemy," the white Cour. It is this quality of eaves-dropping which made the Insult more effective in Les Nègres.
CONCLUSION

Jean Genet has often constructed his theatre upon circularly plotted themes. This has been strikingly evident in *Les Nègres* and *Le Balcon*. The preceding examination of certain types of rhetoric in particular dialogues in these plays has revealed the manipulating relationships between characters—not events—which are integral to the total structure of each play. As characters vied to control one another through linguistic means, the circularity of the play's process unfolded. In *Les Nègres*, the main focus of the rhetoric examined was to urge Village to narrate his crime; yet at the play's end, we also noted that La Reine rhetorically reminded Félicité that, one day, the descendents of her Cour would rise again, to conquer the descendents of *les nègres*. No real action has occurred during the play; however, a great deal of persuasive rhetoric has flowed: Archibald directing characters to "keep to the text," Félicité exhorting *les nègres* to pride in their blackness, Vertu admonishing Village to halt his narrative while Bobo and Neige urge him to complete it. The method used to discover how and why these characters moved about in the universe of white and black was explored through rhetorical analysis which exposed
both motives and personalities. In *Le Balcon*, we realized that Irma must have longed to play a role, herself, in her *Grand Balcon*, as the royal emissary was able to sway her into claiming the role of La Reine. We also discovered something deeper about her psyche by examining her use of rhetoric with Carmen, Arthur and Georges. Irma's strong attachment for Carmen was an underlying motive for her to cajole Carmen into remaining in the "maison d'illusions." Irma revealed in our study that she was already role-playing with Arthur, her "mac," as we closely examined her submissive and then contrasting commanding language in scenes with this avowed but cowardly pimp. And Irma's dialogue with Georges, le Chef de la Police, revealed a tender concern for this former lover (although Georges turned out to be chauvinistically jealous of the power offered Irma by L'Envoyé). Lastly, we noted that those three clients who appeared to yearn to be Evêque, Juge and Général were only capable while role-playing within their rehearsed scenarios; Les Trois Photographes were required to show them how to appear to fill these mythic roles of power. And again, as in *Les Nègres*, *Le Balcon* ended with a cyclic movement, as Irma returned to her "real life" by resuming her function as "directrice" of *le Grand Balcon*. Her final commands to the audience/reader emphasized Genet's attempt to maintain a barrier
between the actors and the audience, involving it not by action but by contemplation—that is, by reflection after the performance.

Genet's persuading characters manipulate one another, exploring emotional paths by which to sustain control, as they exploit in others the innermost emotions of anger, fear or love. They "seduce"—as Ville de Saint-Nazaire said was necessary, "Il devra d'abord sêduire, ensuite convaincre" (NEG, p. 162)—before attempting, if they ever do, any kind of logical argumentation. The "logic" usually occurs outside the theatre, upon our own reflection of a performance or after a careful reading. During the performance or reading of a Genet play, we watch puppeteers manipulating their puppets with the effective strings of persuasive rhetorical device. We watch the emotional strings being jerked (by Imperatives, Exhortations or Insults) while, in the process, those same rhetorical strings are manipulating our own emotions. The end result: a magnificent spectacle in the theatre, not accomplished in the French dramatic tradition—with récits and tirades to convince or to prove—but with sensory effects. For example, Henri Peyre points out in the liner notes to the Theatre Recording Society's production of The Balcony on Caedmon records that Genet's theatre can be compared to some theatrical elements of
Antonin Artaud. Peyre suggests that Genet is far from the classical tirades of French classical theatre, and close to the "dark forces" often employed currently by both the circus and the cinematic world:

Genet's is neither a philosophical nor, in spite of the author's fondness for fine prose and occasionally purple passages, a literary theatre. Breaking with the venerable French tradition which dates from Corneille and Racine and was inherited from Seneca, Genet dethrones the text exchanging magnificently cruel tirades. Like Artaud, Genet dreams, for the modern theatre, of an appeal to the darker forces which arise in men and women gathered for a performance, forces similar to those which the circus and the cinema have captured while too many plays were content with verbose and subtle exercises in psychology. . .It is not a vanguard theatre for the sophisticated.

In Les Nègres and Le Balcon Genet has not used the more traditional structure of either tragedy or comedy, with their incumbent lateral plot lines, where actions lead to a crisis which is resolved. Genet employed—instead of action—a circular linguistic structure, as have his eminent contemporaries, Samuel Beckett and Eugène Ionesco. Because 'time' is fluid in Genet's theatre, rarely hesitating except for occasional "flashbacks," scene or act divisions are generally unnecessary in Genet. Since dialogue, then, has been substituted for action, as critics we were obliged to focus our attention directly upon techniques used by the dramatist in that dialogue.

One method of criticism, relatively unexplored
heretofore, has been an examination of Genet's use of rhetoric. With a "rhetorical method" we have examined Genet's skill in putting characters into conflict, bouncing them about as a puppeteer manipulates his marionettes. Every dramatist is a puppeteer, in this respect, but Genet goes a step further. He creates dramatic characters (his puppets) who, in their turn, attempt manipulation of others, using persuasive rhetoric as their puppet strings. In this regard we see that Genet is, indeed, in love with language. His theatre is a very verbal one, depending heavily upon language. As Robert Champigny suggests in *Le Genre dramatique*, there are many elements in a dramatic work (perspective, gesture, word, character, tension, meaning), but the most abundant of these is verbal:

"...une oeuvre dramatique, ou pièce de théâtre, est un ensemble de gestes, à dominante verbale, destiné à être apprécié esthétiquement à l'occasion d'une représentation scénique." Genet's use of that most useful vehicle, the verbal element, has called for such a study of the rhetorical elements employed by his characters.

In point of fact, Genet's use of language--not only the specific figures of rhetoric to which we have pointed by examining his manipulating characters in *Les Nègres* and *Le Balcon*, but the rich use of imagery which permeates these and his other plays--is what basically sets Genet
apart from his contemporary "Absurdist" colleagues, Beckett and Ionesco in particular. Robert Corrigan says little about Genet in his essay which attempts to define the theatre of the sixties. This essay, "The Theater in Search of a Fix," points out, among other things, "This is the most significant thing about the avant-garde theater—it is a theater of gesture." Corrigan continues by pointing rightly, to the importance of gesture in such plays as The Chairs, Waiting for Godot, Ping-Pong, Endgame, The Balcony and Escurial, correctly referring to an important element in Genet's Balcony. However, Corrigan also uses Beckett and Ionesco—not Genet—as examples when he is discussing the avant-garde theatre's defiance of language:

The Absurdists, in turn, are reacting against the arid language of naturalism... in some of their plays—Beckett's Acts Without Words I and II and Ionesco's The New Tenant—they have discarded language altogether. However, the answer to the problem doesn't lie in the defiant rejection of language, but rather in the revitalization of it. The big question, then, is how to make the language of the theatre once again dramatic.

Corrigan's answer to his own question is revitalization through the language of imagery and metaphor, and we submit that Jean Genet—in using these and other figures of rhetoric—is due a re-evaluation as a non-Absurdist dramatist who has, indeed, as Corrigan demanded in 1961, "made the language of the theatre once again dramatic."
Only characters' overt emotions have been dealt with in this study, that is, rhetoric has been examined through the three linguistic devices which reveal a speaker's emotions to an interlocutor (Imperatives, Exhortations, Insults). Further work which could complement and complete the present study would examine the language of covert emotions in Genet's theatre. Covert emotion is commonly expressed in the use of verbal ironies, which reveal--while attempting to hide--the speaker's feelings. Work has been begun in the general area of irony in Genet by Jack Frisch in his 1965 dissertation; his fifth chapter deals exclusively with Genet: "Jean Genet: The Irony of reflected reflection." Frisch makes a valid contribution to literary criticism by observing that the basic structure of irony is the real basis for the modern "absurd" viewpoint. He points out, for example, that "the first thing of note about Les Paravents is the deliberate and constant juxtaposition of visual reality and unreality" (IT, p. 208), pointing in particular to the "real" props versus those painted upon the screens. Significant elements of irony for Frisch are "an expectation and the contradiction of that expectation" (IT, p. 18). There are few studies other than his which have specifically investigated
irony in Genet and we submit that an examination of
the ironic language of major characters in Genet's
plays would discover further characteristics of per­
suading (manipulating) characters. In addition to
the present plays discussed, Genet's early short plays,
*Haute surveillance* (1947) and *Les Bonnes* (1947, revised
1954) and possibly Genet's seldom-published ballet
scenario, 'Adame Miroir (1949), would provide fruit­
ful material. It might well be that the manipulating
character also is present in Genet's last dramatic
piece, *Les Paravents* (1961), although there are no
apparent role-players in the latter play, and we have
discovered through our own research that the manipu­
lating character is busiest when directing another
character how to act and speak while role-playing.
Lucien Goldmann does find a world of the dominating
and dominated in *Les Paravents*, along with other of
Genet's plays, when he describes Genet's work in the
essay, "Le Théâtre de Jean Genet et ses études sociolo­
giques":

Un univers au centre duquel se trouve avant tout
le rapport entre dominés et dominants, les Bonnes
et Madame, les Noirs et les Blancs, les Révoltés et
le Balcon (le chef de la police, la reine, le général,
l'évêque, le juge) . . . enfin, dans les premières
scènes des *Paravents*, les Colonisés et les Colonisa­
teurs. Un rapport dialectique, constitué de haine
et de fascination, que nous devons analyser."

Goldmann was interested in studying, here, a particular
sociological reaction between the powerful and the weak.
We believe that other facets of the dominating/dominated characters, as perceived through a study of their ironic language, would be useful to a more thorough understanding of the dramatic art of Jean Genet.

* * * *

This thesis has pointed toward the dominating and dominated characters in two of Jean Genet's major dramas as revealed by their language which attempted domination over others overtly. The means used was rhetoric which expressed these manipulators' emotions and which—for the most part—persuasively worked upon the emotions of their interlocutors. The linguistic devices of Imperative, Insult and Exhortation proved to be effective persuaders, with the exception of the admonishment, where persuasion was attempted with little success. Manipulators who used Imperatives, Insults and Exhortations proved to be successful in Les Nègres and Le Balcon, cyclic plays almost wholly dependent upon dialogue, "un ensemble de gestes, à dominante verbal," as Champigny suggested, in Le Genre dramatique.
NOTES AND COMMENTS

Introduction


NB: France, here is summarizing basic tenets of classical rhetoric, based upon the ideas of Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian. Although Peter France's two rhetorical studies, *Racine's Rhetoric* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965) and *Rhetoric and Truth in France* are focussed upon the art as it was practiced in seventeenth century France, his observations regarding rhetoric are particularly helpful as a framework for this study.


6 *Racine's Rhetoric*, op. cit., pp. 164-204. NOTE: Further citations refer to this edition and appear in the body of the text, RR.
The above catalogue summarizes the rhetorical devices (usually referred to as *les figures* in French) examined by Peter France as "The Direct Expression of Emotion." See RR, pp. 167-182.

We shall follow, again, the model of Peter France in *Racine's Rhetoric* because his study is one of the most precise, in grammatical terms, accessible to literary critics. France confines the imperative to two types, ". . .the direct, command, second person imperatives or the third person imperative, the wish or imprecation" (RR, p. 171). Linguistic studies tend to coin new terms of reference and provide literary criticism with a less manageable vocabulary.

NB: Elipses are indicated in the text as (...) and hesitations in a character's speech, as indicated by Genet, as (...).

Taken within the context of the plays, exhortation in Genet will express feelings which reveal what the speaker believes to be "laudable conduct."

For example, Peter France's study of Racine cites as an example of exhortation: "'Quittez, mon Fils, quittez. . .'" (RR, p. 118).


There have been several studies which concentrate on the emotions of hate and anger in Genet: A. Israel,

15 The archaic meaning of the word, "insult," was literally to attack or assault, from the Latin substantive, *insultare*, 'to leap on or at, insult.'

Chapter One - Les Nègres


2 Taubes, Tulane Drama Review, 7, No. 3 (Spring 1963), 86.

3 Bobo's exhortation evokes the smells of carrion, "Qu'une odeur de charogne me porte!" (NEG, p. 32).

4 Archibald says to Bobo, "Rentrez ce mot, Bobo. Ce n'est pas une séance d'hystérie collective, c'est une cérémonie" (NEG, p. 85). She apparently obeys in a later scene, as she 'corrects' herself, "...il y fait noir comme dans le trou du cul d'un nègre. --Oh! pardon, d'un Noir. Il faut être polie" (NEG, p. 93). Her 'politeness' is still tongue in cheek, however, as the word "cul" is as impolite as "nègre."
This particular gesture takes on a 'black humor' quality; they are masking two different things: 1) the stink of the corpse, and 2) the lack of odor which is the implied heritage of the white ("race...inodore," NEG, p. 32).

Jeanette Laillou-Savona suggests that the motivation also includes inverted Christian symbolism when she says:

"The most significant piece of stage business in the first part is the use of smoke: all the Blacks huddled around the catafalque light up a cigarette and puff smoke around it, smoking out the White woman in order to get rid of her odour. The incident appears as a revenge against the myth of the stench of the Blacks, a stench which the Black actors are proud to admit: as we listen to a chant hummed by the group, it is as if we were witnessing the triumph of the Black stench which serves as a rallying point against the Whites. At the same time, we are dealing with an act of reversed purification which could be interpreted as a caricature of the censing of the altar, at the beginning of the Mass."


The members of la Cour find themselves not in France but in Africa, and condemned by the very ones they were judging.

We shall remark, however, when examining the commands of La Reine that she assists Archibald in this very ritual. She announces her own death, following "une détonation" (NEG, p. 177), but she is never really sent "aux Enfers" except by implication in the above-quoted command by Archibald.

Village, undirected, speaks the lines of Diouf-Marie; and Félicité indirectly indicates that Neige will
play the role of the "sister, " Suzanne. Félicité says to Village, "Dis à ta soeur Suzanne de rentrer" (NEG, p. 96).

9 Bernard Frechtman chose an appropriate name-equivalent for this character in "Newport News," a name which reveals, perhaps more than the original, a great deal about his function in the play (Genet, The Blacks, tr. B. Frechtman, op. cit.).

10 Diouf had just objected to Ville de Saint-Nazaire's taking the gun with him.

11 "Archibald s'aperçoit de la présence de Ville de Saint-Nazaire, entré très lentement, alors que Félicité disait sa grande tirade" (NEG, p. 115).

12 Signaled by sound and lighting effects, "plusieurs explosions de pétards...reflets d'un feu d'artifice" (NEG, p. 159).

13 She issues but one command outside the play-within-the-play, as she commands the actors who play la Cour to don their masks, "Messieurs, vos masques!" (NEG, p. 165), in order to finish the 'performance.'

14 This cataloguing of Western culture emphasizes the scope of her appeal.

15 The use of the word, "Général," appears only twice in the play. Here, La Reine seems to be calling Le Gouverneur by the two different titles; he is also later referred to as "Général" in an indication, "Celui qui tenait le rôle du Général" (NEG, p. 163). These instances appear to be unintended, mere editorial discrepancies.

16 There is a striking similarity of idea between these lines and the ending lines of Albert Camus' La Peste.
"Rieux" savait ce que cette foule en joie ignorait. . .que le bacille de la peste ne meurt ni ne disparaît jamais, qu'il peut rester pendant des dizaines d'années endormi. . .qu'il attend patiem- ment. . .peut-être, le jour viendrait où. . .la peste réveillerait ses rats et les enverrait mourir dans une cité heureuse," "La Peste," Théâtre, récits, nouvelles (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1962), p. 1472.

17 The particular Leitmotif indicated here took place first in performance. Roger Blin describes having changed "the general laughter at the end of the play into a savage dance lasting a few minutes, after which would come the minuet" in Bettina Knapp's "Interview with Roger Blin," Tulane Drama Review, 7, No. 3 (Spring 1963), 115.*

Genet obviously approved this alteration of his own written stage directions, when he indicates in "Pour jouer les 'Nègres':"

"Voici comment Roger Blin terminait la pièce; à peine Vertu et Village ont échangé leur dernière réplique que tous les acteurs rentrent en scène et se mettent à danser sur un rythme africain. Ville de Saint-Nazaire en profite pour passer en coulisse. Soudain, à la musique africaine succèdent les premières mesures du menuet de Mozart...Ville de Saint-Nazaire apparait.../et/. . .porte.../le catafalque...puis, la musique n'ayant pas cessé, tous se mettent à danser le menuet de Mozart. Rideau.

Cette façon d'achever la pièce a ma préférence."

(NEG, p. vii)

Le Missionnaire later echoes him, "N'avancez plus. C'est un pays redoutable" (NEG, p. 137).

Ville de Saint-Nazaire says, "Vous n'avez pas essayé de les négrier? De leur greffer des narines ... De leur crêpler les cheveux? De les réduire en esclavage?" (NEG, p. 127).

They list various types of executions: "balle dans la tête... Crevaison de l'abdomen, abandon dans les neiges éternelles... poing américain, guillotine, lacets, souliers, gale, épilepsie..." (NEG, p. 144).

Margaret Moore comments on Félicité's motivation for this speech when she says, "Félicité calls for aid, too, in this almost mystical chant: 'Dahomey! ...' NEG, pp. 66-69. She is calling for a concentration of the dispersed forces that can give strength and wisdom to her, a symbol of the unified black identity. The white Queen, 'très solennelle et presque défaillante' NEG, p. 69 feebly echoes her call for help, though seeking her aid in the glories of civilization..." in "The Theatre of Jean Genet: A Study in the Neo-Baroque," Diss. Univ. of Washington 1972, pp. 222-23.

NOTE: Further citations will appear in the body of the text, NEG-BAR.


Diouf-Marie’s white-gloved hand rests on Village’s shoulder at the exit, but Village refuses to leave, begging that he need not go "jusqu’au bout" (NEG, pp. 106-13).

This point is also brought out by R. A. Zimbardo in his article, "Genet’s Black Mass," where he says:

"Blacks are not necessarily Negroes though Negroes are usually blacks. When Felicity calls the blacks of the world together to be absorbed in her mighty power and to participate in its thrust, she is careful to say that there are blacks of all colors, that to her, the mother of blackness, color is a meaningless, confusing term. . . . Black is the negative of white as servanthood is the negative of mastery; it is a negation that defines the positive.

* * *

The white queen, who alone can shape forms, is hatching ‘Celtic remains,’ entities which are already dead, and are so because they individuated, structured, like ‘stained glass of Chartres, Lord Byron, French cooking. . . . Aristotelean principles . . .’ Black is pure, unformed urge, though it contains the potentiality of everything active."

in Modern Drama, 8, No. 3 (December 1965), 254.

Genet is quite clear on this point:

"Cette pièce, je le répète, écrite par un Blanc, est destinée à un public de Blancs . . . Et si aucun Blanc n’acceptait cette représentation? Qu’on distribue au public noir à l’entrée de la salle des masques de Blancs. Et si les Noirs refusent les masques qu’on utilise un mannequin.”

(NEG, p. xiii)

Genet critic George B. MacDonald suggests the inter-changeability of the situation in his article, "'The Blacks' and Ritual Theatre," the Spring issue of Humanities (1962) when he says:

"Working with the abstractions of reality and illusion through the colors black and white, Genet,
in reality turning inside out, discovers that the two are inter-changeable and usually mistaken for one another. Accordingly, the Negroes will now assume all the god-like qualities of the Whites (Archibald /sic: Felicité/ tells us that all that is tender and kind in the new world will be Black . . .) and in all probability will eventually mistake the illusion of their grandeur for their rightful place in the universe and be overthrown by a new race. . ." (Humanities, 21, No. 2 (Spring 1962), 43-44).

NB: This article, along with many other interesting dramatic pieces, is reprinted in The Theater of Jean Genet: A Casebook, ed. Richard N. Coe (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1970). NOTE: Further references to Coe's collection of dramatic criticism on Genet will appear in the body of the text, Coe, CASEBOOK.

28 In one speech, commanding Village and Vertu to leave les nègres because their attitudes threaten the goal they have set themselves, Archibald gives the couple eleven commands, one atop the other:


(NEG, p. 59)

29 This is the only occasion in the play that any additional actors appear, and the moment is short, quite similar to the appearance of the rhinoceros 'heads' in Béranger's window in the last few minutes of Eugène Ionesco's Rhinocéros, Act III.

30 Village remarks upon the necessity of using sorcery later when he says, "Car il fallait bien, n'est-ce pas, que je l'ensorcelle" (NEG, p. 94).
Instances are, indeed, rare: Le Gouverneur calls Le Valet "foutu gamin" (NEG, p. 62); later he tells the trembling nègres, "N'ayez pas peur de faire dégringoler les noix de coco qui pendent à vos branches!" (NEG, p. 141); and Le Missionnaire calls Le Gouverneur "Idiot" (NEG, p. 154).

See above, page 23. Both of these speeches serve another function: that of caricaturing the black man as seen by the white, as Aleksandra Hoffmann-Lipońska puts it very succinctly in the article, "La Confrontation du théâtre de Jean Genet et sa confrontation avec les thèses d'Antonin Artaud":

"Rejetés par les Blancs, les Noirs veulent jouer jusqu'au bout le rôle des coupables devant leurs juges. Mais ils donnent une image caricaturale des Blancs qui, à leur tour, imposent une fausse image des Noirs sur la scène." (Studia Romanica Posnaniensia, 2 (1972-73), 51)

The phrase, "nègresse soumise," implies, among other things, insult to Vertu as a black prostitute who submits to white men; the epithet is heightened by the fact that Niege had already attached it to her description of those whites Village should be ready to eat, "flasque et soumis" (NEG, p. 42).

The critic, George B. MacDonald, makes clear the importance of being "all black" (stressed below by contradiction by Neige, "ne pouvant...songer au blanc royal"
NEG, p. 73, and demanded affirmatively by Archibald and Felicité), in his essay in Humanities (1962), when he says:

"In a world which has watched, feared, patronized and despised him, the Negro is beginning to realize that unless his split image of half-assimilation is rejected, unless he lives up to his color, Black, and finds a comforting identity in the falseness of the darkly mysterious and evil connotations the Whites have given it, he is doomed to a life of meaningless, subjugated grayness."

(MacDonald, op. cit. p. 41)

In contrast, the French critic, Robert Kanters, seemed to have 'missed the point,' as at one place in his review of Les Nègres, "L'Evangile selon Jean Genet," L'Express, 5 novembre 1959, he says:

"Ainsi, les excellents acteurs noirs du Lutèce (Mmes Darling Legitimus, Lydia Ewande, Toto Bissainthe, MM. Bachir Touré, Mamadou Condé, Robert Liensol, etc.) sont obligés de se faire plus nègres que nature pour jouer l'oeuvre de l'auteur blanc, ce sauvage" (p. 37).

The victim undergoes several transformations of social "class." She begins as "a white women." She is then an "accomplished lady" (who plays piano, knits, sings, does watercolors). Within Village's narrative, her last transformation is into "martyr of France," Jeanne d'Arc.

This is the sole mention of this character, who is never seen onstage.

Vertu begins, "Je suis la Reine Occidentale à la pâleur de lys! Résultat précieux de tant de siècles..." (NEG, p. 64).

Quite similar to the orders Le 1er Photographe gives l'Evêque in Le Balcon: "Les mains jointes. La tête levée. Les yeux baissés" (BAL, p. 158).

"Allez, madame... Marchez!... Avancez toujours... Tirez-moi vers vos dentelles... Marchez plus vite..."
Suivez le corridor. Tournez à droite... Ouvrez" (NEG, p. 105).

40 This idea will be repeated by La Reine in the message she sends through Le Valet, "Dites-leur au moins que sans nous, leur révolte n'aurait pas de sens--et même qu'elle n'existerait pas... " (NEG, p. 176).


42 See above discussion, pages 63-65.

43 This is a reiteration of an early warning by Archibald to the audience:

"... afin que dans vos fauteuils vous demeuriez à votre aise... nous aurons encore la politesse, apprise parmi vous, de rendre la communication impossible. La distance qui nous sépare, originelle, nous l'augmenterons par nos fastes, nos manières, notre insolence--car nous sommes aussi des comédiens." (NEG, pp. 20-23)

Chapter Two - Le Balcon

1 For example Prévost's Manon Lescaut (1731) or Richardson's Clarissa Harlowe (1747-1748). A nineteenth-century French example would be Benjamin Constant's Adolphe (1816). Genet is perhaps closest in form to the Diderot of Jacques le fataliste et son maître (1796), where "reality" is so often put into question.

2 First performed in French 18 May 1960 at the Théâtre de Gymnase, Paris, under the direction of Peter Brook. (NB: The world premier took place three years earlier in London at the Arts Theatre Club, 1957, where Peter Zadek produced the play in English translation.) First published
in a limited edition by L'Arbalete (Décines) in 1956, a version in 15 scenes; brought out again by L'Arbalete as a second edition (revised to nine scenes) in 1960, including an "Avertissement" (pages 7-9); revised in the third edition (Décines: L'Arbalete, 1962), which is also described as "définitive" and preceded by "Comment jouer 'Le Balcon'" (pages v-x). NOTE: All references are to this last edition and appear in the text, BAL. This version reprinted in Gallimard's Oeuvres complètes, Tome IV (1968), pages 33-135, which also reprints the "Avertissement" (pages 35-36) and "Comment jouer 'Le Balcon'" (pages 27-276). Bernard Frechtman has published two translated versions, both in England and the United States: the first text in nine scenes was brought out by Faber and Faber (London) in 1957 and reprinted in 1965; this version was also published in New York (Grove Press, 1958). The revised translation (based upon the 3rd, definitive version) was printed by Grove Press in 1960 with several reissues. In 1971, according to a report by Odette Aslan in Jean Genet (Paris: Seghers, 1973), pages 22-23, Barbara Wright and Terry Hands created a new translation for the Royal Shakespeare Company, which appears to remain unpublished at this writing.


3 So named in the text by Irma: "... on connait le Grand Balcon. C'est la plus savante, mais la plus honnête maison d'illusions... " (BAL, p. 71).

4 Roger is the only major character whose métier we actually know: he is a plumber (BAL, p. 109). However, since we learn through dialogue about the various occupa-
tions represented by other clients—who are said to be bank clerks, embassy employees, waiters, etc.—we may safely assume that the occupations of Les Trois Figures (BAL, p. viii), the first of whom we meet in the above, are also of about the same type; these are the "little men."

5 The scream emanates from La Voleuse of the second tableau.

6 As Immaculée-Conception de Lourdes for the bank clerk (BAL, p. 67).

7 "Arthur tombe, frappé au front, d'une balle venue du dehors. . .Irma. . .se penche sur lui, lui caresse le front" (BAL, p. 115).

8 See BAL, p. 92, where Arthur asks about the day's receipts and Irma pretends being dominated by him.


10 By this time the "little men" are ready to shed their roles of Evêque, Général and Juge.

11 See OC IV, p. 135, corrected to "vous."

12 Yale French Studies, 29 (Spring/Summer 1962), 24. NB: This issue also contains articles on Genet by two other eminent critics: Jacques Ehrmann, "Genet's Dramatic Metamorphosis: from Appearance to Freedom," (pages 33-42) and Joseph McMahon's "Keeping Faith and Holding Firm" (pages 26-32).


NB: For a more far-reaching analysis of mythic themes
including the significance of Irma as "phénix," see Gisèle Feal's article, "Le Balcon de Genet ou le culte matriarchal : une interprétation mythique," The French Review, 48, No. 5 (April 1975), 897-907.

14 Le Chef de la Police demands Irma ignore the offer, "Irma, ne l'écoute pas! (À l'Envoyé.) Et moi, alors, qu'est-ce que je deviens?" (BAL, pp. 142-43).

15 Les Trois Figures and La Reine appear in tattered, dusty costumes, upholding the "appearances" of the roles of those whom they have now replaced. We notice that they approach timidly and silently (BAL, p. 150); they have not quite completed their transformations into the lives of their roles, "Simplement, ils se montrent" (BAL, pp. 150-51).

16 L'Évêque remarks, "Personne ne pouvait nous reconnaître, nous étions dans les dorures. Aveuglé, tout le monde en avait un éclat dans l'œil..." (BAL, p. 155). Having realized that "appearances are all," he resents the fact.

17 "J'ai rendez-vous avec plusieurs magistrats. Nous préparons des textes de lois, une révision du code" (BAL, p. 156).

18 For example, "dentelles noires sous la jupe de bure" (BAL, p. 74). This is only one of several "détails faux" which are enumerated by Irma.

19 Le Général realizes they must "invent," but it is L'Évêque who cautions they must "live" their roles: "LE GÉNÉRAL : ... C'est toute une vie qu'il faut inventer... difficile... / L'ÉVÊQUE (ironique) : ... Ou non, il faudra la vivre. Aucun de nous ne peut plus reculer..." (BAL, p. 153).

20 Nelson, Tulane Drama Review, 7, No. 3 (Spring 1963), p. 75. NB: This issue is devoted equally to Genet and
Ionesco. It contains the first chapter, in translation, of Jean-Paul Sartre's *Saint Genet* (New York, 1963), as well as articles by Pucciani, Taubes, Pierret and Svendsen and notes by Genet, himself. NOTE: Further citations from this issue appear in the text, *TDR '63*. Several of these articles are reprinted in *Genet/Ionesco* (1969), op. cit., and in *Obliques*, No. 2 (1972), another issue devoted entirely to Jean Genet.

Leonard Pronko's description of Georges near the end of the play reminds us that the desired mirroring at last emerges:

"Now the Chief may die himself, for he has found identity in his representation by others, and as the play ends he descends to his tomb where he too will be reflected endlessly by mirrors."


With largesse, Georges even agrees to pay some of Arthur's expenses, the "crêpe de Chine."

What follows immediately is most revealing, as they discuss priorities:

"L'ENVOYE : Qui voulez-vous sauver?  
LE CHEF DE LA POLICE : La Reine!  
CARMEN : Le drapeau!  
IRMA : Ma peau!" (BAL, p. 136)

Irma's answer is the most revealing; it is herself she would save, first of all (not la Reine, not the flag!). Is this her motivation for becoming the resurrected Reine? Quite possibly. After all, Irma had told Carmen earlier that if the insurgents won, her house would be of no more
use to the rabble; they would be too busy and were too chaste to have need of it.

Indeed, complexity has caused a variety of critics --both those favorable and those unfavorable to Genet--to conclude that *Le Balcon* is a "faulty" play. In particular, see:

- Christopher Ricks, "Dejecta," *The New Statesman*, 67, No. 1713 (10 January 1964), especially page 47.

The stage directions emphasize the caricature:

"(Pendant toute la scène... la fille va aider le général à se déshabiller, puis à s'habiller en général. Lorsque celui-ci sera complètement habillé, l'on s'apercevra qu'il a pris des proportions gigantesques, grâce à un truquage de théâtre : patins invisibles, épaules élargies, visage maquillé à l'extrême.)" (BAL, p. 49)

**NOTE:** Although it is difficult to know where it occurred in this tableau, Genet admired an added bit of stagecraft used in the British production which otherwise enraged him:

"Pas dire tout le temps du mal; ainsi à Londres, le metteur en scène avait eu une idée, l'actrice figurant le cheval dessinait avec amour, pendant l'une de ses tirades, avec un bout de charbon des moustaches au Général." (Genet, "Comment jouer 'le Balcon,'" OC IV, p. 275)

25 This is probably the most humorous episode in the entire play, containing as it does a mirror of the "farewell" scene in *Les Nègres* in which the piled-up "dead" rise and bid Diouf-Marie goodbye (NEG, p. 178). We have in *Le Balcon* a client who portrays a grand death, to the point of arranging himself as a cadavre stiffly upon a chair, only to hear him come "alive" and brag that he "died with his boots on."
Chantal earlier described this position: "On dit de moi... que j'en suis l'âme et la voix de l'Insurrection..." (BAL, p. 118).

L'Evêque manages to avoid the confrontation, "L'Evêque s'écarte, prudemment" (BAL, p. 178).

NB: Genet's interpretation of Roger which follows has not necessarily been accepted by his major critics.


See OC IV, p. 84, corrected to "De toute façon."

Conclusion

More specifically, characters were not examined by the psychoanalytic criticism method. Relating the man to his work is more useful in a study of Genet's novels which are, admittedly, closer to autobiography than his drama. Although a study of the philosophy present in Genet's plays does, indeed, assist our understanding of their themes, it is the writer's belief that the work, itself, should stand alone for critical analysis.

Here, as earlier, the meaning of "chauvinism" is the modern, vernacular sense of "male domination."

Pierre Larthomas modifies the Robert definition of *tirade* ("longue suite de phrases, de vers, récitée sans interruption par un personnage de théâtre") by suggesting that each such speech must be defined by its context alone. See *Le Langage dramatique* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1972), pp. 388-93.
Peyre is but one of many critics who have made the association between Genet and Artaud. For other examples, see:


6 Traditional tragedy generally comes about as the result of the hero's recognition of his 'fault' or his complete inability to act, in the face of circumstances that his own 'fate' has created. Traditional comedy generally resolves conflict at this moment (the *péripétie*, followed immediately by the *dénouement*); the opposition between young and old disappears, the latter either leaving the scene (a *bouc émissaire*) or accepting the take-over by youth. Comedy insists that the barrier created during the play be destroyed; tragedy
shows that barrier indestructable. As do most contemporary playwrights, Genet creates a fusion of the two.

7 Of Genet's dramatic works, two are 'one-acts,' with no apparent scene division (Haute surveillance, Les Bonnes), although several critics have created appropriate divisions (see NB, below). Le Balcon is divided into tableaux (nine), as is Les Paravents (17 in the final version). Les Nègres follows the technique of the two earlier plays and has no definite division. In fact, Genet's use of the tableau is very similar to the "black-out" technique used by several modern dramatists. A pertinent example is that of Friedrich Dürrenmatt in the mid-fifties. In The Visit (Der Besuch der alten Dame) lighting is used to switch quickly from one part of the set to another, quite like Genet's use of space, light, and the screens, themselves, in Paravents. See The Visit, adapt. Maurice Valency, Masters of Modern Drama, ed. Haskell M. Block and Robert H. Shedd (New York: Random House, Inc., 1962), pp. 1134-59.


See also Pierre Chabert, "Espace visuel (et reconnaissance) dans les Bonnes, de Jean Genet," Obliques, No. 3 (1973), pp. 102-08.


10 Corrigan, ibid., p. 31.
Other critical assessors who do grant Genet's vital interest in language in drama are:

- **Bernard Dort**—"...la démarche de Genet demeure fondamentalement différente de celle d'Artaud... Loin de rejeter toute la dramaturgie occidentale... Genet renchérit plutôt sur elle : il la pousse jusque dans ses limites extrêmes... Son théâtre reste un théâtre de texte... nulle part il ne tente de ramener la parole à son origine... " in "Genet ou le combat avec le théâtre," Théâtre réel : 1967-1970 (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1971), pp. 178-79.

- **Margaret Ann Moore**—criticizing Martin Esslin's assessment: ". . .the most important argument to be raised against Esslin's viewpoint concerns the use of language. Genet does not communicate in his plays a sense of the devaluation of language. Unlike the absurdists, Genet does not find language meaningless, but on the contrary, finds it to be rich in multiple layers of meaning... " (NEO-BAR, pp. 18-19).

- **André Morf**—who also insists that Genet's language is primarily ritual, saying, "La puissance évocatrice de la langue remplit donc une triple fonction dans la création du rite. Elle confère aux personnages insignifiants la célébrité dont ils rêvent. Elle en transforme d'autres en arché-types de toute une culture. Et, en plus, elle comble l'absence d'objets réels par des choses imaginaires tout en accentuant ainsi leur inexistence," in "Le Rituel comme technique dramatique chez Jean Genet," Diss. McGill University 1969, p. 34.

- **Leonard Pronko**—though he, too, emphasizes the "devaluation of language" in the avant-garde, Pronko describes Genet's contribution toward ritualistic language: "In Genêt's [sic] latest play /Les Nègres/ there is no pretense at realism, no plot or fixed characters. With it we have arrived at a theater that is almost pure ceremony, a theater that 'shakes the rules of the stage and defies judgment,' just as any religious ceremony would do. Like the Catholic Mass, like the Voodoo ceremonies of Haiti, and like the Dionysian celebrations that undoubtedly preceded the flowering of tragedy in Greece, this ritual theater speaks a
language which has not been heard for many hundreds of years on the European stage," (A-G TH, p. 188).


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