As frequent as logic in the consecutive lyric is an order based on time or causality. The work of Ronsard is particularly rich in examples, exhibiting not only a broad spectrum of forms and functions but also the problems of unity that may arise in the loosest type of "temporal-causal structure."

Anecdotal or descriptive material may, of course, serve very different purposes. At the very least, it may furnish a pretext for moral choices, affective activity, or reasonings, expressed in dramatic or interior monologue, or in colloquy. In the seventeenth of Ronsard’s *Amours diverses*, for example, the speaker devotes the first quatrain to a narration-cum-description, laden with paradoxical significance:

Je liay d’un filet de soye cramoisie  
Vostre bras l’autre jour, parlant avecques vous:  
Mais le bras seulement fut captif de mes nouds,  
Sans vous pouvoir lier ny coeur ny fantaisie.  

(Vv. 1–4)

The remaining verses present the speaker’s impossible wishes and melancholy sentiments occasioned by musing on that significance:

Beauté, que pour maistresse unique j’ay choisie.  
Le sort est inegal: vous triomphez de nous.
Vous me tenez esclave esprit, bras, & genous,
Et Amour ne vous tient ny prinse ny saisie.

Je veux parler, Maistresse, à quelque vieil sorcier,
A fin qu'il puisse au mien vostre vouloir lier,
Et qu'une mesme playe à noz coeurs soit semblable.

Je faux: l'amour qu'on charme, est de peu de sejour.
Estre beau, jeune, riche, eloquent, agréable,
Non les vers enchantez, sont les sorciers d'Amour.

(Vv. 5-14)

Situations, character, or action may also be elements of proof in an argument, as in the celebrated sonnet "Quand vous serez bien vieille, au soir à la chandelle." Here the speaker paradoxically foresees himself as happy, even vital, though fantasme sans os, and Hélène—having refused his suit—as the very image of inconsolable death-in-life. All of this materially supports the speaker's fundamental thesis that Hélène should "seize the day." Finally, story elements may have no literal function at all; instead they may constitute symbols of inner states or processes. Consider, for example, the second of Ronsard's Sonnets pour Hélène I, "Quand à longs traits je boy l'amoureuse estincelle," where the anecdote of poisoning and bedazzlement by the lady's eyes translates the speaker's tumultuous inner reaction to the spectacle of Hélène's beauty. 5

Structurally, the temporal-causal lyric may fall into one of three categories. The nineteenth ode in Ronsard's second book is "framed," relating the unseemly behavior of Amor, who—rainsoaked—seeks shelter with the speaker and then "me tire une fleche amere / Droict en l'oeil" (vv. 52-53). 6 There follows a commentary that draws a more or less logical conclusion from the complete symbolic anecdote:

Voila, Robertet, le bien,
(Mon Robertet qui embrasses
L'heur des Muses, & des Graces)
Le bien qui m'est survenu
Pour loger un incognu.

(Vv. 58-62)

But the narrative may be "unframed" as well, relating a complete incident without terminal (or prefatory) comment, often because of the metaphor- or symbol-laden character of the mat-
ter, as the poet treats it. Ronsard’s eighty-ninth Amour, “Soubz le cristal d’une argentuse rive,” exemplifies the type, narrating the speaker’s discovery of the perfect pearl (which represents ideal feminine beauty) and his unsuccessful attempts to fish it out of an equally nonliteral stream. For my purposes, however, the most interesting kind of temporal-causal structure is neither the framed nor the unframed narrative, but rather “simultaneous composition.” Here, a situation or an isolated action is presented and followed immediately by an amplified response—moral, affective, or intellectual. The pattern may recur any number of times in a given lyric so that, finally, a complex situation or event may be presented in its fullness, but the manner is invariably piecemeal, never continuous.

The seventeenth of Ronsard’s first book of sonnets to Hélène is characteristic, presenting two narrative-reactive units. The first of these concerns the speaker’s view of the two women together: “Te regardant assise auprès de ta cousine” (v. 1), and then relates his effusive, hyperbolic reaction: “Belle comme une Aurore, & toy comme un Soleil, / Je pensay voir deux fleurs d’un mesme teint pareil” (vv. 2-3). The second presents the contrast between the glances returned by Hélène and her cousin:

La chaste, saincte, belle & unique Angevine,
Viste comme un esclair, sur moy jetta son oeil:
Toy comme paresseuse, & pleine de sommeil,
D’un seul petit regard tu ne m’estimas digne.

Tu t’entretenois seule au visage abaissé,
Pensive toute à toy, n’aimant rien que toymesme,
Desdaignant un chacun d’un sourcil ramassé,
Comme une qui ne veut qu’on la cherche ou qu’on l’aime . . .

(Vv. 5-12)

His reaction follows: “J’euz peur de ton silence, & m’en-allay tout blesme, / Craignant que mon salut n’eust ton oeil offensé” (v. 13-14). Although this sonnet is single, complete, and integrated, simultaneous composition in fact lends itself, more than any other temporal-causal mode, to disunity. Two other poems by Ronsard illustrate the problem.

Dedans des Prez je vis une Dryade,
Qui comme fleur s’assisoit par les fleurs,
Et mignotoyt un chapeau de couleurs,
Eschevelée en simple verdugade.

Des ce jour là ma raison fut malade,
Mon cuoeur pensif, mes yeulx chargez de pleurs,
Moy triste et lent: tel amas de douleurs
En ma franchise imprima son oeillade.

Là je senty dedans mes yeulx voller
Un doulx venin, qui se vint escouler
Au fond de l'ame: & depuis cest oultrage,

Comme un beau lis, au moys de Juin blessé
D'un ray trop chault, languist à chef baisé
Je me consume au plus verd de mon age.

Here the cause-effect order is pointlessly scrambled, with im­mediate consequences (vv. 9–11) placed between others that are long-range (vv. 5–8 and 12–14), although the former are neces­sary antecedents to the latter. In the next case, the effects are exhibited at random:

Quand je vous voi, ou quand je pense en vous,
Je ne sçai quoi dans le coeur me fretille.
Qui me pointelle, & tout d'un coup me pille
L'esprit emblé d'un ravissement dous.

Je tremble tout de nerfs & de genous:
Comme la cire au feu, je me distile,
Sous mes souspirs: & ma force inutile
Me laisse froid, sans haleine & sans pous.

Je semble au mort, qu'on devale en la fosse,
Ou à celui qui d'une fièvre grosse
Perd le cerveau, dont les esprits mués
Révent cela, qui plus leur est contraire.
Ainsi, mourant, je ne sçauroi tant faire,
Que je ne pense en vous, qui me tués.

No principle except, perhaps, that of repetition accounts for the presence of reactive elements or their “order of telling.” In neither case, moreover, does a submerged analogical reasoning (or any other compensatory device) pull the disjecta membra into a nonconsecutive whole.

In Saint-Amant’s caprice La Mauvais Logement, all of these disruptive elements appear, along with another, peculiar to longer poems of this kind, namely, the atomization of external experience and the breakdown of all sense of time.
Le Mauvais Logement

Gisté dans un chien de grabat,
Sur un infame lit de plume,
Entre deux draps teins d’apostume,
Où la Vermine me combat:

5
Je passe les plus tristes heures
Qui dans les mortelles Demeures
Puissent affliger les Esprits;
Et la Nuit si longue m’y semble,
Que je croy qu’elle ait entrepris

10
D’en joindre une douzaine ensemble.

Parmy tant d’incommoditez
Je conte tous les coups de Cloche;
Et comme un Oyson à la broche
Je me tourne de tous costez:

15
Une vilaine Couverture,
Relique de la pourriture,
Malgré moy s’offre à me baiser;
Mais, si je luy deffens ma bouche,
Je ne sçaurois luy refuser

20
Qu’à mes jambes elle ne touche.

Elle suplante les linceuls
Qui se sauvent dans la ruelle;
Mais pour fuir cette crûelle
Les pauvrets n’y vont pas tous seuls:

25
Un Manteau de laine d’Espagne
En ce chemin les accompagne,
Du travail à demy suant,
Et sans prétendre à la victoire,
Dans un pot de chambre puant

30
Il glisse, et va chercher à boire.

Au clair de la Lune qui luit
D’une lueur morale, et blafarde,
Mon oeil tout effrayé regarde
Voltiger mille oyseaux de Nuit:

35
Les Chauvesouris, les Fresayes
Dont les cris sont autant de playes
A l’oreille qui les entend,
Decoupons l’Air humide et sombre,
Percont jusqu’où mon corps s’estend,

40
Et le muguettent comme une ombre.

Un essaim de maudits Cousins,
Bruyant d’une fureur extremne.
Me fait renasquer en moy-mesme
Contre la saison des raisins:

45 L'un sur ma main donne en Sang-suë;
L'autre sur ma tronche se rué,
Me rendant presque tout mésau;
Je les poursuy, je les attrappe,
Et sans m'épargner le museau

50 Pour les y tuër je me frappe.

Cent Rats, d'insolence animez,
Se querellent sous une table
Où jamais repas délectable
N'apparut aux yeux affamez:

55 Là tantost aux barres ils jouent;
Là tantost ils s'entre-secoûent,
Pipans d'un ton aigre et mutin;
Et tantost cette fauce race
S'en vient ronger pour tout festin

60 Les entrailles de ma paillace.

Une trouppe de Farfadets
Differens de taille, et de forme,
L'un ridicule, et l'autre énorme,
S'y deméne en Diables-Cadets:

65 Ma viziere en est fascinée,
Mon oùye en est subornée,
Ma cervelle en est hors de soy;
Bref, ces fabriquers d'impostures
Estalent tout autour de moy

70 Leurs grimaces, et leurs postures.

Les Rideaux ne m'empeschent point
De voir toutes leurs singeries;
Ces infernales nigeries
Me font fremir sous l'embonpoint:

75 J'ay beau pour en perdre l'image
Qui me baille un teint de fromage
M'efforcer à cligner les yeux,
L'effroy me taillant des croupieres,
Par un effet malicieux

80 Change en bezicles mes paupieres.

Maints faux rayons éparpillez
En fanfreluches lumineuses,
Offrent cent chimeres hideuses
A mes regars en vain sillez:
Saint-Amant

85 Ma trop cédus ancifaisie
En est si vifement saisie
Qu'elle même se fait horreur;
Et sentant comme elle se pâme,
Je me figure en cette erreur

90 Qu'on donne le moine à mon âme.

Que si je pense m'endormir,
Dans les momens de quelque trêve,
Un Incube aussi tôt me crève,
Et resvant je m'entroy gémir.

95 En fin mes propres cris m'éveillent,
En fin ces Démon s'émerveillent
D'être quasie surpris du jour;
Il s font gille à son arrivée,
Et la diane du tambour

100 M'avertit que l'Aube est levée.13

In this interior monologue the speaker (who is either a soldier in or hanger-on of an active military detachment) relates his conflict with the grotesque inhabitants of a commandeered inn where he is quartered. At first disgusted, then frightened and confused, he passes through a series of real and imagined horrors culminating in a nightmare of homosexual rape. Then, at long last, dawn disperses his assailants and reveille sounds.

The first fourteen verses follow the usual pattern of simultaneous composition: the speaker more or less emotionally describes his circumstances and narrates what befalls him; then he exhibits an amplified but not less immediate reaction. For hours he is “gisté” (v. 1) on a contemptible bed, covered by a foul “lit de plume” (v. 2), using sheets colored by the effluvia of an unfortunate predecessor (v. 3). Most importantly, he is attacked by “la Vermine” (v. 4). As a result of all this, he experiences not only pain and malaise without equal, especially given his location (vv. 5–6), but a decreasing awareness of temporal flow, joined with a growing sense of persecution:

Et la Nuit si longue m'y semble,
Que je croy qu'elle ait entrepris
D'en joindre une douzaine ensemble.

(Vv. 8–10)

This is no idle exaggeration: indeed, it makes probable a later shift in the speaker’s mental activity, from straight narration-
cum-reaction to delusion, entailing a total breakdown of temporal-causal perception and an almost overwhelming paranoia. Now, however, the speaker repeats the pattern of verses 1-10, beginning to list the "incommoditez" (v. 11) to which he is subject. The first of these is all but predictable, considering his preoccupation with time: "Je conte tous les coups de Cloche" (v. 12). He then succumbs to agitation: "Et comme un Oyson à la broche, / Je tourne de tous costez" (vv. 13-14). Because et is ambiguous, the reader cannot know how the speaker perceives this change of condition: is it coextensive with the steady, lugubrious pealing of the bell, or does it ensue upon the sound, or is it a mere supervention? This ambiguity, however, is functional: it clears the way for the second part of the caprice, which opens with a hallucination, no doubt the result of the totality of his sufferings.

Tossing and turning, the speaker disarranges his covers so thoroughly that one of them rises to his mouth, while the linceuls—along with the Manteau de laine d'Espagne—fall off the bed completely, the latter sliding into a pot de chambre puant. Obviously, though, the event is not so perceived: no causal detail links verse 14 with 15 and 16: "Je me tourne de tous costez: / Une vilaine Couverture." Moreover, all but one of the inanimate objects involved here are personified. The Couverture is not only sordid, but malhonnête. The speaker perceives it as so maddened by desire that when its more sedate approaches receive no encouragement, it becomes emboldened to take other liberties:

Malgré moy [elle] s'offre à me baiser;
Mais, si je luy defens ma bouche,
Je ne sçauois luy refuser
Qu'à mes jambes elle ne touche.

(Vv. 17-20)

In the process, the Couverture is seen supplanting the bed's other accouterments, no doubt because they appear to be rivals who have succeeded (without effort) in closing in on the speaker's appetizing body. Of the Couverture's victims, the Manteau is imagined as so pathetically exercised that it suffers from dehydration and slithers into the pot de chambre to slake its thirst.
The emotional and imaginative paroxysm related in the first hallucination now closes, and the speaker returns to an alternance of affective narration or description followed by an immediate, amplified response. Without temporal or causal transition, he shifts to the *clair de lune* (v. 31), on which he projects his own mood, seeing it shine "d’une lueur morne, et blafarde" (v. 32). In this sad light he is now victimized, both visually and aurally:

Mon oeil tout effrayé regarde
Voltiger mille oiseaux de Nuit:
Les Chauvesouris, les Fresayes
Don't les cris sont autant de playes
A l'oreille qui les entend.

(Vv. 33–37)

His expanded reaction is complex, for it echoes the hallucination passage, as well as the relative objectivity of the opening:

Decoupans l'Air humide et sombre,
Percent jusqu'où mon corps s'estend,
Et le muguettent comme une ombre.

(Vv. 38–40)

To amplify the image of physical and emotional pain caused by an assault on his senses, the speaker reintroduces the notion of unwanted and coerced intimacy. At this point, however, he seems to undergo a defensive shift of attitude, a dissociation of consciousness from his beleaguered senses, emotions, and imagination. Thus it is that he describes his reactions with detachment and distance.

Again, without temporal or causal linkage, the speaker passes to the affective narration of another assault, followed by an account of its impact on his emotions and speech:

Un essaim de maudits Cousins,
Bruyant d'une fureur extremsme,
Me fait renasquer en moy-mesme
Contre la saison des raisins.

(Vv. 41–44)

The pattern is repeated when the gnats close in on him:
L'un sur ma main donne en Sang-suè;
L'autre sur ma tronche se ruè,
Me rendant presque tout méseau.

(Vv. 45–47)

The term *méseau* complicates the speaker's reaction. Is he hallucinating again: does he perceive the bites as true leprous lesions? Or does he exploit the ironic detachment of verse 39 by parodying his tendency to magnify pain by analogy? The manner in which he relates his physical reaction suggests the former:

Je les poursuy, je les attrappe,
Et sans m'épargner le museau
Pour les y tuer je me frappe.

(Vv. 48–50)

The lack of a coordinating conjunction in line 48 reinforces the impression of a frenetic mood, but the change to periodic structure in the next two verses implies that the speaker's consciousness has again distanced itself from body and emotion and can thus describe acts and sufferings with maximum detachment. Both qualities are confirmed by the term *museau*, which suggests that on the physical level, at least, he perceives himself as dehumanized, reduced to the same level as his bestial assailants.

Now occurs the last instance of simultaneous composition in the poem's middle passage. Again, without temporal-causal transition, the speaker notices the rats fighting under a table (vv. 53–54): "Où jamais repas délectable / N'apparut aux yeux affamez." He then goes on to relate their acts and intentions—objectively but not without an undertone of bitterness and terror.

At this point—and still without preparation other than the speaker's agony—the second delusion begins. As he recounts a train of distorted images that apparently begins in percepts, the speaker maintains the dissociation of his reasoning consciousness from body, imagination, and feeling. Though he half sees, half imagines "une troupe de Farfadets" (v. 61), his detached consciousness permits him to turn whimsically analytical, comparing their peculiarities of appearance, "differens de taille, et de forme" (v. 62), and disvaluing individual hobgoblins for quite different reasons, "l'un ridicule, et l'autre énorme" (v. 63), even establishing a mock-heroic analogy: the *troupe* "s'y deméne en Diables-Cadets" (v. 64). He then states what has long been obvious—
—without, however, acknowledging the lucid consciousness that made the preceding remarks possible. The resumptive verses 68–70 reinforce the paradox of combining a deluded sensorium and a tortured imagination with acuteness of reasoning:

Bref, ces fabriques d’impostures
Estalent tout autour de moy
Leurs grimaces, et leurs postures.

The struggle between defensive consciousness and its coalition of enemies, both internal and external, now reaches its climax. Though betrayed by his “regars en vain sillez” (v. 84) and a “trop credule fantaisie” (v. 85)—which is so possessed and self-terrified that it may collapse—the speaker is fortified by perspicacity. Thus he continues to resist the cent chimeres hideuses that present themselves to him: “Je me figure en cette erreur / Qu’on donne le moine à mon ame” (vv. 89–90). Accordingly, he withdraws completely into sleep (vv. 91–92). Thereupon some new and unidentified assailant penetrates him (as always without warning), only to be imagined as an incubus (v. 93), a creature incorporating the worst qualities of all his past assailants: monstrosity, aggressiveness, and voracious sexuality.

Verses 94 and 95 are crucial, marking the formal and psychological transition to the poem’s finale: “Et resvant je m’entroy gémir. / En fin mes propres cris m’éveillent.” The speaker’s consciousness is at first far removed from his body and its emotions, hearing groans of pain only faintly, and while dreaming. Consciousness is then forced by the outcries to renounce withdrawal, and so it is that the speaker now reunites, however reluctantly, with emotions and perceptions, reasoning in the dissociated mode of verses 1–40:

En fin ces Demons s’émerveillent
D’estre quasi surpris du jour;
Ils font gille à son arrivée.

(Vv. 96–98)
The final section of the poem consists only of the last two verses—an incomplete instance of simultaneous composition, which reconfirms in a matter-of-fact way (though not without a sense of relief) the reintegration of mental faculties and of mind with body: “Et la diane du tambour / M’avertit que l’Aube est levée” (vv. 99-100). No amplified reaction need be depicted here; it is so strongly implied that explicitness would risk an anticlimactic redundancy.

Formally, then, *Le Mauvais Logement* presents a paradox. The disposition of its elements seems rigorous, thanks to the double ternary structure. The poem opens and closes with an objective, stable anecdotal motif in which the speaker’s reactions are either included and subordinated or amplified in a separate subsection. The middle, which depicts instability, begins and ends with protracted hallucinations framing a return to the alternance of anecdote and reaction. Despite such tight symmetry, the narrative pattern is not consecutively unified. This is particularly the case in the middle, where the passage from one horror to another is not governed by causality or by time. Events seem to occur at random. Lack of integration on the level of incident is more than offset, however, by the speaker’s unusual reasoning, which draws the disparate narrative details into a pattern unity of vastly ironic proportions.

**THE CONTRAPASSO**

Below the level of consciousness the speaker reasons analogically, conceiving of his nocturnal experience as a reflex or simulacrum of actions that he takes part in or observes by day.

The aggressor in the monologue is the setting itself. Though singular and finite, the inn is perceived as quartering subhuman and supernatural beings without limit: not only the vermin, the nightbirds, the gnats, and the rats, but the hobgoblins and the incubus, as well as malevolent furniture and outfittings. For the speaker nothing less than an epitome of the nonhuman world assaults his body and mind.

Still subliminally, he conceives the plan of attack as military, calling for two strikes. The first, designed to weaken his defenses, consists of exerting irresistible pressure from every direction. Laterally, the tactic is to bind or enclose for restriction.
of movement: hence the bed is termed a “grabat” (v. 1)—implying a procrustean brevity—and the cover is described as “vilaine” (v. 15)—which among other things suggests tightness. Moreover, the speaker states that the hobgoblins’ antics leave his sight “fascinée” (v. 65), that is, bewitched or, more to the point, bound. Vertically, the procedure is to keep the victim defenseless and, if possible, humiliated. The speaker describes himself as laid out passively during most of the episode, and (given the full seventeenth-century sense of the term *infâme*) he is debased by the “lit de plume” (v. 2). In such a state the victim is prepared for the second and most aggressive phase of the campaign: intimate contact with the ultimate goal of possession. It is this that explains the speaker’s emphasis on imagery of penetration and consumption, to say nothing of the sexual overtones contained in the blanket’s (and later, the nightbirds’) assaults.

Two images sum up the speaker’s situation with utmost vividness: the first appears in his analogy, “Et comme un Oyson à la broche, / Je me tourne de tous costez” (vv. 13–14). Locked into place and penetrated, he feels condemned to engage in movement that is not only repetitive but, above all, self-destructive, for it hastens his arrival at the state desired, he thinks, by those who seek to possess and absorb him. The second image occurs in the final stanza, where he is attacked by an incubus—that is, he depicts himself as immobilized, humiliated, and possessed for the satisfaction of his aggressor’s selfish purposes.

Now faced with these attacks, the speaker can mount no effective defense, nor can he counterattack. On the somatic level, he even sinks into brutish, inarticulate rage (v. 43). A futile attempt to retaliate leads, as pointed out above, to a sense of dehumanization (vv. 48–50). Finally, he complains that his physical and mental soldiery are one by one stifled, subverted, neutralized, captured or dispersed in panic. After the hobgoblins have bound his *viziere*, for example, his “oûye en est subornée (v. 66). Nor, finally, can his eyes shield him from sights too horrible to endure (vv. 79–80). His imagination is “saisie” (v. 86); his brain, “hors de soy” (v. 67).

Though ostensibly doomed, the speaker survives. Unconsciously, he relates this miracle to two key categories: space and quantity. In both he sees himself and his adversaries as polar
The assailants are multiple, whereas he is single; yet if the dimensions of the inn (which aids and abets the attack) are restricted, and if his limbs, senses, and faculties yield to outside bedevilment, his lucid consciousness, reduced to a minimum, becomes suddenly calm, while entertaining thoughts of sleep (vv. 91-92). Having accepted temporary loss of almost all his physical (and most of his nonstrategic mental) terrain, he sees this minimal consciousness retreat to a point virtually inaccessible to pressure or penetration. There, while awaiting future developments, it appears to suffer nothing but a slight jolt when the body and imagination are rent by their final assailant.

With the submerged, metaphorical view of the attack now in focus, certain symbols become transparent. First, the maneuvers take place: “Au clair de la Lune qui luit / D’une lueur morne, et blafarde” (vv. 31-32). The moon’s presence correlates with many of the substances and qualities, as well as passions and states, that the speaker emphasizes during his account. Traditionally linked with the supernatural, the moon is here associated with the weirdly lengthened night, the presence of hobgoblins, and the appearance of an incubus. Moreover, the speaker’s passivity, his coerced femininity, and the affliction of his fancy all have a strong lunar resonance.

Second, the speaker reports that throughout the nox irae “je conte tous les coups de Cloche” (v. 12): in the speaker’s mind the mechanically produced sound not only emphasizes the night’s endlessness but also sums up the assault of the nonhuman world upon his body and mind.

As the incubus attacks, the whole company of assailants is dispersed by the brilliant light of dawn entering the windows. By this the speaker suggests more than the end of his discomfort and the resumption of waking activities. Indeed, he foreshadows a complete reversal of relations between himself and—in the broadest possible sense—his tormentors. Clearly identified with an army waging war, the speaker almost certainly is implicated in broader skirmishes, incursions, battles for control of key positions, and dispersals of enemy troops. In this context his nocturnal sufferings—the peripheral attacks, the bites, the noise, and the other forms of penetration, plus the struggle to retain control of senses and faculties, and finally the retreat of consciousness—appear as a reversed and scaled-down image of the operations with which he is associated by day. The state of af-
fairs may be summed up through a pair of figurative substitutions: by day the entire contained entity (the army) aggressively seeks to take possession of the entire container (the territory where the inn is located); by night, however, part of the container (the inn) afflicts in like manner a part of the contained entity (the speaker).

This implicit symmetry is reinforced by a second pair of symbols. Whereas the nocturnal engagement takes place under the sign of Diana and to the accompaniment of the bell, the day’s operations are announced by the “diane du tambour” (v. 99) which sounds as “l’Aube est levée” (v. 100). In contrast with the dreary bell, the drum commands the hearer to rise and prepare for action, to assist directly or indirectly in the conquest or occupation of the territory that only moments before was seeking to control and vanquish him. Similarly, the sun, which traditionally represents masculinity, rationality, and a propensity for action, is an emblem for whoever answers the summons of the drum.

The speaker’s sense of a parallel between the explicit night and the implicit day gains its full meaning in his casual remarks about the setting itself. There, he states:

Je passe les plus tristes heures
Qui dans les mortelles Demeures
Puissent affliger les Esprits.

(Vv. 5–7)

The stress on mortelles intimates that from his viewpoint the only place worse than the inn is the locale where souls suffer immortally. The gosling simile (vv. 12–13) portrays the speaker’s forced suspension over fire; the natural and supernatural fauna of the inn have unmistakable traits: the gnats are “maudits” (v. 41), the farfadets are like “Diables-Cadets” (v. 64) and disport themselves in “infernales nigeries” (v. 73). All, finally, are “Demons” (v. 96). The setting, in other words, is a temporary and earthly hell, where the speaker suffers, in the image of his crimes, or those of the army he accompanies.

Through the submerged image of the contrapasso, then, the disparate elements of the frenetic, fragmented narrative are resolved into a unified whole.
Nonconsecutive unity occurs in many disrupted temporal lyrics of early seventeenth-century France. To Saint-Amant's nature poems, Malherbe's last revisions of Les Larmes de Saint-Pierre, and Théophile de Viau's epistle to Louis XIII on his exile may be added (among others) Maynard's Ode ("L'Astre du jour a beau sortir de l'onde"), the "Songe" of Sigogne, and Tristan L'Hermite's "Extase d'un baiser."

5. Ibid., pp. 385-86.
8. Cf. Smith, pp. 127-28. I would contend that simultaneous composition may take any tense, not merely the present, as Smith argues, since an ongoing action (and the immediate reaction it provokes) may be remembered or anticipated.
10. Ibid., p. 40.
11. Ibid., p. 59.
12. For an excellent treatment of discontinuity in certain works of Ronsard, see Terence C. Cave, The Cornucopian Text, pp. 223-71.
13. All quotations from the caprice refer to Saint-Amant, Oeuvres, ed. Jean Lagny, 2:144-49.
14. For a full treatment of simultaneous composition in Saint-Amant's nature poetry, see Robert T. Corum, Jr., Other Worlds and Other Seas.