The concept of genre has been a fundamental means of literary classification for many centuries, yet critics have invariably complained that the study of genre theory is deficient. Northrop Frye, for example, laments that literary criticism lacks precise terminology for many kinds of works and that three general labels of drama, epic, and lyric are inadequate to distinguish among an enormous diversity of poetic types. On the other hand, one may argue that the indiscriminate extension of generic categories is neither feasible nor desirable. In such an enterprise the critic would have to consider a myriad of artistic features before granting a label to a particular text. Which factors to weigh—subject matter, structure, tone, mode of presentation, intended emotional effect, cultural attitudes—as well as relative weighting of each, pose added difficulties to the dogged critic who persists in categorizing literature. That the concept of genre encompasses so many qualities explains the proliferation of labels used in delimiting literary sets and subsets.

Despite taxonomic imprecision, genre provides the reader a ready means of orientation. Indeed, a genre functions as “a code of behavior . . . between the author and his reader,” who may be drawn into the “proper” mode of experiencing the text. In other words, the genre creates a set of expectations and, consequently, particular responses in the reader. The generic “fix” becomes in this light another means by which the author manipulates his reader and conveys meaning: certain interpretative possibilities may be eliminated or remain unconceived because of generic assumptions made by the reader. Inasmuch as the author may narrow interpretative possibilities by focusing upon a specific genre, the poet, by mixing his generic signals, may disrupt the reader’s expectations and thereby create new meanings.

The Soviet structuralists have provided a useful vocabulary for the critic interested in describing the phenomenon of mixed genres. This method is based upon the Russian formalists’ notion of hierarchical levels
forming an interdependent system which possesses informational content inherent to its structures. A network of oppositions within and between these textual strata creates tension within the reader and tends to disrupt the automatism of his perception. Disruption of automatic responses is proper to the poetic text; nonartistic languages depend upon perceptual automatism.⁵

The Soviet critic Yury Lotman has suggested an important extension of the concept of levels. For Lotman the textual-strata concept extends to the reader insofar as he interprets the poem in the light of his own culturally determined system of knowledge, experience, and expectations. The process gives rise to what Lotman calls the “alien word” in the poetic text. Accompanying the tension in and among various levels and the resultant deautomatization of the reading, the alien word comes into play when the reader’s expectations are disrupted by the introduction, in a particular level, of a mode incongruous with the dominant mode of that level.⁶ A poem by Saint-Amant may serve to illustrate this device. In his well-known sonnet “L’Hiver des Alpes,” the second word, “atomes” (“Ces atomes de feu qui sur la neige brillent”),⁷ evokes the scientific-philosophic domain of such ancient thinkers as Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius. This circumstance constitutes a clear departure from the dominant topographical-descriptive code of this lyric poem. Although “atomes” is proper to an “alien” code, it integrates into the rest of the piece and actualizes a possible interpretation, namely, that the work provides a playful “scientific” explanation for the absence of thunder during the winter months. The alien word has implications which bear directly on fixed generic categories and their disruption. While generic expectations draw the reader into the “proper” mode of experiencing a text, the alien word forces him to abandon one code and to invoke a new system based upon his cultural and personal resources.

Recent criticism of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century French poetry has revealed a general tendency to redefine inherited systems.⁸ This spirit of innovation strove to “deautomatize” the reader’s reactions, to create “new” works derived from older schematisms, and, perhaps, to create a new audience capable of assimilating these artistic innovations. Utilizing the basic concepts of deautomatization and alien word, I will examine a genre common in the period, the consolation, in order to test this assumption.

Derived principally from the Senecan model found in the Epistulae
Morales, LXIII and XCIX, this poetry of bereavement forms a group of works which share similar themes and generic norms. Close reading of Seneca reveals the major themes of this genre: grief is an indulgence too often abused; one must mourn sparingly; death is part of life; we are all subject to death's rigors; one must resign oneself to its inevitability. In keeping with the somber subject, the standard consolation presents recurring images of destiny and death, often personified, with attendant images of transience and separation. The speaker poses as an affectionate but strong-willed and logical friend whose tone of moral exhortation is intended to jolt the addressee out of his self-pitying malaise. The speaker is careful, however, not to scorn the bereaved or to belittle the dead. Often the speaker alludes explicitly to grief-stricken mythological or historical figures as noble examples or to dead heroes as a means to emphasize death's inevitability.

The best-known consolation in seventeenth-century poetry is Malherbe's "Consolation à Monsieur du Perier, Gentilhomme d'Aix en Provence, sur la mort de sa fille." In this poem Malherbe follows closely the Senecan themes: his emphasis on God's will and design in the poem's conclusion corresponds to the Roman's frequent recourse to destiny and fate. The piece also contains an abundance of mythological and historical allusions, frequent images of death and flux, and personified nature symbolizing death's inevitability. From a generic perspective this poem utilizes a single code. Based upon knowledge of Malherbe's model and upon other contemporary consolations, the reader's generic expectations are not frustrated.

Malherbe remains within the boundaries imposed on the genre in his other consolations. An exception is "Consolation à Caritée, sur la mort de son mary" (Oeuvres, I: 155). Adumbrated in the poem's second stanza, ("O trop fidelle Caritée:" v. 15, my emphasis), an alien code competing with the standard consolation linguistic system belongs to the popular carpe diem mode. This circumstance, however, is not uncommon in consolations addressed to young widows, and would not lead the reader to make an incorrect generic guess in a first reading of the poem. The speaker refers to the grieving lady's "beaux cheveux" (v. 43), her "vive couleur" (v. 52), and that "vous semblez entreprendre / De miner vostre beaute" (vv. 41-42). Presented as a means to convince Caritée that the living must turn away from life-consuming grief, the carpe diem motifs yield to the sober admonition in the poem's concluding stanza:
Le temps d’un insensible cours
Nous porte à la fin de nos jours:
C’est à nostre sage conduite,
Sans murmurer de ce défaut,
De nous consoler de sa fuite
En le mesnageant comme il faut.

[vv. 73–78]

The speaker’s appeal to reason characteristic of Malherbe’s other consolation poems reasserts the generic confines of this piece.

The limited intermingling of two generic codes in the 1598 poem emerges as a systematic interaction in a number of consolations by Tristan l’Hermite written in the 1630s and 40s. In his “Consolation à son cher amy xxxx,” the familiar Senecan commonplaces on the vanity of grief are underlined by the speaker’s trenchant imperatives in the first two stanzas:

ACASTE, c’est assés pleurer;
Ta douleur est trop obstinée;
Cesse enfin de plus murmurer
Contre la Destinée,
Et finissant un si grand dueil,
Laisse les morts dans le cercueil.

Je sc.ay bien que ton pere avoit
Tant de vertus & tant de charmes,
Que ta pieté luy devoit
Un deluge de larmes.
Mais quoy? tes pleurs moüillent ses os.
Et tes crys troublent son repos.12

This tone of moral exhortation reminiscent of Malherbe’s “Consolation à M. du Perier”13 leads to another stock device, explicit comparison between the addressee and a historical or mythological character, in this case Aeneas on the death of his father Anchises. Just as the mythical hero conquered his profound sorrow and proceeded to fulfill his noble destiny, so must the addressee set aside grief. This brief allusion (vv. 13–24) to Aeneas and his ultimate achievement (“Il chercha l’Empire Latin / Que luy promettoit le Destin,” vv. 23–24), unveils to the cultured reader a vast literary backdrop. Immediately subsequent to the death of Anchises
in Virgil's epic is the famous Dido episode, in which love serves to mitigate Aeneas's pain over his father's death. The concluding stanza suggests a parallel course:

Pense donc à te consoler,
Et venir presenter ton ame
A cet astre qui scâit brusler
D'une divine flamme:
Et qui promit l'autre jour
D'estre sensible à ton amour.

A second "Dido" has materialized, offering love and consolation to a young man lost in grief. In this poem Tristan has grafted onto the conventional consolation the well-known *carpe diem* motif. Although the *tempus fugit* topos naturally provides a common ground between the two genres, and indeed is implied in the consolation itself, Tristan's use of allusive comparison based on yet another genre, the epic, assures smooth transition from one mode to the other. The repetition of an adjective basic to the code of love lyrics ("beaux jours de ta vie," v. 28; "Ce que ton âge a de plus beau," v. 30; "Le Sort Tyran des belles choses," v. 32) confirms this generic interpolation. As in Malherbe's "Consolation à Caritée," an "alien" linguistic system disrupts the reader's expectations, forcing a shift in generic orientation. Unlike Malherbe's poem, however, this piece does not revert to the conventional consolation's ultimate call to reason over emotion; the work's last word, "amour," verifies that emotion and desire can assuage the pangs of loss.

Due, perhaps, to the exalted social position of its subject, another consolation taken from *La Lyre* makes abundant use of the amorous code without passing overtly to the *carpe diem* mode. In "Consolation à Madame la Princesse Marie sur le trepas de feu Madame la Duchesse de Longueville sa tante," the opening lines recall themes common to innumerable *carpe diem* love lyrics:

Le Sort dont la rigueur contraire aux belles choses
Ternist si tost les roses:
Pour les plus beaux Objets a le plus de couroux.
Et c'est la raison seule, ô charmante MARIE!
De cette barbarie
Que sa jalousie humeur exerce contre Vous.

[vv. 1–6]
The speaker continues to praise and pity the desolate princess in the three subsequent stanzas and, after a perfunctory panegyric to the dead aunt ("Ce miroir de Vertu qui n'eut point de pareil:" v. 27), he resorts to the standard moral admonishment:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Apres avoir payé dessus sa sepulture} \\
&\quad \text{Les droits de la Nature} \\
&\quad \text{A quoy vos sentimens se trouvent obligez:} \\
&\text{Ne croyez pas toujours en r'ouvrant vos blessures} \\
&\quad \text{Rejetter les censures} \\
&\text{Que la raison veut faire à vos sens affligez.}
\end{align*}
\]

[vv. 37–42]

The poem’s final lines, however, revert to the lyric love code introduced in the opening stanza:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Et l'on espere encor, que vos beautez divines} \\
&\quad \text{Franchissant des Espines,} \\
&\quad \text{Meriteront enfin de marcher sur des Fleurs.}
\end{align*}
\]

[vv. 46–48]

Marie’s "beautez divines" and her close association with flowers suggest a covert comparison with Venus—in Roman mythology goddess of gardens as well as love. In this work the evocation of a poetic mode alien to the standard poem of bereavement obliquely suggests to the addressee that the pleasures of love may divert grief. Whereas in "Consolation à son cher amy xxxx" the speaker refers explicitly to the potential of love, here the speaker relies on the cultural apparatus of the reader to provide additional meanings.

In these poems the speaker combines disparate genres, yet in each case the poem does not actually acquire all the features of the conventional \textit{carpe diem}. The speaker, for a variety of reasons, does not offer his affections to the grieving addressee. This audacious, indeed irreverent, device diverges widely from the Senecan model, yet it is a logical step, given the nature of the two genres and their modulation observed here. Tristan’s best-known consolation, “Consolation à Idalie, sur la mort d’un parent,” opens on a familiar note.16 The deceased, although possessed of wondrous merit, has met the fate reserved for all mortals:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Puisque votre parent ne s’est pu dispenser} \\
&\quad \text{De servir de victime de la guerre,}
\end{align*}
\]
C'est, ô belle Idalie, une erreur de penser
Que les plus beaux lauriers soient exempts du tonnerre.

Si la mort connaissait le prix de la valeur
Ou se laissait surprendre aux plus aimables charmes,
Sans doute qu'Etios, garanti du malheur,
En conservant sa vie eut épargné vos larmes.

[vv. 1–8]

Despite the speaker's guise as moral counselor, the adjective "belle Idalie" immediately delineates the addressee and sets the tack of the poem. The same adjective applied to the unfortunate Etios ("les plus beaux lauriers") suggests an analogy between Idalie and Etios based on their shared mortality: she is also subject to death. The speaker affirms the physical attraction of Idalie in v. 6; her "aimables charmes" are powerless to stay the hand of fate, just as the "valeur" (v. 5) of Etios had no effect. The speaker's pose as preceptor continues in the fourth stanza, in which the deaths of ancient heroes corroborate his teachings:

Alexandre n'est plus, lui dont Mars fut jaloux,
César est dans la tombe aussi bien qu'un infâme,
Et la noble Camille, aimable comme vous,
Est au fond d'un cercueil ainsi qu'une autre femme.

[vv. 13–16]

Analogy remains the prime device in these lines. Alexandre and Caesar are to Etios as Camille is to Idalie. The speaker's repetition of the adjective "aimable" and his direct comparison in v. 15 intensify his rhetorical attack. The addressee should not fail to grasp his designs. The last three words, "une autre femme," initiate an associative transition to the following stanza, which sets aside considerations of Etios to focus solely on Idalie. This shift accompanies a distinct generic reorientation; the carpe diem emerges to displace the standard consolation mode:

Bien que vous méritiez des devoirs si constants,
Et que vous paraissiez si charmante et si sage,
On ne vous verra plus avant qu'il soit cent ans,
Si ce n'est dans mes vers, qui vivront davantage.

[vv. 17–20]

Despite the distressing impermanence of Idalie's earthly existence, the speaker offers immortality based on the eternal merit of his poetic art. This device recalls, of course, many sixteenth-century carpe diem love
sonnets intended to persuade the reluctant lady to accept the speaker’s advances. Her acquiescence rewards the speaker’s pains, while he in turn repays the lady by conferring figurative immortality upon her. Having abandoned the conventional consolation at this point in the poem, the speaker returns in the following stanzas to the dreadful fact of death’s omnipotence while concomitantly insisting on Idalie’s divine perfection:

Par un ordre éternel qu’on voit en l’univers
Les plus dignes objets sont frêles comme verre,
Et le ciel, embelli de tant d’astres divers,
Dérobe tous les jours des astres à la terre.

[vv. 21–24]

The last stanzas conclude the speaker’s argumentation:

Dès que nous commençons à raisonner un peu,
En l’avril de nos ans, en l’âge le plus tendre
Nous rencontrons l’amour qui met nos coeurs en feu
Puis nous trouvons la mort qui met nos corps en cendre.

Le temps qui, sans repos, va d’un pas si léger,
Emporte avec lui toutes les belles choses:
C’est pour nous avertir de le bien ménager,
Et faire des bouquets en la saison des roses.

[vv. 25–32]

The parallelism in vv. 27–28 telescopes the carpe diem themes expressed here. Although the repetition of the key adjective “aimable” in earlier lines signaled the poem’s orientation, the crucial word “amour” in v. 27—in a rhythmic position identical to “mort” in v. 28—prescribes unmistakably both a remedy for Idalie’s grief and, in a larger sense, a means of softening the harsh truth of death’s inevitability. In this light, Tristan’s poem remains a kind of “consolation.” The speaker’s role as wooer, already evoked in vv. 19–20 by the theme of eternal life through art reminiscent of the carpe diem mode, becomes more manifest in the last stanza. Tempus fugit, imperceptibly, perhaps, but all that is lovely (especially youthful, passionate desire, v. 27), must and will be swept away. While in the preceding stanza the first-person plurals point to humankind, the ambiguous “nous” in v. 31 may be taken as including only the speaker and addressee, typical usage in a standard carpe diem piece. The last lines express clearly the speaker’s desire to gather rosebuds while he (and Idalie) may. The “bouquets” and “roses” project the reader to a body of
poetry whose linguistic system is far removed from that of the traditional consolation. The moral tone of the poem's opening has yielded to an invitation to pluck the roses of youth and love. The sexual connotations of "bouquets" and "roses" in the code of galant poetry need hardly be emphasized. By gradually shifting generic codes, Tristan's poem of consolation in bereavement has become a poème amoureux. The speaker's subtle proposition to Idalie to enjoy the fruits of desire with him transforms his role from moral preceptor to passionate lover.

The moral stance of the speaker in a traditional Senecan consolatio such as Malherbe's "Consolation à M. du Perier" can be subverted by devices other than the gradual infiltration of carpe diem motifs. A curious piece by Théophile de Viau, "A Monsieur de L., sur la mort de son père," presents another example of generic modulation. Whereas the title of the poem appears to set the poetic mode, the opening stanza upsets the reader's expectations:

Oste-toy, laisse-moy resver:
Je sens un feu se souslever
Dont mon Ame est toute embrasée,
O beaux prés, beaux rivages verds,
O grand flambeau de l'Univers
Que je trouve ma veine aisee!
Belle Aurore, douce Rosée,
Que vous m'allez donner de vers!

The speaker's brusque imperatives are obvious alien forms, immediately striking a note foreign to the firm yet gentle tone with which a consolation normally begins. Indeed, this first line nullifies the most basic condition of any consolation, namely, intimate communication between conso1er and bereaved. Here the addressee must withdraw so that communication of another sort—between speaker and nature—can be initiated. Although nature is not absent in the standard consolation, the speaker's desire for solitude, his observation of and praise for natural beauty as source of inspiration set the reader on another generic tack, that of the typical solitude. Imitating a poetic mode transmitted from antiquity, the traditional solitude presents the speaker seeking a balm for the pangs of an unrequited love far from other human beings within a pastoral locus amoenus. Contemporary poets created variations of the inherited model; compare for example Saint-Amant's "La Solitude," Tris-
tan’s “La Mer” and “Le Promenoir des deux amants,” and Théophile’s own “La Solitude.”

The subsequent two stanzas of this “consolation” bear motifs belonging to the solitude code:

Le vent qui s’enfuit dans les ormeaux
Et pressant les feuillus rameaux
Abat le reste de la nuée,
Iris a perdu ses couleurs,
L’air n’a plus d’ombre, ny de pleurs,
La Bergere aux champs revenu
Moüillant sa jambe toute nuée
Foule les herbes et les fleurs.

Ces longues pluyes dont l’hyver
Empeschoit Tircis d’arriver
Ne seront plus continuées,
L’orage ne fait plus de bruit,
La clarté dissipe la nuit,
Ses noirceurs sont diminuées,
Le vent emporte les nuées
Et voila le Soleil qui luit.

[vv. 9–24]

The air of optimism following a violent storm evokes a return to mental equilibrium after a period of profound emotional storm and stress. The winter’s “longues pluyes” (v. 17) which had prevented the addressee, Tircis, from “arriving” reinforce this interpretation. The poem thus turns obliquely to the subject of consolation by reference to natural events. The “Soleil qui luit” (v. 24) signals a new beginning, recovery from past grief, and a bright future. The conventional motifs of the solitude—nature’s beauty and effervescence, inspiration in solitary meditation, pastoral sensuality (vv. 14–16)—are here utilized to introduce a decidedly unconventional consolation.

The sun’s brilliance described at the close of the third stanza leads to an abrupt change of subject in the following stanza, where a dialectical shift initiates an extended meditation on nature’s apparent counterpart, death:

Mon Dieu que le Soleil est beau!
Que les froides nuicts du tombeau
Font d’outrages à la nature!
La mort, grosse de desplaisirs,
De tenebres et de souspirs,
D'os, de vers, et de pourriture,
Estouffe dans la sepulture
Et nos forces, et nos desirs.

[vv. 25–32]

Contemporary solitudes often treated the hideousness of death. The intervention of the sinister and the horrific thus maintains the solitude-like aura of the poem while simultaneously focusing on a subject closely linked to the consolation. These lines serve as transition to a series of stanzas which develop death-related themes familiar to standard consolations: death is all-powerful; no one is immune to its rigors; Tircis, too, will meet death; his dead father, unaware of his son's grief, has passed on to inexorable oblivion. Moving from mortal mankind's irrevocable fate ("Les Mores et les Africains," v. 34; "Cesar comme le bucheron," v. 37; "Vostre pere est ensevely," v. 49; "Il est aussi mort qu'Alexandre," v. 55), the speaker magnifies his funereal vision in the last five stanzas to depict the ultimate dissolution of all creation. Although not a feature of the traditional solitude, this grandiose contemplation of Apocalypse recalls another famous solitude, Saint-Amant's "Le Contemplateur," which in turn shares elements with the contemporary devotional lyric. Théophile's poem emerges as a curious hybrid incorporating no less than three well-known lyric genres, the solitude, the religious meditation, and the consolation.

The Pléiade's Aristotelian dictum against mixed genres did not prevent the formation of subgenres derived from pre-existing models, yet the very creation of a genre system produced readers and writers who, in effect, knew what was expected in a given text. Such a system, however, invites subversion by poets desiring to break away from the Tradition. Yury Lotman sees this phenomenon as a means of increasing the text's informational potentialities:

An important means for the informational activization of a structure is its violation. An artistic text does not merely represent the implementation of structural norms, but their violation as well. It functions in a dual structural field consisting of the tendency to establish order and to violate it. Although each tendency tries to dominate and destroy the op-
posing one, the victory of either would prove to be fatal to art. The life of an artistic text depends on their mutual tension.26

Lotman also relates the degree of violation to a text's aesthetic value:

Thus, performing the function of "good poems" in a cultural system is the prerogative of only those texts which are highly informative for that culture. This implies a conflict with the reader's expectation, tension, struggle, and in the final reckoning, forces the reader to accept an artistic system that is more meaningful than his usual one. But in convincing the reader, the writer takes upon himself the obligation to go further. The conquered novelty is converted into cliche and loses its informativeness. Novelty is not always in the invention of the new. Novelty has a meaningful relationship to tradition in being simultaneously the resurrection of its memory and non-coincidental with it.27

The quest for innovation in a poetic generation striving to liberate itself from the Pléiade doubtlessly prompted the generic "instability" examined here. We see in these poems the capacity of genres to be tinted by the introduction of extrinsic—alien—modes. Although Malherbe's appeals to reason, Tristan's to love as well as lust, and Théophile's to both reason and emotion appear quite different, the speaker's rhetorical end remains the same: to console the grieving addressee.

Within the limited consolation genre, Malherbe proves to be the most conservative. Tristan and Théophile reveal themselves as artists no less bound to their literary antecedents. They exhibit, nonetheless, a greater willingness for aesthetic experimentation. While it must be said that the reader's knowledge of generic norms is crucial in deciphering a poetic text, the author's expectations must also be considered. Tristan and Théophile viewed their generic inheritance as a long-standing tradition ripe for subversion. The eminently serious—even religious—consolation becomes in their hands a poetic type subject to transformation. These poems are statements of professional conviction made by writers who wished to assert their own places in literary history.

Notes


3. It is worthwhile to quote Fowler (p. 259) here: “The processes of generic recognition are in fact fundamental to the reading process. Often we may not be aware of this. But whenever we approach a work of unfamiliar genre—new or old—our difficulties return us to fundamentals. No work, however avant-garde, is intelligible without some context of familiar types.”

4. See “The Historicity of Genres,” in E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Validity in Interpretation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 102–11. On these points Fowler (p. 22) is unequivocal: “Of all the codes of our literary langue, I have no hesitation in proposing genre as the most important, not least because it incorporates and organizes many others. Just how many other codes are generically articulated remains uncertain. Probably far more than we are aware of. At any rate there is no doubt that genre primarily has to do with communication. It is an instrument not of classification or prescription, but of meaning.”


10. For example, “Consolation à Monsieur le premier President, sur la mort de Madame sa femme,” in which the speaker entreats his addressee to serve the state as a means of assuaging his grief.

11. The expression originates, of course, in Horace, Odes, I: 11: “fugerit invida aetas / carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero.”


14. For Aeneas’s reaction to Anchises’s death, see Aeneid, III: 908–17. It is interesting that the consolation motif is doubled in Virgil, for Dido is in deep mourning over the death of her husband Sychaeus when Aeneas arrives in Carthage. Her sister entreats her to abandon her grief and to surrender to her nascent love for Aeneas. See IV: 38–73.

15. La Lyre, p. 231.


18. Ronsard expresses this notion repeatedly. On offering an amaranth (“sempervive”) to Hélène:

Elle vit longuement en sa jeune verdeur:
Long temps après la mort je vous feray revivre,
Tant peut le docte soin d’un gentil serviteur,

Qui veut, en vous servant, toutes vertus ensuivre.
Vous vivrez (croyez-moy) comme Laure en grandeur,
Au moins tant que vivront les plumes et le livre.

[Sonnets pour Hélène, Second Livre, II]

19. Indeed, of Tristan’s other consolations, three utilize the first-person plural; in “A Madame de Gournay, sur la mort de sa fille”:

Mais si nostre Sauveur prit cette Fleur nouvelle
Pour en parer les Cieux et la rendre immortelle,
Quelle raison vous porte à verser tant de pleurs?
C’est mal vous souvenir de ses bontez divines,
Faut-il avoir regret qu’il emporte nos fleurs,
Il a bien pris soin de porter nos espines?

[La Lyre, p. 270]

in “A Monseigneur le Chancelier, sur la mort de son gendre”:

Mais bien que la Raison t’ordonne de pleurer,
Garde que ta santé vienne à s’en altérer,
Et t’empêche d’agir où l’estat te convie.
Tes prudentes clartez eclairans son Conseil,
Il ne t’est pas permis d’abréger une vie
Qui nous est nécessaire autant que le soleil.

[Les Vers héroiques, p. 271]
and in “Consolation à son cher amy xxx,” discussed above. In each case the meaning is unequivocal.

20. In his *Dictionnaire universel* Antoine Furetière cites an interesting contemporary meaning of “bouquets”: “on dit qu’une femme fait porter le bouquet à son mari, quand elle lui est infidelle.”


27. *Analysis of the Poetic Text*, p. 131.