

**THE ROLE OF SERVANTS IN
MOLIÈRE'S PLAYS**

211



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, known as Molière, is one of the greatest authors of comedy of all time. Although he wrote no autobiography and his biography was not done during his lifetime, much has been written about his life, so much, in fact that it seems unnecessary to give details of Molière's life here.

The writer has long been interested in Molière's plays and especially in the servants to whom Molière so often gave memorable roles. It is the purpose of this study to examine the role of servants in the plays of Molière.

Molière defended his art in several of his plays. In La Critique de l'Ecole des femmes, Dorante, one of only two characters in the play who support the author's L'Ecole des femmes, states well Molière's idea of the purpose of comedy thus:¹

Lorsque vous peignez les hommes, il faut peindre d'après nature; on veut que ces portraits ressemblent, et vous n'avez rien fait, si vous n'y faites reconnoître les gens de votre siècle.

¹Eugène Despois (ed.), Oeuvres de Molière (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1909), III, 352. (La Critique de l'Ecole des femmes, pages 301-70.)

The purpose of this study is to show what roles the servants which Molière used in his plays have in representing the faults of men as well as what role they have in Molière's purpose of pleasing the audience. The study attempts to categorize the various roles servants fulfill in carrying out these two purposes of Molière.

The study reveals that seldom does a servant play his role with a single purpose. However, servants may be considered to play one of four roles. These roles, which are the basis for the study, are: (1) servants mirror their masters or other characters; (2) servants serve as spokesmen for their masters and devise means of achieving their masters' desires; (3) servants advise their masters; (4) servants play a comic role.

Six of Molière's plays are not a part of this study. In five of these plays there are no servants. These plays are: Don Garcie, Le Mariage forcé, Mélicerte, La Pastorale comique, and Psyché. In the sixth play, L'Impromptu de Versailles, the only servant, Bédart, performs only the ordinary duties normally assigned to servants, such as opening doors, announcing guests, or carrying messages. Molière's characters in the above-mentioned plays are drawn from life, as are the characters in all his plays. However, since this study is concerned

with the role of servants, these six plays are not included in this study.

There are eleven plays in which one or more servants perform only the normal duties assigned to servants; therefore, these servants are not a part of this study. The servants and the plays in which they appear are: Ergaste in L'Etourdi; La Rivière and L'Epine in Les Fâcheux; Almanzar in Les Précieuses ridicules; Flipote in Le Tartuffe; La Violette, Gusman, and Ragotin in Don Juan; Basque in Le Misanthrope; Dame Claude, Brindavoine, and La Merluche in L'Avare; Chorèbe in Les Amants magnifiques; Carle and Nérine in Les Fourberies de Scapin; Monsieur Bobinet and Jeannot in La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas; Julien and L'Epine in Les Femmes savantes. Aside from these servants who play very minor roles, all servants in Molière's plays will be treated in this study. The chronological order of appearance of the plays will be followed in each chapter.

CHAPTER II

SERVANTS MIRROR THEIR MASTERS OR OTHER CHARACTERS

Molière's servants often mirror the ideas or actions of their masters or other characters in the play. The reflection given by the mirroring may be nearly identical to the master, or it may be almost the opposite. In mirroring the love of master for mistress, a valet and maid are generally quite brusque; they rely on their masters to express love with eloquence. In mirroring the ideas of their masters, the servants' language is generally more simple and picturesque than their masters'. Molière was, in fact, sometimes criticized because he at times portrayed servants who used a dialect.

In Le Dépit amoureux, Gros-René mirrors the love of his master Eraste for Lucile by his love for Lucile's maid, Marinette. In the opening scene Gros-René tells Eraste:²

Avec vous en amour je cours même fortune;
Celle que vous aurez me doit être commune;
La maîtresse ne peut abuser votre foi,
A moins que la suivante en fasse autant pour moi; . . .

²Ibid., I, p. 406. (Le Dépit amoureux, pages 377-520.)

In order to win Lucile's love Eraste is advised by Lucile to win her father's favor, a task he fears will fail. But when Marinette asks Gros-René where their love stands, he replies:

Un hymen qu'on souhaite,
Entre gens comme nous, est une chose bientôt faite:
Je te veux; ne veux-tu de même? (Le Dépit amoureux
I, ii, 185-87).

They conclude very simply as she replies, "Avec plaisir," and he seals the agreement with, "Touche, il suffit." A marriage contract between members of the upper classes required the parents' approval, but on the part of servants the oral agreement between Gros-René and Marinette was sufficient.

Eraste's lack of confidence is not shared by Gros-René, but Gros-René mirrors immediately Eraste's jealousy. Eraste tends always to be jealous, and circumstances increase his jealousy. In order to show his rival Valère that Lucile is in love with Eraste, not Valère, Eraste asks Valère to read a love note which he has just received from Lucile. Valère reads the note, recognizes the handwriting, but walks away laughing. Eraste's jealousy is further heightened when Mascarille, Valère's valet, tells Eraste and Gros-René that Lucile and Valère have been secretly married. Valère has been secretly married but not to Lucile. He has really married

Dorothee,* sister of Lucile, who posed as Lucile and would see Valère only at night. When Marinette comes to deliver a message from her mistress, Eraste states, "Oses-tu me parler, âme double et traîtresse?" (Le Dépit amoureux I, v, 325). Gros-René mirrors, "M'oses-tu bien encor parler, femelle inique?" (Le Dépit amoureux I, v, 330). Gros-René has now become jealous of Mascarille, Valère's valet, because he feels the secret marriage of Valère and Lucile will cause him to lose Marinette.

Lucile and Marinette are not jealous of Eraste and Gros-René, but they are angry because of their jealousy. Lucile expresses her anger and her fear of weakening and forgiving Eraste in a speech of twenty lines which Marinette mirrors in four lines:

Vraiment, n'ayez point peur, et laissez faire à nous:
 J'ai pour le moins autant de colère que vous;
 Et je serois plutôt fille toute ma vie,
 Que mon gros traître aussi ne redonnât envie (Le Dépit amoureux II, iv, 645-48).

Later both Lucile and Marinette are free to marry when everyone learns of the secret marriage of Valère and Dorothee.

In Les Précieuses ridicules one sees servants who are the opposite of their masters but a perfect

*Dorothee had long been passed off as a son, Ascagne, by her mother in order to fulfill an inheritance demand.

reflection of other characters in the play. La Grange and Du Croisy are men of common sense and natural manners who are rebuffed by Magdelon and her cousin Cathos, two silly girls from the provinces aping the Parisian esprit précieux. For revenge, La Grange and Du Croisy send their valets, Mascarille and Jodelet, disguised as a marquis and a viscount, to woo the girls. The two valets mirror admirably the two précieuses in a play of which Castex and Surer say:³

Mais la comédie de Molière n'est pas seulement une déclaration de guerre aux outrances précieuses qui, en dégénérant, entraînaient l'esprit et le cœur en de dangereux égarements, c'est aussi la première revendication du bon sens et du naturel, si souvent invoqués par nos grands classiques.

The desire for naturalness and common sense is a desire shown in most of Molière's later plays.

Mascarille mirrors in his entrance the exaggerated imitation of the esprit précieux of Magdelon and Cathos as he asks his porters to carry his sedan chair into the house. He mirrors their appreciation for précieux poetry when he recites his impromptu:⁴

³Pierre-Georges Castex and Paul Surer, Manuel des études littéraires françaises (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1947), III, 106.

⁴Despois, op. cit., II, 84. (Les Précieuses ridicules, pages 3-134.)

Oh, oh! je n'y prenois pas garde:
Tandis que, sans songer à mal, je vous regarde,
Votre œil en tapinois me dérobe mon cœur.
Au voleur, au voleur, au voleur, au voleur!

Magdelon praises his poem, "...j'aimerois mieux avoir faite ce oh, oh! qu'un poème épique." (Les Précieuses ridicules scene ix, p. 86). Mascarille then praises every word of his poem.

Jodelet mirrors the précieuses as he follows their affected form of greeting when he addresses the marquis de Mascarille. His homage to the girls reflects their préciosité:

Il est juste de venir vous rendre ce qu'on vous doit; et vos attraits exigent leurs droits seigneuriaux sur toutes sortes de personnes (Les Précieuses ridicules scene xi, p. 100).

The girls receive their dues when La Grange and Du Croisy come to stop the masquerade by pulling the précieux clothing off their valets' backs.

In L'Ecole des maris, Lisette mirrors her master Ariste and her mistress Léonor in their ideas concerning freedom and frankness in preparing for marriage. Lisette reprimands Sganarelle, severe guardian of Léonor's sister Isabelle:⁵

Notre honneur est, Monsieur, bien sujet à foiblesse,
S'il faut qu'il ait besoin qu'on le garde sans cesse.
Pensez-vous, après tout, que ces précautions

⁵Ibid., p. 368. (L'Ecole des maris, pages 331-435.)

Servent de quelque obstacle à nos intentions,
 Et quand nous nous mettons quelque chose à la tête,
 Que l'homme le plus fin ne soit pas une bête?

Isabelle takes matters in her own hands, and Sganarelle is duped. Isabelle, pretending to despise Valère, makes Sganarelle think Valère is going to marry her sister Léonor. With the help of a veil, Isabelle passes for Léonor and marries Valère with Sganarelle's blessing.

Of Tartuffe John Palmer said that Molière was challenging a formidable sect and that his ultimate victory was to cost him five long years of continuous effort and provoke a rancor which followed him beyond the grave.⁶ It is in Tartuffe that Dorine, Mariane's maid, mirrors the general family opinion of Tartuffe. Madame Pernelle and her son Orgon are the only two characters in the play who do not see through Tartuffe's hypocrisy. Madame Pernelle receives this view of Tartuffe from Dorine:⁷

Certes c'est une chose aussi qui scandalise,
 De voir qu'un inconnu osons s'impatronise,
 Qu'un gueux qui, quand il vint, n'avoit pas de souliers
 Et dont l'habit entier valoit bien six deniers,
 En vienne jusque-là que de se méconnaître,
 De contrarier tout, et de faire le maître.

⁶John Palmer, Molière (New York: Brewer and Warren Inc., 1930), p. 332.

⁷Eugène Desnois and Paul Mesnard (eds.), Oeuvres de Molière (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1912), IV, 402. (Le Tartuffe, pages 269-566.)

Tartuffe almost succeeds in making himself the master. After having signed his possessions over to Tartuffe, Orgon discovers, as he hides beneath a table, Tartuffe's attempt to make love to Elmire, Orgon's wife. Dorine does not lose the opportunity to mirror the feelings Orgon had expressed earlier in the play as she chides:

Vous vous plaignez à tort, à tort vous le blâmez,
 Et ses pieux desseins par là sont confirmés:
 Dans l'amour du prochain sa vertu se consomme;
 Il sait que très-souvent les biens corrompent l'homme,
 Et, par charité pure, il veut vous enlever
 Tout ce qui vous peut faire obstacle à vous sauver.
 (Tartuffe V, v, 1815-20).

Tartuffe, however, is not allowed to take Orgon's wealth. The prince discovers that Tartuffe is a noted swindler and has him arrested. Thus Molière pays homage to the crown.

In Amphitryon, Molière presents the well-known myth of Jupiter coming to earth to make love to a mortal. Jupiter assumes the form of Amphitryon, Theban general and husband of the beautiful Alcmène. With the help of Mercure, who steals the name and form of Amphitryon's servant, Sosie, Jupiter approaches Alcmène to woo her in the form of her beloved husband; but Alcmène, who has been anxiously awaiting the return of her husband from battle, tells Jupiter that her husband and her

lover are identical in her thinking.⁸ Cléanthis, Alcène's maid, mirrors her mistress by her love for her husband Sosie, valet of Amphitryon, but she is not aware that she is speaking to Mercure and not to Sosie when she reprimands him:

Mais quoi? partir ainsi d'une façon brutale,
 Sans me dire un seul mot de douceur pour régal!
 (Amphitryon I, iv, 638-39).

When Amphitryon returns home in the morning, he has no knowledge of Jupiter's visit to Alcène during the night. Because Amphitryon does not act as Jupiter did and because Alcène speaks of a visit of her lover, Amphitryon and Alcène quarrel. Cléanthis, who has received a visit from Mercure, helps Sosie mirror their masters' quarrel as Cléanthis says:

Ah! ah! tu t'en avises,
 Traître, de t'approcher de nous!

Sosie replies:

Mon Dieu! qu'as-tu? Toujours on te voit en courroux,
 Et sur rien tu te formalises (Amphitryon II, iii,
 1086-89).

In his second visit to Alcène, Jupiter, as Amphitryon, is unable to resolve completely the quarrel between Amphitryon and Alcène. Her pride has been wounded by Amphitryon's accusation of infidelity and, although

⁸Ibid., VI, 391. (Amphitryon, pages 309-472.)

Jupiter is very persuasive, Alcène will not yield to him. In the following scene Cléanthis and Sosie mirror Alcène and Jupiter as Sosie tries to persuade Cléanthis to forget their quarrel:

Veux-tu qu'à leur exemple ici
 Nous fassions entre nous un peu de paix aussi,
 Quelque petit reparriage? (Amphitryon II, vii,
 1429-31).

Cléanthis first refuses, then relents. Finally both she and Sosie decide they want to be angry. The quarrel for both pairs of lovers is resolved only when Jupiter and Mercure explain their deception.

Claudine, Angélique's maid in George Dandin, mirrors Angélique's mocking reproaches of her husband, George Dandin, a man who fears, with good reason, that he is a cuckold. Angélique and Claudine leave the house one night, while George Dandin is asleep, in order to see their lovers, Clitandre and his servant Lubin. The husband awakens and locks the door only to be tricked by Angélique's feint of suicide to unlock the door and go out to see if his wife is really dead. While he is searching for his wife, she and Claudine slip into the house and lock George Dandin out. When George Dandin

attempts to get back in, Angélique mocks him. Claudine, parrot-like, adds:⁹

Cela est-il beau d'aller ivrognier toute la nuit?
et de laisser ainsi toute seule une pauvre jeune
femme dans la maison?

Before he left the house, George Dandin sent for Angélique's parents so that they can witness the infidelity of their daughter; but, when they arrive, George Dandin is still trying to get into the house and both Angélique and Claudine continue to reprimand him. After being forced to ask forgiveness of Angélique, George Dandin, alone on the stage, concludes, ". . . je n'y vois plus de remède: lorsqu'on a, comme moi, épousé une méchante femme, . . ." (George Dandin III, viii, p. 594). Molière opposed in George Dandin and in other plays marriages to change social rank.

Of Molière's skill as a comedian, Jacques Roger said:¹⁰

Il s'agit de faire rire, sinon de l'homme, du moins de ses mensonges, de ses entêtements, de ses illusions. Faire rire. Sur un théâtre où règne alors la comédie d'intrigue, plus ingénieuse que comique, Molière ramène le rire de la farce. Coups de bâtons, déguisements bouffons, plaisanteries énormes, tout un arsenal de gaieté populaire qui fait fremir les délicats. Mais aussi, et dès les

⁹Ibid., p. 586. (George Dandin, pages 473-640.)

¹⁰Jacques Roger, XVII^e Siècle français (Paris: Editions Seghers, 1962), p. 140.

premières pièces, l'observation la plus fine des contradictions du cœur humain, qui ne déchaîne plus les éclats de rire, qui fait "rire dans l'âme," comme dit joliment un contemporain.

Certainly the audience laughs as it sees Molière display all his techniques as comedian in Le Bourgeois gentilhomme. The most important role of Nicole, the Jourdain's servant-girl, is a comic one, and Cléonte's valet Covielle plays his most important role in achieving his master's wishes. However, both Nicole and Covielle mirror their master and mistress in love as well as in their quarrels.

Cléonte seems unaware that he is rebuffed, not by Lucile but by her father, M. Jourdain, who wants his daughter to marry into the nobility. When Cléonte comes to visit Lucile, who he thinks has insulted him, he is brusque with Nicole, the maid:¹¹

Retire-toi, te dis-je, et va-t'en dire de ce pas à ton infidèle maîtresse qu'elle n'abusera de sa vie le trop simple Cléonte.

Covielle mirrors:

Allons vite, ôte-toi de mes yeux, vilaine, et me laisse en repos.

While Nicole reports to her mistress, Cléonte utters reprimand after reprimand against Lucile. After a reprimand fourteen lines long by Cléonte, Covielle

¹¹Despois and Mesnard, op. cit., VIII, 126. (Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, pages 1-214.)

could not speak to him on the street because she was accompanied by her aunt.

Certain of Molière's characters would not have been so interesting except for the mirroring by their servants. The mirroring at times emphasizes the faults of mankind which Molière was trying to correct or the mirroring at times merely amuses the audience. Because of the mirroring of servants, persons from a wider range of social classes, both the aristocrats in the loges and the servants in the pit, were able to identify themselves with the characters in Molière's plays. Molière is a great comedian because of his universality.

CHAPTER III

SERVANTS SERVE AS SPOKESMEN FOR THEIR MASTERS AND DEVISE MEANS OF ACHIEVING THEIR MASTERS' DESIRES

Molière often portrays servants as spokesmen for their masters. Because etiquette limited the contact an unmarried woman could have with her suitor, her servant often fulfilled the role of spokesman. In certain plays the master cannot be openly seen in the house of his beloved because the girl's father has chosen someone else to be her husband. Perhaps the master feels unworthy to consider himself a suitor or is considered unworthy by the girl's father. The servant must act, then, as his master's spokesman. Many stratagems are necessary to avoid a marriage planned by a parent who does not consider the factor of love in marriage nor the right, which Molière championed so well, of a girl to choose her husband.

In Molière's first play, L'Etourdi, one sees a servant who is the spokesman for his master and who uses nine stratagems in attempting to win Célie for his master, Lélié.¹²

¹²Brander Matthews, Molière (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), p. 62.

Lélie's father wants him to marry Hippolyte, daughter of a family friend, Anselme, but Lélie falls in love with Célie, a slave bought by an old man, Trufaldin. If he could get the money, Lélie would buy Célie, but his father is close-fisted. Lélie, fortunately, has an ally in his valet, Mascarille, whose cleverness he praises:¹³

Toutefois j'aurois tort de me désespérer;
Puisque j'ai ton secours, je puis me rassurer:
Je sais que ton esprit, en intrigues fertile,
N'a jamais rien trouvé qui lui fût difficile,
Qu'on te peut appeler le roi des serviteurs,
Et qu'en toute la terre....

This praise satisfies Mascarille who asks only:

Laissez-moi quelque temps rêver à cette affaire.
Que pourrais-je inventer pour ce coup nécessaire?
(L'Etourdi I, iv).

Not much time is necessary for Mascarille to figure out a stratagem, but he does have difficulty carrying off an intrigue because of his master's blundering.

In order to speak with Célie for his master, Mascarille tells Trufaldin, who guards Célie very closely, that the slave girl has power to foretell the future. Mascarille explains to Célie the love his master holds for her, but before Mascarille finishes talking with Célie, Lélie, in his typical blundering fashion, bursts

¹³Despois, op. cit., I, 106. (L'Etourdi, pages 77-378.)

into the house and informs Trufaldin that he has sent Mascarille to arrange the purchase of Célie. Lélie and Mascarille are sent from the house (L'Etourdi I, iv).

In an attempt to get money to purchase Célie, Mascarille skilfully steals Anselme's purse, but Lélie once again foils the stratagem as he asks Anselme and Mascarille, "A qui la bourse?" In a third attempt to get Célie for his master, Mascarille convinces Lélie's father, Pandolfe, that he should buy Célie and send her to another country so that Lélie's love for her will be diverted to Hippolyte, but again Lélie appears at the wrong time and the stratagem fails.

Six other stratagems by Mascarille fail, each because of a blunder by Lélie. Mascarille, alone on the stage, counsels himself:

L'honneur, ô Mascarille, est une belle chose:
A tes nobles travaux ne fais aucune pause;
Et quoi qu'un maître ait fait pour te faire enrager,
Acheve pour ta gloire, et non pour l'obliger (L'Etourdi
III, 1, 915-18).

Excellent as his work has been, it is not by one of Mascarille's stratagems that Lélie wins Célie but by the discovery that Célie is actually the long-lost daughter of Trufaldin, who now approves of the marriage of Lélie and his daughter.

In La Princesse d'Elide, Moron, court fool of the princess, serves as spokesman for both the princess

and Euryale. The princess has three suitors but disdains all three. Euryale, a suitor aware that he must have help to win her love, appeals to Moron, who is his friend. Moron agrees to help:¹⁴

Pour n'effaroucher point son humeur de tigresse,
Il me faut manier la chose avec adresse;
Car on doit regarder comme l'on parle aux grands,
Et vous êtes parfois d'assez fâcheuses gens.
Laissez-moi doucement conduire cette trame.

Although Moron is in the service of the princess and serves as her spokesman with Euryale, he helps with Euryale's plan to win the princess. In order to handle the affair with address, Moron makes his mistress think that Euryale is not interested in love. The princess decides to test her powers over the male and win Euryale, planning then to refuse him. Moron, leading the princess on, tells her, "Il ne se rendra jamais" (La Princesse d'Elide III, v. p. 190). Moron encourages Euryale to continue his pretense of disdain for the princess, a stratagem which finally forces the princess to reveal her love for Euryale.

Like Mascarille in L'Etourdi, Hali, in Le Sicilien, feels gifted as he expresses:¹⁵

¹⁴Despois and Mesnard, op. cit., IV, 154. (La Princesse d'Elide, pages 129-268.)

¹⁵Ibid., VI, 245. (Le Sicilien, pages 205-308.)

Non: le courroux du point d'honneur me prend;
 il ne sera pas dit qu'on triomphe de mon adresse;
 ma qualité de fourbe s'indigne de tous obstacles,
 et je prétends faire éclater les talents que j'ai
 du Ciel. . . . Laissez-moi faire seulement: j'en
 essayerai tant de toutes les manières, que quelque
 chose enfin nous pourra réussir.

Hali's master, Adraste, a French gentleman, loves Isidore, a Greek slave, who is guarded closely by Dom Père, the Sicilien. Dom Père plans to free Isidore and marry her himself. Hali devises a musical scene in order to deliver Adraste's love message without being noticed by Dom Père.

After having sung to Isidore of Adraste's love, Hali speaks openly to Dom Père who has discovered his role:

He bien! oui, mon maître l'adore; il n'a point de plus grand désir que de lui montrer son amour; et si elle y consent, il la prendra pour femme (Le Sicilien scene ix, p. 256).

Hali's master does take Isidore for his wife through a stratagem in which Hali, disguised as a Spaniard, diverts Dom Père's attention while Adraste, passing as a painter, convinces Isidore that she should marry him.

Not always is the servant as successful as Hali. In George Dandin, Clitandre sends his servant Lubin to the Dandin house to arrange a rendezvous with Angélique, wife of George Dandin. Upon leaving the Dandin house, Lubin meets a man to whom he reveals the reason for

his visit. The man is George Dandin. It must be noted that Lubin is not listed with the cast as a valet or a lackey but as, "Lubin, paysan, servant Clitandre" (George Dandin, list of characters, p. 506). The blunders of Lubin emphasize the blunder the rich peasant George Dandin made when he married a girl for her title and not for love.

Maître Jacques, coachman and cook of Harpagon in L'Avare, is somewhat like Lubin in that his attempt at being a spokesman is not successful. Maître Jacques is asked by both Harpagon and his son, Cléante, to act as spokesman and judge in their quarrel over Mariane who loves Cléante and who is loved by him. The quarrel ensues when Cléante learns that his father plans to marry Mariane. Maître Jacques relays messages from the father and son on opposite sides of the stage. Believing everything is arranged, Maître Jacques says:¹⁶

Messieurs, vous n'avez qu'à parler ensemble; vous voilà d'accord maintenant; et vous alliez vous quereller, faute de vous entendre.

However, Harpagon and Cléante still do not understand each other since Maître Jacques mistakenly settles the quarrel by awarding Mariane to Cléante whereas Harpagon has asked Maître Jacques to relay the message, ". . . et

¹⁶Ibid., VII, 169-170. (L'Avare, pages 1-208.)

que, hors Mariane, je lui laisse la liberté de choisir celle qu'il voudra" (L'Avare IV, iv, p. 169).

La Flèche, Cléante's valet, serves as spokesman for his master in arranging a loan from Simon. However, he is unsuccessful in arranging the loan when Simon's backer turns out to be Harpagon. La Flèche succeeds in a difficult stratagem, that of locating Harpagon's hidden treasure chest and getting Harpagon away from the chest long enough to steal it.

Julie's servant girls, Nérine and Lucette, are used in an intrigue in Monsieur de Pourceaugnac to prevent the marriage of Julie and Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, a rich country lawyer from Limoges. Julie loves Eraste, but she has been promised by her father to Monsieur de Pourceaugnac. Julie and Eraste seek aid from Sbrigani, a schemer who devises several intrigues designed to frighten Monsieur de Pourceaugnac into leaving Paris and returning to Limoges. Sbrigani has Nérine and Lucette pose as women from the provinces who claim to have married Monsieur de Pourceaugnac. After having met his two "wives," Monsieur de Pourceaugnac is warned by Sbrigani that bigamy is a hanging offense in Paris. Through intrigues with two doctors, two lawyers, and a police officer, Sbrigani succeeds in chasing Monsieur de Pourceaugnac back to Limoges, and Julie marries Eraste.

Of Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, Brander Matthews wrote:¹⁷

The Bourgeois Gentilhomme belongs in the same group with Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, that of comedy-farces filled with contagious carnival gaiety. Its humor is more delicate in spite of the fact that there is daring buffoonery in its most fantastic episode. And it is superior not only because the central figure is of a more general interest, but also because this figure is surrounded not by the outline personages we found in Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, but by recognizable human beings.

That there are recognizable human beings in Le Bourgeois gentilhomme is certainly true. The daring buffoonery referred to by Matthews is carried off by Covielle, valet of Cléonte. Covielle, who like Mascarille, Hali, and Sbrigani, is a master of intrigue, creates an intrigue which amuses the audience and overwhelms M. Jourdain who, Covielle says, ". . . est homme à y jouer son rôle à merveille" (Le Bourgeois gentilhomme III, xii, pp. 148-49). Covielle, disguised as an oriental, convinces M. Jourdain that the father of M. Jourdain was a gentilhomme who sold cloth to his friends only because he was such a good judge of cloth.

The intrigue with its daring buffoonery was devised by Covielle to win the hand of M. Jourdain's daughter, Lucile, for his master, Cléonte. Covielle and Cléonte,

¹⁷Matthews, op. cit., pp. 266-67.

in a ceremony of song and dance, confer the title of Mamamouchi on M. Jourdain, in order, they say, that his daughter may marry the son of the Grand Turk, that is, Cléonte in disguise.

In Les Fourberies de Scapin, Léandre's valet, Scapin, helps his master win his beloved in spite of the apparent protest of Léandre's father, Géronte. Léandre falls in love with Zerbinette, believed to be an Egyptian, held captive in the scene of the play, Naples. Scapin also helps Octave, Léandre's friend, who has secretly married Hyacinthe, a poor but well-bred girl. The difficulty for both Léandre and Octave is that both their fathers return prematurely from a voyage with plans to marry the sons to unnamed girls.

When Hyacinthe learns of the return of Argante, Octave's father, she impleres Scapin, who has been hesitant to become involved:¹⁸

Je vous conjure, à son exemple, par tout ce qui vous est le plus cher au monde, de vouloir servir notre amour.

Scapin replies:

Il faut se laisser vaincre, et avoir de l'humanité. Allez, je veux m'employer pour vous.

¹⁸Despois and Mesnard, op. cit., VIII, 422. (Les Fourberies de Scapin, pages 385-526.)

In order to convince Argante that his son Octave acted wisely in marrying, Scapin tells Argante that Octave was forced to marry the girl by her parents. When Argante says that a forced marriage can easily be set aside, Scapin informs him that Octave, as a matter of honor, must not admit that he was forced to marry, but that he married of his own will (Les Fourberies de Scapin I, iv).

Although Octave is pleased with Scapin's intercession for him with his father, Léandre is very displeased with Scapin. Léandre feels that Scapin has revealed to his father, Géronte, Léandre's love for Zerbinette. Scapin has not. In appeasing Argante's anger, Scapin mentions that Léandre, who has been left in his charge by his father, has not followed his advice and has done something worse than Octave did in marrying the poor girl. When Léandre greets his father upon his return, Géronte questions him about what he has done. Léandre says that he is innocent of any wrong-doing, but the suspicions of both are aroused.

With growing anger, Léandre is about to run his sword through Scapin when Léandre receives word that the Egyptians are going to take Zerbinette away if they do not receive money for her. Léandre's anger vanishes as he says, "Ah! mon pauvre Scapin, j'implore ton secours."

Scapin replies, " 'Ahi mon pauvre Scapin,' Je suis 'mon pauvre Scapin ' à cette heure qu'on a besoin de moi" (Les Fourberies de Scapin II, iv, p. 450). Upon the pleading of Léandre and Octave, Scapin finally agrees to help in their enterprise by getting from their fathers the money both need.

In order to get the money which Octave needs to help Hyacinte, Scapin tells Argante, Octave's father, that the brother of Octave's recent bride is willing to break off the marriage for two hundred pistoles. When Argante refuses to give Scapin the money, Scapin has Silvestre, Octave's valet, pose as the brother of Hyacinte. Silvestre plays his part well, for he frightens Argante. Scapin, pretending to protect Argante, tells Silvestre that Argante is an enemy of the man for whom Silvestre is looking. Argante is, nevertheless, so frightened by Silvestre that he gives Scapin the money. To get the five hundred écus which Léandre needs to ransom Zerbinette, Scapin tells Gêronte that his son is being held captive on a Turkish ship in the harbor and that the ship is going to leave for another country where Léandre will be sold as a slave if the captain does not receive five hundred écus. After much hesitation, Gêronte gives Scapin the money.

It is fate which permits the two couples to be united. Zerbinette turns out to be Argante's daughter who was stolen from him when she was four years old. Hyacinthe is really the daughter of G ronde who had left her in the care of a nurse. Thus, as happens in certain other plays of Moli re, the choice of the fathers is also, in reality, the choice of the children.

In Moli re's last play, Le Malade imaginaire, Toinette, Argan's servant, serves as spokesman for Argan's daughter, Ang lique, and creates an intrigue which proves to Argan that his second wife, B line, does not love him but only wants his money.

Ang lique and Cl ante are in love, but Argan wants his daughter to marry a young doctor, Thomas Diafoirus, so that there will be a doctor in the family to care for all his imaginary ills. Ang lique appeals to Toinette for help, "Ne m'abandonne point, je te prie, dans l'extr mit  o  je suis."¹⁹ Toinette replies that she will never abandon Ang lique, and agrees to serve her as she says:

Laissez-moi faire: j'emploierai tout chose pour vous servir; mais pour vous servir avec plus d'effet, je veux changer de batterie, couvrir le z le que j'ai pour vous, et feindre d'entrer dans les sentiments de votre p re et de votre belle-m re (Le Malade imaginaire I, viii, p. 319).

¹⁹Ibid., IX, 318. (Le Malade imaginaire, pages 207-510.)

The first thing Toinette does to serve Angélique is to introduce Cléante to Argan as a singing teacher. Through an improvised song, Angélique and Cléante discuss their love. However, in order to permit their marriage, Toinette knows she must discredit Béline who has convinced Argan that Angélique should be sent to a convent because she opposed the marriage with Thomas Diafoirus. Through the pretense of proving to Argan's brother, Béralde, that Béline's love for her husband is sincere, Toinette asks Argan to feign death so that the doubting Béralde may witness Béline's shock upon seeing her husband dead. Béline is delighted to see her husband dead, and is chased away by Argan. When Angélique and Cléante view the body, both express grief with the result that Argan agrees to their marriage on the condition that Cléante become a doctor. Béralde and Toinette are able to convince Argan that he himself should become a doctor. Thus the step-mother's designs to get her husband's wealth are thwarted, Angélique and Cléante's desire to marry is fulfilled, and Argan's wish to have a doctor in the family is achieved.

Molière used servants as spokesmen for their masters and to help resolve some of their masters' problems. Not always is the servant successful in his role as spokesman, and his role is not appreciated at times by

his master. Many of the intrigues, by their necessity point out certain faults of mankind in Molière's time, as indeed in all times. Certainly most of the intrigues are clever enough to amuse the audience.

En effet, tu dis bien, voilà comme il faut être:
 Jamais de ces soupçons qu'un jaloux fait paroître!
 Tout le fruit qu'on en cueille est de se mettre mal,
 Et d'avancer par là les desseins d'un rival:
 Au mérite souvent de qui l'éclat vous blesse
 Vos chagrins font ouvrir les yeux d'une maîtresse;
 Et j'en sais tel qui doit son destin le plus doux
 Aux soins trop inquiets de son rival jaloux
 (Le Dépit amoureux I, II, 117-24).

Eraste does not follow Marinette's advice nor does he heed Gros-René's counsel. However, as was indicated earlier, Eraste wins Lucile's love (cf. p. 6).

In one of Molière's short plays, Sganarelle or Le Cocu imaginaire, Gorgibus wants his daughter Célie to marry the rich Valère. Célie, however, loves Léliu to whom her father had been favorable before he met Valère. Célie's maid, who approves of marriage for the sake of marriage, advises her mistress:²⁰

Quoi? refuser, Madame, avec cette rigueur,
 Ce que tant d'autres gens voudroient de tout leur cœur!
 A des offres d'hymen répondre par des larmes,
 Et tarder tant à dire un oui si plein de charmes!
 Hélas! que ne veut-on aussi me marier.
 Ce ne seroit pas moi qui se feroit prier;
 Et loin qu'un pareil oui me donnât de la peine,
 Croyez que j'en dirois bien vite une douzaine.

Célie does not of course oppose marriage, but she wants to marry for love. She is able to persuade her maid that Léliu would be a better husband than Valère.

²⁰Despois, op. cit., II, 168-69. (Sganarelle, pages 135-216.)

An incident which creates confusion for several characters in the play almost causes Célie to abandon Lélie. While talking with her maid in the street, Célie faints and drops her portrait of Lélie. Sganarelle, a bystander, helps carry Célie into her house. Sganarelle's wife, immediately jealous of the attention he has given to Célie, comes to the spot where Célie has fainted and finds the portrait. As she examines the portrait and praises its appearance, Sganarelle returns, seizes the portrait he thinks was given his wife by a suitor and in his turn becomes jealous. Still holding the portrait, Sganarelle meets Lélie. Since Sganarelle tells Lélie the portrait was given to him by his wife, Lélie assumes that Célie has broken her vows with him and married Sganarelle. Célie sees Lélie and Sganarelle talking but does not arrive in time to meet Lélie, who leaves. When she asks Sganarelle if he knows the man who just left, Sganarelle replies that the man is his wife's lover. Now that all parties have reason to be jealous, a face-to-face meeting of all concerned is necessary in which the maid unravels the mystery. All ends well when Valère's father reports that his son has secretly married another girl and so cannot marry Célie. Célie and Lélie are free to marry. Perhaps Célie's maid will be able to convince Lélie's valet to follow suit.

in the princess. Euryale, however, becomes discouraged with the progress of his plan and is advised by Moron:

Donnez-vous-en bien de garde, Seigneur, si vous m'en voulez croire. Vous avez trouve la meilleure invention du monde, et je me trompe fort si elle ne vous réussit. Les femmes sont des animaux d'un naturel bizarre; nous les gâtons par nos douceurs; et je crois tout de bon que nous les verrions nous courir, sans tous ces respects et ces soumissions où les hommes les accouinent (La Princesse d'Elide III, 11, p. 183).

Moron further advises Euryale to remain firm in the plan he has chosen. When Euryale begins to weaken in the presence of the beautiful princess, Moron stands beside him, urging him to have courage and follow his plan. Euryale's plan, as Moron advised, succeeds (cf. p. 20).

Orgon, who is taken in by the hypocrite in Le Tartuffe, needs advice but does not want it, nor will he follow it until it is almost too late. Orgon is in the process of revealing to his daughter, Mariane, his plan to have her wed Tartuffe rather than her suitor, Valère, when Mariane's maid, Dorine, interferes. Dorine offers this advice concerning Tartuffe who, Orgon says, is certainly a gentleman:

Oui, c'est lui qui le dit; et cette vanité,
Monsieur, ne sied pas bien avec la piété.
Qui d'une sainte vie embrasse l'innocence
Ne doit point tant prôner son nom et sa naissance,
Et l'humble procédé de la dévotion
Souffre mal les éclats de cette ambition
(Le Tartuffe II, 11, 495-500).

Dorine, because she is a servant, is able to continue her denouncement of Tartuffe, and she also gives Orgon advice concerning the care necessary in giving a daughter in marriage:

Il est bien difficile enfin d'être fidèle
 A de certains maris faits d'un certain modèle;
 Et qui donne à sa fille un homme qu'elle hait
 Est responsable au Ciel des fautes qu'elle fait.
 Songez à quels périls votre dessein vous livre
 (Le Tartuffe II, ii, 513-17).

When Orgon tells Dorine that it is his duty to teach his daughter how to live, Dorine states that Mariane would do better to follow her teachings. No longer able to listen to Dorine's advice, Orgon demands that she be still.

After listening to Mariane and Valère argue for several minutes over Orgon's marriage plans for Mariane and Tartuffe, Dorine interrupts them. When she has appeased their anger, Dorine counsels Mariane:

Votre père se moque, et ce sont des chansons;
 Mais pour vous, il vaut mieux qu'à son extravagance
 D'un doux consentement vous prêtiez l'apparence,
 Afin qu'en cas d'alarme il vous soit plus aise
 De tirer en longueur cet hymen proposé
 (Le Tartuffe II, iv, 796-800).

Dorine continues as she advises both Mariane and Valère:

Mais pour mieux réussir, il est bon, ce me semble,
 Qu'on ne vous trouve point tous deux parlant ensemble
 (Le Tartuffe II, iv, 809-10).

With Mariane and Valère separated, Dorine is able to give advice to other members of the family.

Finally Dorine advises Damis, Orgon's son, who has been threatened with disinheritance. Dorine advises Damis to act carefully toward both his father and Tartuffe:

Hal tout doux! Envers lui, comme envers votre père,
Laissez agir les soins de votre belle-mère,
Sur l'esprit de Tartuffe elle a quelque crédit;
Il se rend complaisant à tout ce qu'elle dit,
Et pourroit bien avoir douceur de cœur pour elle
(Le Tartuffe III, 1, 833-37).

As has been shown, Dorine conspires with Orgon's wife so that Tartuffe is exposed and Mariane and Valère may marry (cf. p. 10).

Writing of Molière's Dom Juan, André Villier said:²¹

Dom Juan is not a dispensation from rules of conduct, nor is it a course in practical morality; but the wealth of ideas that its five acts suggest is considerable. It is a play that offers us ample material for meditation that is not limited to the problem of a particular period, and that leaves us marveling over so unique a work.

It is in Dom Juan that a servant advises his master and tries to get him to meditate on some of his problems. Dom Juan, a man who rejects all conventional modes of behavior, has a valet, Sganarelle, who gives advice freely but who can never persuade his master to follow the advice.

²¹André Villier, essay on "Dom Juan Revisited," in Molière, edited by Jacques Guicharnaud (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 89.

When Dom Juan at times asks for Sganarelle's advice, Sganarelle uses caution in advising his master. Dom Juan has married Elvire, as he has many women, and left her a few days after the wedding on the pretense of having business which called him away. As with his other wives, he does not plan to return. However, Elvire sends her brothers to look for Dom Juan. When Dom Juan asks Sganarelle why he thinks he left Elvire, Sganarelle replies, "Moi, je crois, sans vous faire tort, que vous avez quelque amour en tête."²² Dom Juan lightly denies the charge but asks Sganarelle what he thinks of such behavior. Sganarelle replies, "Assurément que vous avez raison, si vous le voulez; on ne peut pas aller là contre. Mais si vous ne le vouliez pas, ce seroit peut-être une autre affaire" (Dom Juan I, ii, p. 86). Such a guarded response does not satisfy Dom Juan who tells Sganarelle to speak freely without fear of reprisal. Sganarelle, with this freedom to speak frankly, says:

En ce cas, Monsieur, je vous dirai franchement que je n'approuve point votre méthode, et que je trouve fort vilain d'aimer de tous côtés comme vous faites (Dom Juan I, ii, pp. 86-87).

Dom Juan immediately justifies his actions so eloquently that Sganarelle does not really know what to say.

²²Despois and Mesnard, op. cit., V, 85. (Dom Juan, pages 1-260.)

What he does reply when Don Juan asks him to try to refute his arguments is:

Ma foi! j'ai à dire..., je ne sais que dire; car vous tournez les choses d'une manière, qu'il semble que vous avez raison; et cependant il est vrai que vous ne l'avez pas. J'avois les plus belles pensées du monde, et vos discours m'ont brouillé tout cela. Laissez faire: une autre fois je mettrai mes raisonnements par écrit, pour disputer avec vous (Don Juan I, ii, p. 89).

Sganarelle, however, continues to advise and to serve Don Juan even though he expresses dislike for his master, "Ahi quel abominable maître me vois-je obligé de servir" (Don Juan I, iii, p. 100).

Don Juan continues his adventures as he pleases in spite of Sganarelle's objections. He seduces two peasant girls, apparently because he cannot bear to see them happy with their peasant suitors. After visiting the tomb of the commander whom Don Juan has killed in a duel and seeing the statue of the commander nod agreement to Don Juan's invitation to dinner, Sganarelle feels sure that his advice will be heeded. Don Juan, however, will not permit Sganarelle to talk about the incident with the statue. When the statue comes to dine with Don Juan, he invites Don Juan to come the next day to dine with him. Before Don Juan and Sganarelle leave for their dinner engagement, a specter appears to Don Juan warning him to repent. Sganarelle advises

his master to heed the specter's warning, but Dom Juan says that he is not able to repent. They go to dine with the statue at the commander's tomb where Dom Juan is punished. After Dom Juan disappears in flames in the tomb of the commander, Sganarelle, alone on the stage, offers this advice to the audience:

Voilà par sa mort un chacun satisfait: Ciel
 offense, lois violées, filles séduites, familles
 deshonorées, parents outragés, femmes mises à mal,
 maris poussés à bout, tout le monde est content.
 Il n'y a que moi seul de malheureux, qui après tant
 d'années de service, n'ai point d'autre récompense
 que de voir à mes yeux l'impiété de mon maître punie
 par le plus épouvantable châtement du monde (Dom
 Juan V, vi, p. 203).

It is, of course, unfortunate that Sganarelle does not receive any monetary reward for his services, but he does have the realization that the advice which he had given his master could have saved his master's life.

Molière returns to a much lighter theme in Le Médecin malgré lui. Géronte's daughter, Lucinde, appears to be ill, but the doctors are not able to help her. Jacqueline, Géronte's housekeeper, advises Géronte concerning the cause of his daughter's illness:²³

La meilleure médecine que l'on pourroit bailler
 à votre fille, ce seroit, selon moi, un biau et bon
 mari, pour qui elle eût de l'amitié.

²³Ibid., VI, 69. (Le Médecin malgré lui, pages 1-122.)

Although G ronte tells Jacqueline to mind her own business, she continues to advise. She recommends L andre as a husband for Lucinde, but G ronte rejects him because L andre will not receive his wealth until the death of an uncle. Jacqueline expresses her bon sens concerning marriage:

Enfin j'ai toujours euf' dire qu'en mariage, comme ailleurs, contentement passe richesse. Les b eres et les m eres ont cette maudite coutume de demander toujours: "Qu'a-t-il?" et "Qu'a-t-elle?" et le comp ere Biarre a mari  sa fille Simonette au gros Thomas pour un quarqui  de vaigne qu'il avoit davantage que le jeune Robin, o  elle avoit bout  son amiquie; et vel  que la pauvre creature en est devenue jaune comme un coing, et n'a point profit  tout depuis ce temps-l  (Le M decin malgre lui II, 1, pp. 71-72).

Jacqueline, in her picturesque way, expresses the truth that love is more important than riches in marriage. G ronte refuses to follow Jacqueline's advice; but L andre's uncle dies, leaving his wealth to L andre. G ronte, then, has a rich son-in-law, and Lucinde has a husband she loves.

At times the advice expressed by a servant causes him pain. Ma tre Jacques, coachman and cook of Harpagon in L'Avare, tells his master that in spite of what is said of him, he feels tenderness for his master, and loves him, next to his horses, more than anything else. Harpagon, curiosity aroused, asks Ma tre Jacques to tell him what people are saying about him. Although

Harpagon denies that he will become angry, Maître Jacques contradicts him politely, "Pardonnez-moi: je sais fort bien que je vous mettrois en colère" (L'Avare III, 1, p. 134). Urged on by Harpagon, Maître Jacques begins, "Monsieur, puisque vous le voulez, je vous dirai franchement qu'on se moque partout de vous" (L'Avare III, 1, p. 134). He then enumerates the many examples of Harpagon's avarice which are common talk among the people of the town. As Maître Jacques has predicted, Harpagon becomes angry and beats his servant.

In the comedy-ballet, Les Amants magnifiques, Clitidas, court fool of the princess Eriphile, advises both his mistress and her would-be suitor, Sostrate. The princess has two elegant suitors whom she only tolerates. Sostrate, a general in the princess' army, thinks he is alone as he speaks of his love for Eriphile. He vows to himself to carry his love unexpressed to his death. Clitidas, however, overhears Sostrate's musings. After talking with Sostrate, who declares himself unworthy of the princess, the court fool Clitidas advises:²⁴

Le respect bien souvent n'oblige pas tant que l'amour, et je me trompe fort, ou la jeune princesse a connu votre flamme, et n'y est pas insensible.

²⁴Ibid., VII, 392. (Les Amants magnifiques, pages 349-473.)

Clitidas continues to advise Sostrate to press his suit for the princess.

The princess' mother, Aristone, has an astrologer, Anaxarque, who attempts to get Aristone to choose for her daughter the suitor who has paid him to read the stars in his favor. Clitidas mocks Anaxarque in front of Aristone and is told by the astrologer that, since he is the court fool, he should spend his time making jokes for his mistress. Clitidas replies:

Ma foi! on les donne telles qu'on peut. Vous en parlez fort à votre aise, et le métier de plaisant n'est pas comme celui d'astrologue. Bien mentir et bien plaisanter sont deux choses fort différentes, et il est bien plus facile de tromper les gens que de les faire rire (Les Amants magnifiques I, ii, p. 397).

As is often true, the court fool sees through the faults of men, here perhaps expressing one of Molière's ideas about his own art.

Clitidas advises the princess concerning Sostrate: "En vérité, c'est un homme qui me revient, un homme fait comme je veux que les hommes soient faits" (Les Amants magnifiques II, ii, p. 410). Although Sostrate and the princess are attracted to each other, it is fate which brings them together. The astrologer Anaxarque devises a Venus that appears to the princess' mother, Aristone, and tells her that she should choose the person who saves her life to be her son-in-law. Aristone agrees, and

Anaxarque plans to let the elegant suitor who gives him the most money save Aristone from bandits who are in Anaxarque's hire. However, walking in the forest, Aristone is attacked by a wild stag before she reaches the spot where the hired bandits are hiding. Sostrate, also walking in the forest, sees the stag and saves Aristone thereby winning the hand of the princess Eriphile.

In Les Femmes savantes Molière renews the attack made in Les Précieuses ridicules on excessive, exaggerated refinement (cf. p. 7). Philaminte, wife of Chrysale, and her eldest daughter Armande, attempt to become erudite but at the cost of abandoning normal social relationships. Armande does not want to marry since marriage would interfere with her studies. Philaminte is not able to tolerate the grammatical mistakes of her kitchen maid. Martine, although she does make mistakes in grammar, offers her mistress good advice about the purpose of language:²⁵

Quand on se fait entendre, on parle toujours bien,
Et tous vos biaux distons ne servent pas de rien.

Martine is discharged by her mistress Philaminte for this use of a double negative. The maid is retained, however, by her master Chrysale, who does not want to

²⁵Ibid., IX, 96. (Les Femmes savantes, pages 1-206.)

lose a good cook just because she uses incorrect grammar.

Philaminte wants to marry her younger daughter Henriette to Trissotin, an arrogant pedant. Henriette, however, is in love with Clitandre. Chrysale tells his wife that his daughter will marry his choice, Clitandre; Philaminte replies that, on the contrary, Henriette must marry her choice, Trissotin. Chrysale, who often surrenders to his wife's demands, is advised by his maid Martine:

Ce n'est point à la femme à prescrire, et je sommes
Pour céder le dessus en toute chose aux hommes
(Les Femmes savants V, iii, 1641-42).

Although Martine uses a plural verb with a singular subject, her advice encourages Chrysale and Henriette does marry Clitandre. Not all the credit, however, belongs to Chrysale and Martine. Ariste, wise brother of Chrysale, delivers a letter to Chrysale and one to his wife Philaminte which inform them that they have lost all their fortune. After the pedant Trissotin, who was willing to marry Henriette only to get the family's wealth, renounces his claim on Henriette, Ariste reveals that he wrote the letters himself in a successful attempt to bring Henriette and Clitandre together as well as to discredit Trissotin.

Toinette, servant of Argan in Le Malade imaginaire, freely advises her master and at times even usurps his authority. The hypochondriac Argan, who wastes much of his money on a doctor and an apothecary, is advised by Toinette:

Ce Monsieur Fleurant-là et ce Monsieur Purgon s'égayent bien sur votre corps; ils ont en vous une bonne vache à lait; et je voudrais bien leur demander quel mal vous avez, pour vous faire tant de remèdes (Le Malade imaginaire I, ii, p. 288).

Toinette is quite frank with her master, but he is so firmly convinced that he is ill that he does not pay any attention to her.

Argan's daughter, Angélique, is more receptive to Toinette's advice. Angélique loves Cléante and is loved by him. When Angélique asks Toinette if she thinks Cléante loves her as much as he says he does, the maid replies:

Eh, eh! ces choses-là, parfois, sont un peu sujettes à gaudion. Les grimaces d'amour ressemblent fort à la vérité; et j'ai vu de grands comédiens là-dessus (Le Malade imaginaire I, iv, p. 292).

Toinette counsels her mistress that the best means of determining if Cléante loves her is to see whether or not he asks her father Argan for her hand in marriage.

When Argan tells his daughter Angélique that he plans to have her marry a young doctor, Thomas Diafoirus, so that he may have a doctor in the family

to care for his ill, Toinette, trying to get Argan to admit the truth asks him, "Mais, Monsieur, mettez la main à la conscience: est-ce que vous êtes malade?" (Le Malade imaginaire I, v, p. 299). Because Argan becomes angry at the question of his illness, Toinette concedes that he is very, very ill; but she advises him, "Mais votre fille doit épouser un mari pour elle; et n'étant point malade, il n'est pas nécessaire de lui donner un médecin" (Le Malade imaginaire I, v, p. 299). Toinette continues to counsel Argan, gradually becoming more and more outspoken in her advice that he should not wed Angélique to the doctor. When Argan can no longer stand the interference of his maid, he cries, "Je lui commande absolument de se préparer à prendre le mari que je dis." Toinette immediately retorts, "Et moi, je lui défends absolument d'en faire rien" (Le Malade imaginaire I, v, p. 304). As Argan becomes more and more angry, he hurls derogatory remarks one after the other at Toinette, and Toinette continues to state calmly that she will not permit the marriage. Argan becomes so exhausted that he cannot continue the argument. As has been shown, Toinette's advice is followed, for Angélique marries Cléante (cf. p. 29).

The servants who advise their masters are all similar in that the advice they give is reasonable.

Although masters do not always follow the advice of their servants willingly or knowingly, with the exception of Sganarelle's advice to Dom Juan, the recommendations of the servants to their masters are achieved.

CHAPTER V

SERVANTS PLAY A COMIC ROLE

Molière, writing for an audience of varied tastes, attempts to point out the faults of mankind, but all the while he intersperses the more serious ideas of his plays with comedy. There are few characters in his plays at whom one cannot laugh at least once in a play; however, servants most often play the comic role using every type of comic device.

In L'Etourdi, Mascarille, L'Élie's valet, serves as spokesman for his master; but, in many of his endeavors, Mascarille plays a comic role as well. In an effort to steal Anselme's purse so that he may get the money his master needs to purchase Célie, Mascarille uses a jeu de mots as he tries to make the old man Anselme think that the beautiful slave girl Célie loves him. After telling Anselme that Célie wants him as a husband, Mascarille continues:

Et vous veut, quoi qu'il tienne,
Prendre la bourse (L'Etourdi I, v, 235-36).

Anselme questions, "La...?" and Mascarille quickly changes words, "La bouche avec la sienne" (L'Etourdi I, v, 236). Mascarille steals the purse; but L'Élie, his master,

foils the plan in his usual blundering fashion as he interrupts with "A qui la bourse?" (L'Etourdi I, v, 259).

One of Molière's favorite comic devices is the disguise. In an attempt to gain Cécile from André who has ransomed her and plans to take her with him to Egypt, Mascarille disguises himself as a Swiss proprietor of a house André wants to rent while he and Cécile prepare for the trip to Egypt. When André tells Mascarille that Cécile is neither his wife or his sister, Mascarille, feigning a dialect, says:

Mon foi, pien choli. Finir pour marchandise,
 Ou pien pour tenanter à la Palais choustice?
 La procès il faut rien: il coûter tant tarchant!
 La procurair larron, la focat pien mechant
 (L'Etourdi V, iii, 1759-62).

Mascarille wants to get some money for his master by renting the house to André. Célie once again interrupts as he tells André that the house belongs to his father and that the man from whom André rented the house is his valet, Mascarille.

Mascarille, Valère's valet in Le Dépit amoureux, plays a comic role in a scene in which his speeches are repeated mockingly by Albert, father of Lucile, whom his master wants to marry. Albert does not believe Mascarille's claim that Lucile has married Léandre, Valère's rival. Mascarille and Albert exchange questions and answers:

Mascarille: Voulez-vous deux témoins qui me justifieront?

Albert: Veux-tu deux de mes gens qui te bâtonneront?

Mascarille: Leur rapport doit au mien donner toute créance.

Albert: Leurs bras peuvent du mien réparer l'impuissance.

Mascarille: Je vous dis que Lucile agit par honte ainsi.

Albert: Je te dis que j'aurai raison de tout ceci (Le Dépit amoureux III, x, 1099-1104).

They continue the exchange until Albert, because of his age, becomes too tired and tells Mascarille to go away. Mascarille later learns that Lucile is not married (cf. p. 6).

In Les Précieuses ridicules, both Mascarille and Jodelet, valets of La Grange and Du Croisy, play comic roles disguised as précieux. The two valets are comic as they greet each other in front of Magdelon and Cathos, two girls from the provinces aping the Parisian précieuses. After having embraced, Mascarille says to Jodelet, "Baise-moi donc encore un peu, je te prie" (Les Précieuses ridicules scene xi, p. 99). The disguised valets continue their comic role as they tell exaggerated stories about their exploits for the benefit of the précieuses. Mascarille and Jodelet are also comic as they attempt to demonstrate their dancing ability for the girls, but the crowning comedy occurs when the valets'

masters come on stage to stop the masquerade. La Grange pulls the précieux clothes off his valet, Mascarille, who has his valet's apparel beneath. Du Croisy peels ten coats off his valet, Jodelet, before the valet's apparel is revealed.

Marotte, servant of the précieuses, plays a comic role as she has difficulty understanding the précieux language of her mistresses. When reproached for saying un laquais rather than un nécessaire and not knowing that a conseiller de grâces is a miroir, Marotte tells her mistresses, "Il faut parler chrétien, si vous voulez que je vous entende" (Les Précieuses ridicules scene vi, pp. 69-70). Marotte, however, never understands her précieuses mistresses.

In Sganarelle, Gros-René, valet of Lélie, appears in only one scene. He and his master are returning from a long journey. Lélie is very anxious to see his beloved, Célie; however, Gros-René, comic by his very appearance, is much more anxious to eat. After each speech in which Lélie expresses his desire to see Célie as quickly as possible, Gros-René expresses his desire to eat. Lélie finally tells his valet:

J'ai de l'inquiétude, et non pas de la faim.

Gros-René replies:

Et moi, j'ai de la faim, et de l'inquiétude
De voir qu'un sot amour fait toute votre étude
(Sganarelle scene vii, p. 182).

When L lie finally tells Gros-Ren  to go eat while he visits C lie, Gros-Ren  is comic in his sudden obedience.

In Les F cheux, Eraste, who is beset by boors, has a valet, La Montagne, who is comic in his blundering, repeating, and hesitating. While trying to adjust his master's clothes, La Montagne pulls his master's hair, knocks off his hat, and beats him as he dusts his clothes. Eraste, exasperated, finally tells his valet:²⁶

Au diantre tout valet qui vous est sur les bras,
Qui fatigue son ma tre, et ne fait que déplaire
A force de vouloir trancher du necessaire!

When Eraste's beloved, Orphise, passes by, Eraste asks La Montagne to follow her to see where she is going and what she is doing. Rather than simply carrying out his master's order, La Montagne repeatedly asks his master questions concerning the manner in which he should follow Orphise. When at last La Montagne does leave to follow Orphise, Eraste tells him:

Que le Ciel te confonde,
Homme,   mon sentiment, le plus f cheux du monde!
(Les F cheux I, ii, 171-72).

²⁶Despois, op. cit., III, 45. (Les F cheux, pages 1-104.)

When he returns to his master, La Montagne is comic in his hesitation to tell Eraste what he has learned from Orphise:

Eraste: Et quoi? déjà mon cœur après ce mot
soupire: Parle.

La Montagne: Souhaitez-vous de savoir ce
que c'est?

Eraste: Oui, dis vite.

La Montagne: Monsieur, attendez,
s'il vous plaît.
Je me suis, à courir, presque mis hors
d'haleine.

Eraste: Prends-tu quelque plaisir à me tenir
en peine?

(Les Fâcheux II, iii, 352-56).

La Montagne starts to give his master the message from Orphise but hesitates under all sorts of pretexts. When finally La Montagne relates the message, Eraste learns that Orphise loves him and that she was not avoiding him but only trying to be polite in getting rid of her other admirers.

In L'Ecole des femmes, Molière depicts a man who attempts to rear a girl to make him the kind of wife he wants. Arnolphe is the guardian of Agnès, whose father has long been in America. In an attempt to keep Agnès simple, Arnolphe has two peasant servants guard her in a house where he goes by the name M. La Souche. The two servants, Alain and Georgette, play a comic

role as they appear to aid their master but in reality aid Agnès gain her freedom. The servants have been given orders to admit no one to the house, so when Arnolphe comes to visit Agnès, Alain and Georgette hesitate to let him in. After they have been convinced by Arnolphe that they should open the door, Alain and Georgette argue because neither wants to get up and open the door. Alain finally opens the door, but he strikes Arnolphe as he enters.²⁷

Arnolphe later learns from Horace, who does not know that Arnolphe is also M. La Souche, Agnès' guardian, that Alain and Georgette let Horace visit with Agnès. When Arnolphe, in anger, confronts them with the fact, Alain and Georgette fall at his knees in some pleading for their lives, but they never admit that they let Horace in.

Arnolphe learns from Agnès that she loves Horace and wants to marry him. In order to insure that Horace will not be admitted again to his house, Arnolphe instructs Alain and Georgette in a scene which is some in the servants' repetition of Arnolphe's answers he wants them to give to any of the pleas Arnolphe suggests Horace might make. Arnolphe, however, is unsuccessful in his

²⁷Ibid., III, 177. (L'Ecole des femmes, pages 105-280.)

attempt to wed Agnès. Agnès' father returns from America just in time to give Horace permission to marry her. The notary whom Arnolphe hired for his marriage ceremony performs the ceremony for Agnès and Horace.

In La Critique de l'Ecole des femmes, Uranie's servant, Galopin, is comic in his inability to follow his mistress' wishes without being told exactly what to do. Uranie, a supporter of Molière in the controversy over L'Ecole des femmes, does not want to see Climène, who is an opponent of Molière. Galopin comes to tell his mistress that Climène is waiting to see her. When reproached by Uranie for having told Climène that his mistress is in, Galopin quickly says that he will go tell Climène that his mistress has just left, but Uranie feels that she must now see her. Later when the marquis, another opponent of L'Ecole des femmes, is at the door, Galopin tells him that he must not enter for his mistress is not there. The marquis sees Uranie, but Galopin persists, "Il est vrai, la voilà; mais elle n'y est pas" (La Critique de l'Ecole des femmes scene iv, p. 330). Galopin has no further role in the play except to conclude the play and the discussion the opponents and supporters of Molière are having by announcing that dinner is served.

In Le Tartuffe, Dorine, Orgon's maid, is comic in her repeated interruption of Orgon as he attempts to

tell his daughter, Mariane, that she is to wed Tartuffe. Dorine interrupts Orgon every time he tries to relate his plans to Mariane. After eight interruptions, Orgon orders Dorine to be quiet. The maid replies, "Soit. Mais, ne disant mot, je n'en pense pas moins" (Le Tartuffe II, 11, 555). Dorine, however, continues to interrupt, pretending to be talking to herself, until Orgon becomes so angry that he strikes at her but misses. As has been shown, Mariane does not marry Tartuffe but rather the man she loves (cf. p. 10).

In L'Amour médecin, Lisette, Lucinde's maid, is comic in her repetition of un mari. Lucinde appears to be ill, but none of the five doctors her father, Sganarelle, has hired can satisfactorily diagnose her illness. Lisette discovers that her mistress is not ill but wants simply to marry her suitor, Clitandre. Lisette and Lucinde are both interrupted by Sganarelle who does not want to discuss marriage. Lisette finally completes a sentence as she tells Sganarelle, "C'est un mari qu'elle veut."²⁸ Sganarelle, pretending not to hear, casts reproach after reproach at his daughter because she will not tell him what is the matter with her. After

²⁸Despois and Mesnard, op. cit., V, 310. (L'Amour médecin, pages 261-354.)

each reproach, Lisette repeats, "Un mari," and following the fifth reproach, "Un mari, un mari, un mari" (L'Amour médecin I, ii, p. 311).

Lisette is also comic in the expression of her feelings about doctors:

. . . J'ai connu un homme qui prouvoit, par bonnes raisons, qu'il ne faut jamais dire: "Une telle personne est morte d'une fièvre et d'une fluxion sur la poitrine;" mais: "Elle est morte de quatre medecins et de deux apothicaires" (L'Amour medecin II, i, p. 318).

Lisette further makes fun of the doctors Sganarelle calls to the house to help his daughter. It is through the disguise of a doctor that Clitandre, Lucinde's suitor, is able to marry Lucinde. Clitandre tells Sganarelle that in order to cure Lucinde, he will pretend to marry her. The marriage, however, is real.

In one of Molière's most serious plays, Le Misanthrope, Du Bois, Alceste's valet, plays a role of comic relief. Alceste, who is willing neither to accept nor to follow the conventional social patterns of behavior, and his beloved, Célimène, finish an emotional scene in which they are unable to reconcile their differing opinions concerning love. Alceste's valet, Du Bois, arrives with unpleasant news:²⁹

²⁹Ibid., pp.530-31. (Le Misanthrope, pages 355-561.)

Monsieur, un homme noir et d'habit et de mine
 Est venu nous laisser, jusque dans la cuisine,
 Un papier griffonné d'une telle façon,
 Qu'il faudroit, pour le lire, être pis que démon.
 C'est de votre procès, je n'en fais aucun doute;
 Mais le diable d'enfer, je crois, n'y verroit goutte.

The news of this disastrous blow to Alceste is lightened by the comic attire which Du Bois is wearing and also because Du Bois left the letter itself at Alceste's house. Alceste, unwilling to accept Célimène's love on her terms, attempts, unsuccessfully, to give his love to Célimène's cousin. Alceste, unchanged, will seek a place where he can be his kind of honorable man (Le Misanthrope V, iv).

In Le Médecin malgré lui, two of Géronte's servants, Valère and Lucas, administer a comic beating. Martine, a peasant who is angry with her husband, Sganarelle, sees a means of avenging herself when Valère and Lucas come looking for a doctor for Lucinde, daughter of their master Géronte. Martine tells Géronte's servants that the most able doctor in the world can be found nearby where he is cutting wood. This famous doctor, Martine tells them, has a strange desire:

La folie de celui-ci est plus grande qu'on ne peut croire, car elle va parfois jusqu'à vouloir être battu pour demeurer d'accord de sa capacité; et je vous donne avis que vous n'en viendrez point à bout, qu'il n'avouera jamais qu'il est médecin, s'il se le met en fantaisie, que vous ne preniez chacun un bâton, et ne le réduisiez, à force de coups, à vous confesser à la fin ce qu'il vous

cachera d'abord. C'est ainsi que nous en usons quand nous avons besoin de lui (Le Médecin malgré lui I, iv, p. 51).

Martine has, of course, told them to seek her husband, Sganarelle. Valère and Lucas find Sganarelle; and, as Martine told them, they must beat him. Sganarelle, after several beatings, gives in:

Ah! ah! Eh bien, Messieurs, oui, puisque vous le voulez, je suis médecin, je suis médecin; apothicaire encore, si vous le trouvez bon. J'aime mieux consentir à tout que de me faire assommer (Le Médecin malgré lui I, v, p. 64).

Because Sganarelle once worked for a doctor, he is able to play his part well enough that he fools not only Géronte but also two peasants whom he later meets on the street (Le Médecin malgré lui III, ii, pp. 100-04).

Sganarelle is not the only recipient of Lucas' blows. In an effort to silence his wife, Jacqueline, Lucas strikes at her but hits rather his master, Géronte. Lucas tells Géronte that he wants to teach his wife respect for their master, but Géronte begs him not to use force.

Sosie, Amphitryon's valet, receives a beating from Mercure in Amphitryon. The meeting of Sosie and Mercure is in itself comic since Mercure appears with the voice and form of Sosie in order to aid Jupiter in wooing Amphitryon's wife, Alcène. When Mercure meets Sosie, he tries to get Sosie to abandon his name. Sosie,

since he has always had his name, does not want to give it up. Even after a beating at the hand of Mercure,

Sosie hesitates:

Tes coups n'ont point en moi fait de métamorphose;
Et tout le changement que je trouve à la chose,
C'est d'être Sosie battu (Amphitryon I, 11,
pp. 380-83).

The blows finally convince the beaten Sosie, however, and Mercure goes off to help Jupiter while Sosie returns to his master, Amphitryon, who awaits news of Sosie's visit with Alcène.

When Sosie reports to Amphitryon, he relates in a comic scene his meeting with himself. Amphitryon thinks Sosie is joking and orders his valet to tell him what really happened. Sosie, unable to make his master believe his story, tells him:

Monsieur, vous n'avez rien qu'à dire,
Je mentirai, si vous voulez (Amphitryon II, 1, pp.
721-22).

Amphitryon asks for the truth, so Sosie relates how he was beaten by himself. Sosie regains his name from Mercure, as has been shown, when Mercure explains the deception (cf. p. 12).

In George Dandin one sees a comedy of errors. Claudine, Angélique's maid, and Lubin, Clitandre's servant, comically mirror their masters in love (cf. p. 13). In a rendezvous at night Lubin mistakes Angélique for

Claudine, and Claudine mistakes Clitandre for Lubin. Clitandre and Angélique discover the mistake, and they find a place where they can sit down to talk. Lubin, separated from Claudine, bumps into Angélique's husband, George Dandin, who is trying to find his wife. Lubin, in the darkness, mistakes George Dandin for Claudine. When Lubin discovers his mistake, he escapes. George Dandin, sure that he has caught his wife with a suitor, calls for his valet, Colin. In the darkness Colin and George Dandin call to one another as they pass each other back and forth across the stage. Colin finally bumps into his master and knocks him down.

In L'Avare, La Flèche, Cléante's valet, is comic in a scene with his master's father, Harpagon. Harpagon suspects that everyone is trying to steal from him. He asks La Flèche to return the money he thinks the valet has stolen. Not satisfied by La Flèche's denial, Harpagon tells the valet to show him his hands. La Flèche shows Harpagon his hands, whereupon Harpagon asks him to show the others. La Flèche once again shows his hands. Harpagon has La Flèche empty every pocket, but he is still sure that the valet has stolen something.

Maître Jacques' comic role as both coachman and cook for Harpagon emphasizes his master's avarice. When Harpagon wishes to speak with his servant, Maître Jacques

asks whether he wishes to speak to the cook or the coachman. Upon Harpagon's reply, Maître Jacques dons the appropriate attire for the servant to whom Harpagon wishes to speak. Maître Jacques is later accused of stealing Harpagon's chest which, in fact, was stolen by La Flèche. Maître Jacques in turn accuses Valère, suitor of Harpagon's daughter, Elise. Maître Jacques is able, by means of his skillful questioning of Harpagon, who suspects even his own children, to get Harpagon to tell where the chest was hidden, as well as to give a full description of the chest. He then uses this information to convince Harpagon that it is Valère who stole the chest. Both Maître Jacques and La Flèche are able to carry off a comic role because of the blind avarice of their master.

As the comic roles of Maître Jacques and La Flèche emphasize Harpagon's avarice, so also does the comic role of Nicole, M. Jourdain's maid in Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, emphasize the ridiculous attempt of M. Jourdain to become a sophisticated gentleman. M. Jourdain carries everything to an extreme. When he appears in his new suit which, although his tailor tells him is very stylish, is actually gawdy, Nicole, his maid, laughs at the sight of him. She continues to laugh, interrupting her master, who becomes quite angry. M. Jourdain threatens Nicole with a beating if she laughs any more. Although

she tries, she cannot help laughing as she tells M.

Jourdain:

Tenez, Monsieur, battez-moi plutôt et me laissez rire tout mon souf, cela me fera plus de bien. Hi, hi, hi, hi, hi (Le Bourgeois gentilhomme III, ii, pp. 100-01).

Nicole has no difficulty stopping her laughter when she learns that M. Jourdain wants her to clean the house so that he may entertain guests.

Nicole, in another comic scene, shows how foolish M. Jourdain is to try to gain sophistication through music, dancing, and fencing lessons. M. Jourdain, complimented by his fencing-master on his skill, attempts to demonstrate to Nicole his newly acquired skill. When he gives Nicole a foil and asks her to fence with him, she promptly backs him across the stage. M. Jourdain is beaten at his own game.

Scapin, Léandre's valet in Les Fourberies de Scapin, serves as spokesman for his master, but he plays a comic role as well. Scapin's friend, Silvestre, Octave's valet, is about to receive a scolding from his master's father, Argante, when Scapin interrupts Argante with a series of trivial questions which prevent Argante from ever scolding Silvestre. Scapin himself is later reprimanded by his master, Léandre. Léandre thinks that Scapin has told his father about his love

affair with Zerbinette. Actually, Scapin mentioned to Octave's father, and not to Léandre's father, only that Léandre had done something which would gravely displease his father. Léandre, thinking that he has been betrayed by his valet, is ready to run him through with his sword. Scapin falls at his master's knees and begs for mercy. Léandre tells Scapin that the wrong must be confessed before mercy can be given. Scapin, unaware of which wrong, confesses that he stole Léandre's wine. When Léandre tells him that the wine is not what he wants to know about, Scapin confesses that he stole a watch which he was supposed to deliver to Zerbinette, Léandre's beloved. Léandre is not concerned about the watch, so Scapin confesses other wrongs he has done his master. After the revelation of several tricks by Scapin, Léandre asks him to tell what he has said to his father. Scapin can truthfully reply that he has not seen Léandre's father since his return. Scapin gets out of the situation when Léandre receives word that Zerbinette, Léandre's beloved slave, is to be taken away by her owner unless Léandre redeems her. As has been shown, Léandre then asks Scapin to get the money necessary to redeem Zerbinette (cf. p. 27).

Scapin is comic in most of his escapades. One, however, is not comic for G eronte, L eandre's father.

Scapin seeks revenge from G ronte for setting L andre against him. The valet gets his revenge by telling G ronte that he has just learned that some men want to kill G ronte. G ronte is frightened, and Scapin offers to protect him. Scapin has G ronte get into a sack where he cannot be seen, then disguising his voice, Scapin pretends to be the men who are looking for G ronte. The valet beats G ronte in the sack, but when G ronte sticks his head out, Scapin complains that he has himself taken a beating while protecting G ronte. Scapin tells G ronte to get back into the sack, and once again Scapin beats him. G ronte, however, gets out of the sack this time and discovers Scapin who flees. Scapin is forgiven by G ronte in the last scene of the play because Scapin pretends to be dying. G ronte tells Scapin, ". . . Je te pardonne   la charge que tu mourras" (Les Fourberies de Scapin III, xiii, p. 516).

In La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas, Moli re, as he did in Les Pr cieuses ridicules, depicts an affected person, the provincial countess D'Escarbagnas. The countess thinks she is glorious in her attractions and loved by all. She imagines that the attentions of Cl ante for her friend, Julie, are directed toward herself. The two servants of the countess, Andr e and Criquet, play comic roles which underline the social striving of their

mistress. Andrée cannot remember to use the précieux terms which her mistress learned during her brief appearance at court. Andrée is instructed to call the countess' laquais; but, unacquainted with the titles for servants, she calls for Criquet. She attempts to correct herself:³⁰

Laquais donc, et non pas Criquet, venez parler à Madame. Je pense qu'il est sourd: Criq.... laquais, laquais.

Criquet has been waiting in the street, since the countess told him to wait outside. Criquet cannot remember, as the countess tells him, ". . . Dehors, en termes de personnes de qualité, veut dire dans l'antichambre" (La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas scene ii, p. 565). The role of both Andrée and Criquet point out once again the need for sensible language.

In Molière's last play, Le Malade imaginaire, Toinette, Argan's maid, plays a comic role using all the devices of comedy. In order to avoid a scolding, she continually interrupts Argan and complains of being in pain herself. She makes fun of Argan as he follows the remedies of his doctor and apothecary. Toinette roughly stuffs a pillow behind his head and then runs

³⁰Ibid., VIII, 565. (La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas, pages 527-502.)

off to escape him. She leads him, cane in his hand, on a chase around the stage. When Cléante, the suitor of Argan's daughter, Angélique, comes disguised as a music-teacher, Toinette announces him in a loud voice. Argan asks her to speak quietly, whereupon Toinette whispers so softly Argan cannot hear her. Cléante tells Argan that he is delighted to see him feeling better, but Toinette tells Cléante:

Il marche, dort, mange, et boit comme les autres; mais cela n'empêche pas qu'il soit fort malade (Le Malade imaginaire II, ii, p. 341).

Toinette uses a disguise to make fun of her master further. She announces an itinerant doctor to Argan, then quickly goes off stage and returns disguised as a doctor. After greeting Argan, she tells him that she must give a message to her valet. She leaves but returns immediately as Toinette, pretending she heard Argan call her. She returns once more as a doctor and diagnoses Argan's malady as a lung disease, recommending that he eat well in order to cure it. Argan is further advised that one of his arms should be cut off and one of his eyes should be cut out, in order, Toinette tells him, that the others be better. As has been shown, Argan does not overcome his hypochondria, but he does agree to become his own doctor (cf. p. 29).

Many servants in Molière's plays have a comic role which accentuates the faults of mankind which Molière depicted; and, of course, the comic role fulfills Molière's purpose of amusing his audience. The servants are not the only comic characters in Molière's plays, but it is easier to laugh at the faults of a master when his servant plays a comic role. The comic roles of Molière's servants bring forth laughter in the present day as they did in Molière's time.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study has been to examine the role of servants in Molière's plays. Molière used servants to mirror their masters or other characters in actions or ideas. This mirroring allowed Molière greater freedom in depicting the faults of mankind, since the faults of servants were more easily accepted by an audience than those of their masters. The mirroring was not always done to depict faults, however. At times servants mirrored their masters and mistresses in love. Often when the master and mistress broke down the barriers to their marriage, the maid and the valet were also matched. Servants served as spokesmen for their masters and helped devise means of achieving their masters' desires. In order to prevent a marriage planned by a father, servants were able, because of their freedom of movement, to speak with all parties involved. Servants helped carry out the intrigues which Molière so often used. The necessity of the intrigues pointed out the faults of mankind, i.e., avarice, hypocrisy, or striving for social recognition. Molière's servants often advised their masters. The advice given was almost always good advice; servants often expressed Molière's bon sens.

Certainly one of the largest roles servants played was a comic role. Molière's purpose of depicting the faults of men was complemented by his purpose of amusing his audience. The comic role of servants was always, of course, amusing to his audience, but the comic role often underlined some fault of mankind which Molière was depicting. Although the use of servants is not the same today as it was in Molière's time, the faults which he depicted remain unchanged.

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