THE COMIC CONTEST IN MOLIERE AND GOLDONI

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This thesis attempts a definition of comedy by analyzing the comedies of Molière and Goldoni. Although a century apart, these two playwrights have analogous roles in redefining and in raising the standard of comedy in their respective countries. Frye says that the basis of the comic action is the contest between eiron and alazon figures; in traditional comedy, the young lovers and their trickster friends are eirons; blocking father figures are typically alazons. This is the case in many of Molière's and Goldoni's comedies, but in order to say that the eiron-alazon contest forms the basis of all of their comedies, the definition of eiron and alazon figures must be expanded. This is where Bergson and his essay on Le Rire are helpful. Bergson says that characters are comical essentially because they react mechanically and automatically. It thus becomes clear that the overriding characteristic of the alazon, whether he is in a traditional comedy or not, is his rigid behaviour, due for the most part to a lack of self-knowledge. Conversely, eirons are distinguished by their flexibility which they demonstrate through their ingenuity and adaptability. The deceptions and dissimulations which occur over and over again in comedies are the theatrical manifestations of this flexibility. Because the blocking character is usually in a position of authority, eirons are often
required to resort to trickery out of sheer necessity. Chapter One
discusses Molière and Goldoni comedies where the eiron-alazon contest is
expressed solely in terms of youth versus age and the young lovers are
unaided in their attempts to resist the blocking figure. Some interesting
situations arise, however, in comedies where young lovers are left to fend
for themselves; for they take on alazon-like characteristics. In many
comedies, more important than the young lovers as an eiron figure is the
trusty servant who helps them. But when servants, whether male or female,
are called in to help the young lovers, as is the case in the comedies
analyzed in Chapter Two, they invariably bring into play another contest,
that of servant versus master. In the final chapter, comedies are
discussed where the role of the servant figure has been replaced by that
of the wife, who in 17th and 18th century Europe was very much in a
subordinate position vis à vis her husband. In the two final comedies
studied in the third chapter, the wife-husband contest gives way to that
of women versus men, and it can be said of both Molière and Goldoni that
they raise feminist issues. Depending on the comedy, the youth-age
contest is not always the predominate one, and as other contests take
precedence, the less tied is the comedy to the traditional comic plot.
But basic to all of Molière's and Goldoni's plays is that when more than
one contest is present within the same comedy, they can be superimposed
one on top of the other so that the eirons are always distinguished by
their dedication to the cause of love and liberty and their expertise in
trickery and the alazons, by their rigid and mechanical behaviour and
total lack of self-knowledge.

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A young man and a young woman fall deeply in love. Life has lost all meaning for them if they cannot be together. A single desire now motivates them: the desire to marry. Though their love for each other should move the hardest of hearts, there are those who try to separate them and to block their marriage. But in the end the young people, aided by individuals who are on the side of love, overcome all obstacles and attain their happiness. We are all only too familiar with such a plot for it is the traditional plot of comedy, originated by Menander and imitated by Plautus and Terence and comedy writers ever since. Two types of characters oppose each other in traditional comedy: the young lovers and whoever aids them in their efforts to marry must struggle against the "heavies" or blocking characters who continuously try to thwart the progress of their love. It is this contest or opposition between what Frye calls the eiron and alazon figures which "forms the basis of the comic action."¹ In traditional comedy, described by Frye as the normal phase of comedy,² the movement is "from a society controlled by habit, ritual bondage, arbitrary law and the older characters to a society controlled by youth and pragmatic freedom."³
Here, the eiron-alazon contest is one of youth versus age. The youth-age contest is, however, but one of the many variations of the eiron-alazon contests which are possible in comedy. Bergson, in his famous essay, *Le Rire*, helps us to understand what constitutes the essential contest in comedy and what distinguishes an eiron from an alazon. He explains that what is comical, what makes us laugh is "une certaine raideur de mécanique là où l'on voudrait trouver la souplesse attentive et la vivante flexibilité d'une personne." The basic opposition in comedy is therefore between flexibility and rigidity, or to use Bergson's terms, elasticity and tension.

In society, tension and elasticity complement each other, but in comedy, certain characters have imposed, or are trying to impose, restrictions on the other characters or on society as a whole. This, in turn, causes the other characters to do whatever they can to get around the restriction or to have it removed entirely. In traditional comedy, the alazons, usually father figures, are obsessed creatures. Ruled by their passion for money, ambition, or authority, and blinded to the needs of the young people, they react in a mechanical and irrational way. The blocking characters—the word *blocking* is itself indicative—are rigid, severe, unbending, unaccommodating. They are never willing to listen or compromise or change in order to meet anyone halfway but follow "auomatiquement [leur] chemin sans se soucier de prendre contact avec les autres." Although they are usually reconciled at the end with the other characters in order to secure the happy ending, they are seldom converted to the new ways of "the final society reached by comedy... [which] the audience has recognized all along to be the
proper and desirable state of affairs." The young lovers and their friends, in resisting the blocking character and in trying to attain their own desires, must be entirely pliant and adaptable to whatever new situation arises. They must reveal a flexibility of the mind, and invent names and events and explanations at a moment's notice; they must demonstrate a flexibility of the body, and disguise their voice, emotional state, manners, and at times, even their sex, in order to escape each predicament they find themselves in and to overcome each obstacle they encounter.

A blocking character, because he "has social prestige and power . . . is able to force much of the play's society into line with his obsession." With few exceptions, the eirons are subordinate to the alazons who are always in positions of authority. Consequently, in confronting the alazons, the eirons have only their wits to rely on, and in order to bring about a more socially acceptable world, trickery is the only means available to them. Knutson makes essentially the same point when he writes, "The wrong society, the one in control during most of the play, has authority and legality on its side, so that the only weapons against it are dissimulation and deception." The rigidity of certain characters is put into perspective by the flexibility of the others, and one of the most effective ways of offsetting the rigid characters is through the implantation of a stratagem. To be able to trick someone successfully, especially when he is in a position of authority and one is not, requires a great deal of ingenuity, of flexibility of both mind and body. In many comedies, the stratagem or inganno is the play, and we note here the ambiguity of the word play for
it means a dramatic composition as well as something done in fun or to deceive. Usually directed by a principal trickster figure, the eirons come together to plan and set into motion this stratagem. Whether he is conscious of himself as such, the trickster is "the architectus of the comic action."\textsuperscript{11} Whereas the trickster is or becomes aware of his expertise as a trickster and often boasts of it, the blocking character is unconscious of his obsession, of his rigidity; he "frequently displays a lack of self-knowledge."\textsuperscript{12} Bergson says of the monomaniacal comic character that he is "généralement comique dans l'exacte mesure où il s'ignore lui-même... il se rend invisible à lui-même en devenant visible à tout le monde."\textsuperscript{13} The eiron succeeds in tricking the alazon because the alazon, due to his particular obsession, reacts stiffly and mechanically, and is thus totally predictable. The eiron is in control; he has the alazon playing into his hands. It is as if the alazon were his puppet; he knows which strings to pull in order to get a given reaction from the alazon. We applaud the trickster because through his ploys he demonstrates his ingenuity and his adaptability; we laugh at the dupe because he reveals his inability to perceive anything beyond the restricting limits that he imposes upon himself and others. The eiron succeeds in temporarily switching positions with the alazon for during the duration of the deception, the alazon is subordinate to the eiron. This reversal represents for the audience a kind of wish fulfillment. Mauron explains that in children's games and in the daydreams of both children and adults, "Le faible s'imagine fort, le pauvre, riche, le coupable, justicier, etc."\textsuperscript{14} Thus, "la comédie nous apparaît fondée, dans l'inconscient, sur une fantaisie de triomphe, elle-même née du
The trickster lets us in on his deception plan when he discusses it with the other eiron characters, or in some comedies, when he directly addresses the audience, a fact which explains the importance of monologues and asides in comedy. But whether we have 'overheard' or been directly informed, a secret understanding results between the trickster and the audience. This is related to what Bergson says about laughter and the nature of the comical: "le rire cache une arrière-pensée d'entente, je dirais presque de complicité, avec d'autres rieurs, réels ou imaginaires." 

"Seulement, cette intelligence doit rester en contact avec d'autres intelligences. . .Il semble que le rire ait besoin d'un écho. . .Notre rire est toujours le rire d'un groupe." From the beginning, the trickster figure is directing our laughter towards the blocking characters. Bergson explains that "où la personne d'autrui cesse de nous émouvoir, là seulement peut commencer la comédie." In comedy, we can laugh at the blocking characters because they never arouse our sympathy; the trickster makes certain of this. It is mostly through his doing that all the ridiculousness of the alazon is brought out into the open. We never laugh at the trickster, but with him, for he makes us laugh. In a very real sense, the trickster is an entertainer. He thus has all our sympathy and we cheer for him. For as long as he amuses us, this sympathy extends even to the trickster turned rascal, and it is with regret that we see him expelled from certain comedies as in the case of Falstaff. But the trickster is not only the director of our laughter; he is also rieur himself, for he often makes no secret of enjoying himself at the alazon's expense. This ties in with what Hegel
says about laughter, that it is "little more than an expression of self-satisfied shrewdness."  

Society is suspicious of "toute raideur du caractère, de l'esprit et même du corps... parce qu'elle est le signe possible d'une activité que s'endort et aussi d'une activité qui s'isole, qui tend à s'écarter du centre commun autour duquel la société gravite." If automatic and mechanical actions and gestures, fixed and restricting ideas and opinions are ridiculed in comedy, it is because they are anti-social. Frye notes that the happy ending of comedy "is not moral in the restricted sense, but social;" Bergson explains that the comical, that is rigid, character "peut, à la rigueur, être en règle avec la stricte morale. Il lui reste seulement à se mettre en règle avec la société." But more than anti-social, what is rigid and mechanical is also anti-biological, anti-organic. Langer says that "comedy in a nutshell is the contest on men and women—the most universal contest, humanized, in fact civilized, yet still the primitive joyful challenge, the self-preservation and self-assertion whose progress is the comic rhythm." This explains the enduring attraction of traditional comedy where the pursuit of love and marriage is the main issue and where biology and flexibility merge, where "organic and social vitality intersect." Rigidity means automatism, alienation, stagnation, death; flexibility means spontaneity, adaptation, growth, life. After all, the theory of evolution maintains that it is the species that can adapt to changes in the environment that will survive.

The purpose of this study is to apply a synthesis of these general ideas on comedy to two great comic playwrights, the Frenchman Molière
and his Italian admirer Goldoni. There are many affinities between these two playwrights who are separated by almost a century. Not only have both Molière and Goldoni written brilliant comedies which are studies in character as well as manners but they also have analogous roles in revising the definition of comedy and raising its standard in their respective countries, although not before they both failed in their attempt to write tragedies, which were considered a superior form of art. In recompense, and in response to criticisms from the public and critics, Molière and Goldoni wrote comedies which contained an explanation of what comedy should be and its defense, namely, Molière's La Critique de L'Ecole des femmes and L'Impromptu de Versailles and Goldoni's Il teatro comico. In describing the importance of Molière and Goldoni in the world of theatre, perhaps Niccolò Tommaseo said it best when he wrote that "three cities share in the glory of having given birth to comedy: Athens, Paris, and Venice."26

Although Goldoni, unlike Molière, was never a professional actor and director, he was closely involved with acting companies. Certainly, he shared their hopes and fears; the success of his plays, like those of Molière's, depended on their performance. Here, we can draw a line between the world of comedy and reality for it can be said of the acting companies of Molière's and Goldoni's times, especially those of the commedia dell'arte, that "they had to be quick-witted, tough, and adaptable, or they perished"27 in the face of possible resistance from their public. For both Molière and Goldoni, the influence of the commedia dell'arte is undeniable. Molière shared the Hotel de Petit Bourbon with Scaramouche, head actor of the commedia dell'arte in Paris.
There is evidence that in his early farces, Molière's character types were masked as in the *commedia dell'arte* tradition, but the masks were soon dropped, at least by the time of *L'Ecole des maris*. Molière's famous alazons: Arnolphe, Orgon, Harpagon, Alceste, however, "ont ce trait du masque italien de porter à travers toutes les situations de la pièce la fixité invariable de leur caractère." In his description of "un caractère au sens que le mot a chez Molière," Lanson says that it is "une nature puissamment unifiée par la domination d'une passion ou d'un vice qui détruit toutes les autres affections et puissances de l'âme, et devient le principe de toutes les pensées et de tous les actes du personnage." But whereas Molière incorporated the concept of the mask into his comedies, Goldoni rebelled against it. By the eighteenth century, as Riccoboni himself observes, the *commedia dell'arte* was a lost art. But in order to reform the Italian theatre, Goldoni had to fight the *commedia dell'arte* actors, who initially resisted his attempts to give them written parts. Thus, his first plays were little more than canevas for *commedia dell'arte* troupes. But as Goldoni wrote more and more of the parts, the human face began to appear through the brown leather masks, and "the cocoon that shroud[ed] the 'figure' [became] more and more unraveled." By individualizing "la personalità dei propri personaggi, strappandoli alla maschera precostituita del 'tipo'," Goldoni sought to create characters which would later herald him as a forerunner of psychological realism. Goldoni underlines the difference between Molière, for whom he had an avowed admiration, and himself by having Orazio, his mouthpiece in *Il teatro comico*, say that "un caractère solo basta per sostenere una commedia francese. . . I nostri Italiani
vogliono molto di più. Vogliamo che il carattere principale sia forte, originale e conosciuto, che quasi tutte le persone, che formano gli episodi, siano altrettanti caratteri." These two playwrights also differ in their class bias. Molière essentially upholds the aristocracy and Goldoni, the bourgeoisie. On the whole, however, their works reveal the ascendency of another class: many of Molière's comedies hint at a rising bourgeoisie and by the end of his Italian career, the bourgeoisie in Goldoni's comedies has given way to the popolo.

A comparison of Molière's and Goldoni's comedies will reveal that the basic opposition brought into play be eirons and alazons is that of flexibility and rigidity and that deception is the theatrical manifestation par excellence of flexibility. Both Molière and Goldoni have written comedies which are apparently traditional in plot but in very few of them is it strictly a question of the youth versus age contest. Only when the young lovers are unaided by anyone as in Molière's L'Ecole des maris and L'Ecole des femmes and Goldoni's Un curioso accidente, which are discussed in the first chapter, is the eiron-alazon contest expressed solely in terms of age differences. Some interesting situations, however, arise when young lovers are left to fend for themselves; and in the other comedies discussed in this chapter, we see eirons take on alazon-like characteristics.

In many comedies, more important than the young lovers as an eiron figure is the trusty servant who helps them. But when servants, whether male or female, are called in to help the young lovers, as is the case in the comedies analyzed in Chapter Two, they invariably bring into play another contest, that of servant versus master. In the final chapter, we encounter comedies where the role of the servant figure has been replaced by that of
the wife, who in 17th century French society and 18th century Venetian society, was very much in a subordinate position vis à vis her husband. In *Le Misanthrope* and *La locandiera*, however, the wife-husband contest gives way to that of women versus men, and we can say of both Molière and Goldoni that they raise feminist issues. Depending on the comedy, the youth-age contest is not always the predominate one, and as other contests take precedence, the less tied is the comedy to the traditional comic plot. But basic to all of Molière's and Goldoni's plays is that when more than one contest is present within the same comedy, they can be superimposed one on top of the other so that the eirons are always distinguished by their dedication to the cause of love and liberty and their expertise in trickery and the alazons, by their rigid and mechanical behaviour and total lack of self-knowledge.
NOTES


3 Frye, p. 169.


5 Bergson, p. 14.

6 Loc. cit.

7 Bergson, pp. 102-3.

8 Frye, p. 164.


12 Frye, p. 172.

13 Bergson, p. 13.


15 Mauron, p. 30.

16 Bergson, p. 5.

17 Bergson, pp. 4-5.

18 Bergson, p. 102.
19 Frye, p. 45.


21 Bergson, p. 15.

22 Frye, p. 167.

23 Bergson, p. 105.


29 Lanson, p. 206.

30 Lanson, p. 203.


34 Riedt, p. 20.

A century less a year apart, Molière's *L'Ecole des maris*, which he wrote in 1661, early in his Paris career, and Goldoni's *Un curioso accidente*, written in 1760 and representative of his mature works, are very similar in terms of the eiron and alazon alignment and of the type of stratagems invented by the eirons, although the former is still only "une farce mêlée de comédie" and the latter, a full-length comedy. Both plays are faithful to the traditional comic plot in that a tyrannical father figure thwarts the progress of young love but they are unlike most of the other Molière and Goldoni comedies in that here the young lovers fend for themselves, using their own ingenuity in overcoming the alazons. These two comedies are further distinguished by the fact that in each of them, the young woman is the main trickster. She is the first to reveal her love to the young man; and once assured of his love for her, initiates deceptive strategies in order to marry him. In confronting the father figure's unyielding resistance, both Isabelle and Giannina know that it is pointless to meet rigidity with rigidity. The young heroine of Molière's and Goldoni's
comedies, who, along with the young hero, is usually well-born, may persist in refusing to marry her father's choice but this refusal brings her no closer to marrying her true love. It would more than likely result in her never seeing him again for her only other alternative is the convent. This is the situation in Molière's and Goldoni's society as well as in their comedies. In comedy, however, there is a way to resist a father's imperative and marry one's beloved, not through obstinacy and open confrontation, but through guile and dissimulation. In other words, rigidity can be overcome by being flexible.

Correlatively, servants are either unavailable or unable to help the young lovers in these comedies. In L'Ecole des maris, because of his mistrust of "valets impudents," Sganarelle will not allow any servants in the house and Isabelle's predicament is thus a particularly difficult one for secret lovers to prevail over. Valère explains this to his servant, Ergaste, "il n'est là-dedans servantes ni valets/Dont, par l'appât flatteur de quelque récompense,/Je puisse pour mes feux ménager l'assistance" (vv. 342-3). In Un curioso accidente, Giannina risks the success of her plan to marry La Cotterie by failing to confide in her servant, Marianna. As it turns out, however, given the ironic situation in the play, Marianna's two 'betrayals' are of little consequence and she is unwittingly an alazon. Marianna, in fact, is never aligned with the alazons. Her first betrayal is the result of a quiproquo, and thus accidental; and the second, although intentional, is due to her desire to marry Guascogna, La Cotterie's valet, and her need to prove her integrity of mind to her master. Ultimately, Marianna pleads with Filiberto to forgive his daughter and to accept her and her husband back into his house. It is, however, significant that
although they are unable to help, both Ergaste and Guascogna are aware of the power of love. At the beginning of L'Ecole des maris, Ergaste points out to an exasperated Valère that "l'amour rend inventif" (v. 339) and at the end of Un curioso accidente, Guascogna explains to a shocked Filiberto that "amore è ingegnoso."³ Isabelle and Giannina, who are both unaccustomed to dissimulating, demonstrate through the course of the play, the veracity of the valets' words, for love does awaken in lovers hidden resources.

In exact opposition to his brother, Ariste, who has allowed his ward, Léonor, to decide for herself whether she wishes to marry him or to choose someone else (always, of course, within the bounds of propriety), Sganarelle has willed, without ever conferring with his ward, Isabelle—he would, moreover, be deaf to any possible objections on her part—that she is to be his wife. Sganarelle is completely insensitive to the wisdom and to the humanity of Ariste's words regarding Léonor's marriage, "j'aime mieux la voir sous un autre hyménée/Que si contre son gré sa main m'était donnée" (vv. 207-8). Moreover, in order to guarantee himself a docile and faithful wife, Sganarelle has kept Isabelle locked up at home, where, separated from all social contact, she is condemned to spend her days, as Sganarelle explains to Ariste, "aux choses du ménage/A recoudre mon linge.../Ou bien à tricoter quelques bas par plaisir" (vv. 120-2). But despite "les soins défiant, les verrous et les grilles (v. 167), Sganarelle has been unable to prevent Isabelle and Valère from falling in love, for the two, barred from communicating either by word or writ, have fallen in love in the most spontaneous and irrepressible way: through an exchange of glances. Horrified by her impending marriage with Sganarelle and encouraged by her newly awakened love for Valère, Isabelle does not
hesitate to set into motion "Le stratagème adroit d'une innocente amour" (v. 362) in order to deceive Sganarelle and marry Valère.

From the early scenes of Un curioso accididente, we learn that Filiberto, a rich and supposedly liberal-minded Dutch merchant has given hospitality to a wounded French officer, La Cotterie. His daughter, Giannina, who is allowed the freedom to socialize as befits a young woman of good family, has consequently shared, for the past few months, the company of this young officer. The two, not surprisingly, have fallen in love, but because of the impossibility of their love, they are both unwilling to express their feelings for each other. Although a nobleman, La Cotterie is very poor, and neither La Cotterie nor Giannina harbour any hope that Filiberto would agree to give his daughter in marriage "a un cadetto, a un soldato, ad uno, in fine, che dovrebbe vivere sulla dote" (p. 706). Giannina has been raised in freedom like Léonor in L'Ecole des maris but she is more like Isabelle in that she cannot hope to marry the man she loves. Indeed, when in II, 4, Giannina ventures to say that she wants "un marito di genio" (p. 34), Filiberto interrupts her, "Desidero che si trovi di vostro genio. Ma prima ha da essere di genio mio" (p. 34). Giannina's feelings are thus of secondary importance to her father. When it comes to marrying his daughter, Filiberto's liberalism is replaced by intolerance and selfishness. La Cotterie makes up for his lack of wealth by a deep sense of honour. Certain that he can never marry Giannina, he cannot prolong his stay without risking to betray "l'ospitalità, l'amicizia, la buona fede" (p. 706) which he has received from Filiberto. He therefore decides to sacrifice his love to honour and return to France without letting Gianinna know how much he loves her. La Cotterie's imminent departure has
the same effect on Giannina that Isabelle's impending marriage to Sganarelle has on her. Like Isabelle, Giannina is driven to make the first move and she reveals her love to La Cotterie. When he responds by admitting that he, too, loves her and confesses that he is precipitating his departure only because of his love for her, she convinces him to stay for who knows what new circumstances may arise with time.

Both Isabelle and Giannina are aware of their boldness in being the first one to reveal their love and to initiate a plan of action. "Je fais, pour une fille, un projet bien hardi" (v. 366), admits Isabelle, and Giannina confesses to herself, "Non avrei mai creduto avermi da ridurre ad un simil passo. Impiegare io medesima le parole ed i mezzi per trattenerlo" (p. 714). But although they may have some misgivings about overlooking "les formalités où la bienséance du sexe oblige" (Maris, p. 375), they do not doubt that the urgency of their predicament will justify them. Isabelle says that she has been forced to act by "l'injuste rigueur dont envers [elle] l'on use" (v. 367) and Giannina realizes that without her intervention, La Cotterie "partirebbe a momenti" (p. 714) and he would then be lost to her forever and she would die of heartbreak. Giannina is, however, a little less conscientious than Isabelle. Whereas Isabelle publicly apologizes to her sister, Léonor, for having had to compromise her good name in "ce honteux stratagème" (v. 1080), Giannina, although she did not originally intend to involve Costanza in her plan, does not regret having played with her rivals feelings in tricking Filiberto. But if Giannina seems almost cruel in her treatment of Costanza, it is because she has not been blind to Costanza's interest in La Cotterie. Goldoni's heroine has a jealous streak, a characteristic common to many of Molière's
and Goldoni's young lovers as we shall see later on in this chapter. As alazons, Sganarelle and Filiberto are characterized by a sense of superiority and a lack of self-knowledge. Arrogant and therefore insensitive to the needs of the young people, neither Sganarelle nor Filiberto ever realizes that his arrogance restricts his mentality and he consequently reacts mechanically and rigidly. Their minds are set, functioning like railroad cars that can only proceed along an inflexible and preconceived route. Thus, their reactions to any given situation is highly predictable. The young people, particularly the young women, understand this and it is their one advantage over the blocking figures. By letting the blocking figure believe that she is respecting his limitations and fulfilling his selfish expectations of her, in other words, by keeping herself within the narrow track of his perceptions, Isabelle as well as Giannina is able to deceive him. Since neither Sganarelle nor Filiberto is very skillful at following any other line of thought than his own, the young heroines successfully throw suspicion off themselves until they have married their lover. Isabelle and Giannina, it seems, are well aware that the society cherished by the blocking figures is one of "definition and formulation" and that they "want predictable activity."

Sganarelle makes it no secret that he considers his method of education superior to Ariste's (he anticipates with malicious pleasure the day when Léonor will verify his prediction and make Ariste cocu). Thus, in order to inflate Sganarelle's ego and assure his trust in her, Isabelle purposely tells him about Valère's love for her and how she spurns him. As Isabelle expected, Sganarelle takes the bait. He automatically believes that Isabelle "montre le fruit/Que l'éducation dans une âme
produit:/La vertu fait ses soins, et son coeur s'y consomme/Jusques à s'offenser des seuls regards d'un homme" (vv. 445-8). At Isabelle's suggestion, he willingly seeks out Valère to tell him that she is offended by his attentions. But when Sganarelle tells Valère, "Son coeur.../N'a que trop de vos yeux entendu le langage" (vv. 415-6) "Et qu'ayant vu l'ardeur dont votre âme est blessée,/Elle vous eût plus tôt fait savoir sa pensée,/Si son coeur avait eu.../A qui pouvair donner cette commission" (vv. 423-6), he is oblivious to the ambiguous nature of his words and of their effect on Valère who is intrigued rather than repelled by them; as Ergaste is quick to point out, "cet avis n'est pas d'une persone/Quï veuille voir cesser l'amour qu'elle vous donne" (vv. 439-40). Isabelle has found the ingenious way of communicating her love to Valère through Sganarelle.

Through Isabelle's manipulations, Sganarelle serves twice more as the unconscious go-between for her and Valère. If Isabelle feels insulted by the "seuls regards d'un homme" (v. 448) how much more insulted will she be if he sends her a love note. This is how Sganarelle reasons and he thus never considers that the letter that he hands over to Valère is Isabelle's. Valère is quick to assess the situation. Following Isabelle's lead, he also uses Sganarelle in order to communicate with her. Realizing that he can manipulate Sganarelle by taking advantage of his inflated ego, Valère pretends to agree to give up Isabelle because Sganarelle is the better man, and Sganarelle is only too willing to see in Valère's decision the young man's recognition of the older man's superior merits. Elated by Valère's resignation, though not without commiserating with him a little for losing Isabelle, Sganarelle repeats almost word for word Valère's camouflaged message of love to Isabelle, and he is again completely unaware of what he is actually communicating to Isabelle:
Mais il m'a tendrement conjuré de te dire
Que du moins en t'aimant il n'a jamais pensé
A rien dont ton honneur ait lieu d'être offensé,
Et que, ne dépendant que du choix de son âme,
Tous ses désirs étaient de t'obtenir pour femme,
Si les destins, en moi, qui captive ton cœur,
N'opposaient un obstacle à cette juste ardeur;
Que, quoi qu'on puisse faire, il ne te faut pas croire
Que jamais tes appas sortent de sa mémoire;
Que, quelque arrêt des Cieux qu'il lui faille subir,
Son sort est de t'aimer jusqu'au dernier soupir;
Et que si quelque chose étouffe sa poursuite,
C'est le juste respect qu'il a pour mon mérite.
(vv. 596-610)

We find in Sganarelle's accurate rendition of Valère's expression of love, more evidence of Sganarelle's inflated ego. Does not, according to Sganarelle's way of thinking, the worth of his prize possession, Isabelle, increase because she is praised and coveted by someone else?

When, through Isabelle's further manipulations, Sganarelle actually brings Valère into the house, a delightfully ironic scene ensues. With her enemy and lover before her, Isabelle cleverly expresses what she feels for each of them without her specifying who is who: "La présence de l'un m'est agréable et chère,... Et l'autre par sa vue inspire dans mon cœur/De secrets mouvements et de haine et d'horreur" (vv. 743-5). Because Sganarelle never suspects that he is the object of her hatred, Isabelle can freely describe her love for Valère, who because of her letter and other signs, can correctly decode the double meaning of her words and know for sure that he is the one who has "toute [son] estime et toute [sa] tendresse" (v. 740) and that Sganarelle "a toute [sa] colère et [son] aversion" (v. 742). Valère can therefore respond appropriately and maintain this conversation of double entendres with Isabelle. Unmindful, as usual, of the real nature of the communication taking place in his very presence,
Sganarelle instead exalts in Isabelle's words, considering them the expression of her love for him. When Isabelle, valuing Valère's opinion, worries that it may be "honteux/Aux filles d'exprimer si librement leurs voeux" (vv. 757-8), Sganarelle coaches her, "Point, point" (v. 759) for he wishes to hear more as he assures her, "Tu ne languiras pas longtemps" (v. 770); when she begins to describe her hatred for Sganarelle, he thinks it is directed at Valère and feeling a little sorry for him, he asks her to be more moderate. Unfortunately for Isabelle, her success in making Sganarelle believe that the words aimed at Valère were for him has an unexpected result. They have aroused Sganarelle's passion and as a result he wants to advance the marriage date. "C'est trop que de huit jours pour ton impatience;/Dès demain je t'épouse" (vv. 796-7), Sganarelle tells a horrified Isabelle as Act II ends. Isabelle is going to have to resort very quickly to another strategy.

In Un curioso accidente, Filiberto has been liberal about his daughter's upbringing, trusting her to act prudently and preferring, like Ariste, that it be "l'honneur qui [la tienne] dans le devoir [et]/Non la sévirité" (Maris, vv. 169-70). Filiberto says he is "un poco filosofo" (p. 716)—as only a product of the age of enlightenment can claim to be—and he believes in the supremacy of reason. But consistent with the rigid mentality of a blocking character, he only takes into consideration his definition of what is reasonable. Like Sganarelle, Filiberto is lacking in self-knowledge, for despite all his claims to love philosophy and truth, he is unaware that he is both selfish and hypocritical. Early in the play, Filiberto says that he is a man "che ama la verità, che non sa fingere nemmen per ischerzo" (p. 718), but in dealing with his daughter, La Cotterie,
and the others, Filiberto delights in speaking in innuendos and in double entendres. It is this tendency of his not to speak plainly which makes Marianna and La Cotterie believe at first that he approves of La Cotterie marrying Giannina and which consequently prolongs Filiberto's ignorance of the true nature of the situation and involves him in planning La Cotterie's marriage with Costanza to such a degree that neither La Cotterie nor Giannina can detract him from his project without revealing their love for each other. Because of his hypocrisy, Filiberto does not realize that his opinion of La Cotterie is based on a double standard. On the one hand, he urges La Cotterie to marry Costanza, a rich man's daughter, even if he has to run off with her for "Il [suo] sangue ed il [suo] merito possono equiparare una ricca dote" (p. 725), and on the other, he lashes out at Marianna for thinking that he would approve of a marriage between La Cotterie and Giannina, "Pare a te che io volessi dare mia figlia ad un uomo d'armata, ad un cadetto di casa povera, ad uno che non avrebbe il modo di mantenerla com'ella è nata?" (p. 737). Filiberto thus believes that Riccardo should be eager to acquire La Cotterie as a son-in-law because "è onest'uomo: non ha difetti, e poi è di sangue nobile" (p. 740) when these same qualities would never satisfy Filiberto's requirements for a son-in-law. It seems that Filiberto considers La Cotterie a good choice for any rich man's daughter other than his own. Moreover, Filiberto refuses to acknowledge that his reason for not considering La Cotterie a suitable husband for Giannina is none other than greed. When Riccardo asks Filiberto why he does not marry La Cotterie to his daughter if he thinks so highly of him, Filiberto can only answer, "Perché...perché non gliela voglio dare" (p. 740). Filiberto cannot explain why because he has exactly
the same objection as Riccardo: they both can expect to marry their
daughters into "una delle migliori case d'Olanda" (p. 740).

Filiberto first appears on stage in II, 4, when he discovers
Giannina alone in La Cotterie's room after their avowal of love. Giannina
tries to conceal her agitation but she finds it difficult to appear
unperturbed by Filiberto's questions since he suspects La Cotterie's
recent depressive state to be a symptom of love sickness. In his treatment
of Giannina in this scene, Filiberto contradicts all of his philosophic
principles. We see from the beginning that he does not speak in a
straightforward manner. He broaches the subject of La Cotterie with rather
elusive language. "Io dubito che la malattia ch'ei soffre presentamente,
sia originata da un'altra ferita un poco più penetrante" (p. 715), and he
continues talking in this way about wounds "che non sono dai medici
conosciuti" (p. 715), about "armi che colpiscono per di dentro [e passano]
per gli occhi, per le orecchie, per i meati del corpo " (p. 715). At first,
Filiberto's metaphoric way of speaking appears light-hearted, the manner
in which a liberal-minded and good-natured father might deal with his
daughter who has fallen in love. Filiberto, however, is not being sincere
for he is using this type of language not to tease Giannina but to test her.
If she understands him it means she is in love, for he says to her, "Avrei
piacere che non mi capiste" (p. 715). Filiberto makes it quite clear that
he would not be pleased to find out that Giannina and La Cotterie have
fallen in love. His true nature, therefore, is not that of an understanding
parent but of a heavy father figure. He tells Giannina what he expects her
to be: "una brava ragazza, saggia, prudente, che conosce il male
dell'uffiziale, e che mostra di non conoscerlo per onestà" (p. 715), and it
is understood that if she complies with this, he will not have to step in and openly impede the progress of their love. Filiberto has accurately deduced La Cotterie's predicament: "io lo giudico innamorato [e]...se mai per avventura quella che lo ha innamorato fosse ricca, dipendesse dal padre, e non potesse accordargli alcuna buona speranza, non sarebbe fuor di proposito, che la disperazione lo consigliasse a partire" (p. 716). Filiberto is proud of having thought all of this out "filosoficamente" (p. 716), but what Filiberto does not perceive is that although he may reason logically and be an accurate observer, he does not live according to the principles of an enlightened philosopher. Speaking of himself in the third person, Filiberto has analyzed La Cotterie's unhappy situation as if he were completely detached from it and not at all as the one person who could completely change the situation and alleviate La Cotterie's suffering. Filiberto thus reveals himself not to be on the side of love. He tells Giannina, "Non vorrei che nella di lui malattia vi fosse frammischiata quella di mia figliuola" (p. 716), and though his use of the conditional has a softening effect, it does not completely hide the threatening undertone. Filiberto differs from Sganarelle only in that he does not consider it necessary to keep his daughter under lock and key. In a way, Filiberto is more cruel than Sganarelle for whereas Sganarelle never philosophizes about the nature of love, Filiberto shows through his military metaphors that he understands the spontaneous and irrepressible nature of love, yet he would not hesitate to try and suppress its course if it were to interfere with his plans for his daughter's marriage.

Giannina's responses to her father indicate that she understands exactly what he is getting at and is able to manipulate him by modelling
herself according to his expectations. She effectively pretends not to understand his words and Filiberto must change tactics, "Figliuola mia, facciamoci a parlar chiaro" (p. 716). (He himself admits to not speaking plainly). She manages to overcome her flustered state and feign gaiety so well that Filiberto tells her, "O che abbia avuta la virtù di resistere, o che abbia quella di saper fingere" (pp. 716-7). Ultimately, in order to throw Filiberto off her tracks, Giannina is forced to invent a romance between La Cotterie and her friend, Costanza. But like Isabelle, Giannina is too successful in deceiving the blocking figure. Where Isabelle has to contend with Sganarelle's sudden decision to precipitate their wedding, Giannina must deal with Filiberto's unforeseen desire to help bring about the marriage between La Cotterie and Costanza. The unexpected resolution taken by Sganarelle and Filiberto, although it takes place near the end in L'Ecole des maris and at the beginning of Un curioso accidente, is in each case crucial to the play. In L'Ecole des maris, Sganarelle's decision to advance the wedding date is the climatic moment of the play and Filiberto's desire to intervene on La Cotterie's behalf is the point from which Un curioso accidente evolves. Moreover, both resolutions drive the young women to desperate measures: Isabelle, who had expected that Valère would, in due time, come and rescue her, must now escape on her own and Giannina, who had originally only wanted to prolong La Cotterie's stay in the hope of more favourable circumstances, agrees to elope with him.

Like Isabelle and Valère, Giannina and La Cotterie are able to dissimulate together in front of the blocking figure and hold ironic conversations, but Giannina and La Cotterie are not the craftily dissimulators that Isabelle and Valère are, for their situation is complicated
by Giannina's jealousy. In scenes 2 and 3 of Act II, the conversations of
the young lovers first with Costanza and later with Filiberto are laced
with secondary meanings, but instead of being a method of implicit
communication between Giannina and La Cotterie, their double entendres
only antagonize each other. La Cotterie and Giannina must deal with two
contradictory modes of behaviour: La Cotterie must at the same time feign
love for Costanza and not arouse Giannina's jealousy. Giannina interrupts
the conversation each time La Cotterie must express his love for Costanza,
thereby risking the betrayal of her true feelings, although in each case
she is quick enough to disengage herself from any compromising remarks.
Giannina cannot bear to hear La Cotterie utter words of endearment to
Costanza even though she knows full well that they are not true and that
her happiness hinges on the success of this deception. When she is jealous,
Giannina cannot differentiate between truth and dissimulation. Love, thus,
has a restricting effect on her mind which almost causes her to be an
alazon in her own plot, a situation which occurs, as we shall see, in many
comedies.

What is interesting about Sganarelle and Filiberto is that
although they are alazons, they are tricked into functioning as eirons. In
the same way that Marianna is unwittingly an alazon, Filiberto and
Sganarelle are unwittingly eirons. They help to bring about the marriages
of the young lovers while thinking that they are helping other young
people to get married. All the efforts that they put into aiding non-
existent marriages benefit the very marriages that they would oppose. They
are thus their own dupes and thereby make it easier for the young lovers.
Sganarelle is anxious to help realize the marriage of Léonor and Valère,
and Filiberto, of La Cotterie and Costanza, marriages which they believe to be desired by everyone except the father figure concerned. Unlike a true eiron, however, neither of them is in any way dedicated to the cause of love. In offering their services to the young people, they are motivated by a spirit of vindictiveness; it is, moreover, their vindictive nature which makes them so ready to believe in these invented marriages. Although Sganarelle feels sorry for Valère for having lost out to him and Filiberto wants to help his friend, La Cotterie, in both cases their over-riding reason in wanting to see that these marriages take place is selfish. When Isabelle, caught by Sganarelle as she tries to escape, invents the story about wanting to help Léonor get together with Valère, Sganarelle automatically believes her for this is a moment which he has long cherished. He sees it as confirming the superiority of his method in upbringing young girls, and he is anxious to run to his brother and throw in his face all his moralizing about honour and liberty. He tells Isabelle, "En quelle impatience/Suis-je de voir mon frère, et lui conter sa chance!" (vv. 383-4). Before gloating over his brother's humiliation, Sganarelle wants to make sure that this marriage takes place and he himself arranges for a commissaire and a notaire to legalize it. Sganarelle is so formed by his rigid mentality that he does not perceive the inconsistency in Isabelle's story: why would Léonor, who has Ariste's permission and blessing to choose a husband for herself, wish to marry Valère in secret? In fact, Ariste is troubled by Sganarelle's news not because Léonor has allegedly married another man but because she never told him. "Moi, qui dans toute chose ai, depuis son enfance,/Montré toujours pour elle entière complaisance?" (vv. 983-4), he ponders aloud in the face of Sganarelle's smugness. When Isabelle appears
before him by Valère's side, Sganarelle finally realizes that he has been tricked. But his rigidity of mind persists to the very end. He refuses to allow for the possibility that he may have been wrong in his treatment of Isabelle. Although he has before him the positive example of Léonor who freely and happily chooses Ariste as her husband, he condemns all women as "ce sexe trompeur" (v. 1109) "engendré pour damner tout le monde" (v. 1108).

In *Un curioso accidente*, Filiberto seizes from the beginning onto Giannina's story about La Cotterie's love for Costanza with such tenacity that he never suspects its falseness, even when Marianna is ready to swear that she has heard differently. The reason for Filiberto's obstinacy is, as in Sganarelle's case, his sense of self-righteousness and not any altruistic concern for the young lovers. From the moment that Giannina mentions that La Cotterie is afraid of being refused by Costanza's father, Filiberto is angered by the thought that Riccardo would disdain to give his daughter to La Cotterie. It is not because Riccardo thinks this suitor too poor that Filiberto finds Riccardo's rejection of La Cotterie unfair but because this is the reason why Filiberto cannot accept La Cotterie as a son-in-law; and whereas this is, according to Filiberto's double standard, a worthy excuse for "un negozianti d'Olanda" (p. 718), it is not an acceptable reason for "un finanziere, sollevato dal fango, ed arricchito al suono delle esclamazioni del popolo" (p. 717). Whether or not this is a fair description of Riccardo does not change the fact that he is as rich as Filiberto and that he consequently has the same expectations as Filiberto regarding his daughter's marriage. It is ultimately because he believes himself to have been treated arrogantly by Riccardo that Filiberto advises La Cotterie to elope and even lends him the necessary money.
In the same vein, we recall that Arnolphe in *L'Ecole des femmes* lends money to Horace only to have it used against him. It is therefore out of spite rather than sympathy that Filiberto helps the young lovers. When Filiberto says "Non vedo l'ora di veder fremere, di vedere a disperarsi Riccardo" (p. 743), he seems to echo Sganarelle and his wish to see Ariste humiliated. That Filiberto is an alazon even when he is acting as an eiron is revealed in his monologue in Act II where he raises some doubts about having encouraged La Cotterie to marry Costanza against her father's wishes: "Penso che ho ancor io una figliuola, e non vorrei mi venisse fatto un simile torto" (p. 744). Filiberto here is having a kind of identity crisis—it goes against his nature to act as an eiron. But he quickly justifies himself in true alazon fashion by recalling his contention with Riccardo.

Blinded by his sense of self-righteousness, Filiberto never sees that the very reasons that he uses to convince La Cotterie to elope with Costanza are equally persuasive in the case of his daughter. Like Sganarelle in relating *verbatim* Valdère message of love to Isabelle, Filiberto is oblivious to the double-natured effect of his words when he reasons with La Cotterie, "La fanciulla vi ama, voi l'amate teneramente. Sarebbe questo il primo matrimonio, che stabilito si fosse fra due giovani onesti, senza il consenso del padre?" (p. 742). And when La Cotterie asks him outright, "Approvereste voi ch'io sposassi la figlia, senza il consenso del genitore?" (p. 742), Filiberto is completely unaware that he is essentially giving his permission to La Cotterie to elope with his daughter: "Sì, nel caso in cui siamo, esaminando le circostanze, l'approverei" (p. 742). La Cotterie's last resistance to betray his host dissolves when
Filiberto lends him money and even accuses him of cowardice in hesitating to act.

Giannina is not blind to her father's double standard; in several instances throughout the play she underlines his hypocrisy, though he never realizes it. At the beginning of Act I, she voices his opinion before he does, "Per quel ch'io sento, se foste voi il finanziere, non gli neghereste la vostra figlia. . .Ma essendo un negoziante d'Olanda, non vi conferrebbe il partito" (p. 718). When Filiberto tells her that "la dote che io vi destino, può farvi degna di uno dei migliori partiti d'Olanda" (p. 734), she angers him by saying, "Lo stesso può dire il padre di madamigella Costanza" (p. 734). Although Giannina has always demonstrated to be "una buona fanciulla," Filiberto undermines the power of love, and fails to realize that when one is in love, it is no longer possible to distinguish between "i casi e le convenienze" (p. 746), especially when they are based on a double standard. Before deciding to run off with La Cotterie, Giannina wants to hear from her father herself that he has advised La Cotterie "a sposar la figlia senza del padre" (p. 745). Filiberto hesitates to admit it because it might serve as a bad example for his daughter, but like Sganarelle, Filiberto is sure of his ways; he has no need to worry, for as he says, "so come l'ho educata, e sotto la mia vigilanza non vi è pericolo che mi accadano di tali disastri" (p. 746).

Filiberto, too, needs positive proof before he realizes that he has been deceived. But unlike Sganarelle, Filiberto—who after all has not lost a wife but gained a son—with the aid of Marianna, Guascogna, and ironically, Riccardo, moderates his anger, forgives his daughter and accepts
La Cotterie as son-in-law, verifying his previous predication to La Cotterie that for a father whose only daughter elopes, "[la collera] gli durerà... qualche giorno, e poi farà ancor egli come hanno fatto tanti altri. Vi accetterà per genero, e forse forse vi farà padrone di casa" (p. 742).

Taking advantage of this period of grace, Marianna and Guascogna ask "licenza di lor signori" (p. 757) to marry, and the play ends with two weddings. "The tendency of comedy," to quote Frye, "is to include as many people as possible in its final society: the blocking characters are more often reconciled or converted than simply repudiated."^7 Un curioso accidente differs from L'Ecole des maris in its ending for Sganarelle rejects the new society of the lovers; Filiberto, however, is not exactly reconciled to but rather blackmailed into accepting "a society controlled by youth and pragmatic freedom."^8 Riccardo advises him, "Amico, la cosa è fatta, non vi è rimedio. Vi consiglio ad accomodarvi, prima che si sparga per la città il curioso accidente che vi è accaduto" (p. 756). It is therefore his fear of public opinion that finally convinces Filiberto to forgive the young couple. Filiberto's susceptibility to what people say further undermines in our eyes his "lume d'intelletto" (p. 720) and aligns him rather with the likes of Sganarelle in L'Ecole des maris and Arnolphe in L'Ecole des femmes. Giannina is well aware of this fear of her father and it is actually her new source of power over him for when Filiberto hesitates to forgive La Cotterie, Giannina begins to recite the story of this curious mishap. Though Filiberto orders her to speak no more of it, it is at this point that he is finally "pacificato" (p. 756), that he forgives all and blesses their marriage, "Siete sposi, siete in casa, stateci, che il cielo vi benedica" (p. 757).
Giannina's final speech is another example of her artful dissimulation. She says that "il cielo. . . non esenta dai rimorsi e dai timori la figlia" (p. 757) but she does not convince us. (At the end of La locandiera Mirandolina makes a similar speech which leaves us just as unconvinced). The remorse Giannina demonstrated in front of her father quickly dissipated when he forbade her to mention her husband and she responded by saying, "O accettatelo nel cuor vostro, o sarò costretta ad abbandonarvi" (p. 756). For the concluding words of the play to be effective, Giannina must therefore mean them tongue-in-cheek and speak them saucily.

Before ending this discussion on Un curioso accidente, we must deal with Costanza for whom there is no counterpart in L'Ecole des maris. In Molière's L'Etourdi, however, there is the character of Léandre who corresponds in some ways to Costanza. By definition, Costanza should be an eiron for she is in love with La Cotterie and is willing to risk her father's anger in order to marry him. Although she is Giannina's rival, Costanza, more than an obstacle to Giannina's and La Cotterie's marriage, turns out to be the vehicle by which they attain their happiness. Costanza is as much taken in by Giannina's stratagem as Filiberto but whereas Filiberto deserves it, Costanza is only an innocent victim. It could be argued, of course, that Costanza as a lover is a little too foolhardy; she is convinced by Filiberto's words without having any proof from La Cotterie. Isabelle and Giannina, on the contrary, were both very careful to assure themselves of their lover's commitment before proceeding with their plans. In any case, this argument does not reconcile us with Costanza's unhappiness at the end of the play for her final predicament is disproportionate.
to her foolhardiness. In *L'Etourdi*, Léandre, although he is young and in love, functions as an alazon because, like Costanza, he is the rival of one of the lovers. This contradiction is resolved in the Molière play by having Léandre withdraw from the contest for Célie and marrying him to another beauty. But no such consolation awaits Costanza at the end of *Un curioso accidente*. Instead, she is ordered by her father to be henceforth "chiusa fra quattro mura" (p. 754), a situation which is appropriate at the beginning of a comedy as many of Molière's and Goldoni's plays demonstrate but not at its end. Perhaps that is exactly Goldoni's point: the only way to accept Costanza's fate is to consider her plight the basis for another comedy. And if we believe in the motto of comedy that "l'amour rend inventif," (v. 339), we need not be concerned for Costanza's sake for she will not remain a prisoner for long in her father's house, once she has learned the difference between requited and unrequited love.

* * *

The young lovers in *L'Ecole des maris* and in *Un curioso accidente* prove themselves very adept in deceiving the blocking figures in order to marry each other. It rarely occurs, even in plays where the trickster is a servant figure, that "trickery alone suffices to bring about the comic triumph," as it does in these two plays. Here, unaided by a servant or trusted friend, the young lovers, the young women in particular, are the architects of the comic action. It is not surprising, however, that the young girl is the main trickster for, although guarded and home-bound and therefore in a situation requiring greater ingenuity than the young man's, she has more to gain and less to lose than he does in tricking the blocking figure. The young men, Valère and La Cotterie, are at least free to roam
about and experience the world—La Cotterie is an officer in the French army—and they are thus not in the same subordinate position to the blocking figure as the women are. Since a woman can only expect to be transferred from the guarded home of her father to that of her husband, let it at least be a prison of love, of tenderness, a marriage "rempli de plaisirs" (L'Ecole des femmes, v. 1518), "[de] propos...gentils et...douces caresses" (v. 608). Moreover, the more subservient is the position of the trickster, the more effective and savory is the comic reversal wherein the blocking figure is made subordinate to the trickster for the duration of the deception.

In few comedies is this comic reversal as pleasing as in Molière's L'Ecole des femmes, written a year after L'Ecole des maris. Here, the situation is very similar to the one in L'Ecole des maris except that while "Sganarelle's tyranny has not prevented his ward from becoming a woman... Arnolphe has succeeded in keeping [Agnès] a child." Arnolphe has raised Agnès in total ignorance "pour la rendre idiote autant qu'il pourrait" (v. 138) because he wants a docile and faithful wife. Being cuckolded thus concerns him more than winning her love. Arnolphe, however, is foiled by nature; despite all his efforts, Agnès responds to Horace's love and wants to marry him. Like Sganarelle and Filiberto, Arnolphe never takes into consideration the power of love which teaches "l'art d'aiguiser les esprits" (v. 919). We relish Agnès's tricking of Arnolphe all the more because, unlike Isabelle and Giannina, she is completely ignorant of the ways of the world, and because, since Horace has confided in him, Arnolphe is in a much stronger position than Sganarelle and Filiberto. In L'Ecole des maris, in Un curioso accidente, and in many other comedies, we see how
love generates ingenuity but nowhere is this principle so basic as in L'Ecole des femmes where love is portrayed as a natural and positive force which knows no obstacles. Even the most meek and naive lovers will instinctively resort to trickery and dissimulation if necessary for the survival of their love. This is the case with Agnès whose newly awakened passion for Horace goes hand in hand with her new-found need to dissimulate in front of Arnolphe. The Agnès at the beginning of the play naively tells Arnolphe all that has happened between her and Horace and all that she feels for him; the moment, however, that Arnolphe forbids her ever to communicate again with Horace, Agnès becomes an able trickster. The rock she throws at Horace in Arnolphe's presence with her accompanying words of "Retirez-vous: mon âme aux visites renonce;/Je sais tous vos discours, et voilà ma réponse" (vv. 912-3) means one thing to Arnolphe and another to Horace. Like Isabelle and Giannina, Agnès is able to communicate two different meanings with the same message. Her words and gesture convince Arnolphe that she spurns Horace while it draws Horace's attention to the love letter attached to the rock and to her true feelings for him. Later on, when Arnolphe comes to visit Agnès in her room, she successfully feigns nonchalance and returns his gaze unperturbed even though Horace is hidden in her closet. "L'amour est un grand maître" (v. 900) "[qui] a commencé de...déchirer le voile" (v. 956) of Agnès's ignorance. In her letter to Horace, Agnès herself best expresses her awakening to love:

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\text{Comme je commence à connaître qu'on m'a toujours tenue dans l'ignorance, j'ai peur de mettre quelque chose qui ne soit pas bien, et d'en dire plus que je ne devrais. En vérité, je ne sais ce que vous m'avez fait; mais je sens que je suis fâchée à mourir de ce qu'on me fait faire contre vous, que j'aurai toutes les peines du monde à me passer de vous, et que je serais bien aise d'être à}
\]
vous. Peut-être qu'il y a du mal à dire cela; mais enfin je ne puis m'empêcher de le dire, et je voudrais que cela se pût faire sans qu'il y en eût. (p. 69)

Again, like Isabelle and Giannina, Agnès reveals a certain reluctance in being too bold, in doing something that goes against decorum, but her love for Horace is stronger than any fear. Few heroines of comedy are as justified as Agnes in rebelling against a blocking figure for few alazons are as tyrannical and oppressive as Arnolphe. Not content to restrain her freedom and to marry her against her will, a common practice in Molière's and Goldoni's comedies, Arnolphe also seeks to mould her "comme un morceau de cire entre [ses] mains" (v. 810) and to direct her soul. Arnolphe wants to create a human being according to his specifications; he thus encroaches "upon the functions of God as creator." In deceiving Arnolphe, Agnès is defending not only her right to love and happiness but also her sense of identity, and if we remember that Molière and Goldoni wrote for predominantly Christian audiences, her spiritual welfare as well. It is "this sense of self-fulfilment, of self-realization in the very course of the action, so exceptional in a dramatic tradition centred on fixed types," as Knutson says, which "is one of the main reason for this comedy's compelling appeal." In L'Ecole des femmes, trickery is not just a means to fulfilling a desire. In this play we encounter a more fundamental link, that of trickery with self-preservation, with survival, a link that has a biological basis, and which is implied in every comedy where a young man and woman seek to come together and are forced to resort to trickery in order to realize this goal. The natural result of their union is reproduction, the survival of the human race and the preservation or continuity of the self through one's children. Langer differentiates between the comic
rhythm and the tragic rhythm by explaining that "comedy presents the vital rhythm of self-preservation [whereas] tragedy exhibits that of self-consummation." Again, according to Langer, "what justifies the term 'comedy' is...that the Comus was a fertility rite, and the god it celebrated a fertility god, a symbol of perpetual rebirth, eternal life."

At this point, it is worthwhile to posit Goldoni's Gl'innamorati, written a year after Un curioso accidente, as a counterpoint to L'Ecole des femmes for in this comedy we see that love is not always the wonderful, almost miraculous, liberalizing force that is portrayed in L'Ecole des maris and in Un curioso accidente and epitomized in L'Ecole des femmes. Love can have negative side effects. The situation of Eugenia and Fulgenzio, the young lovers in Gl'innamorati, differs from that of the lovers in traditional comedy because their engagement has been approved by both families; they are only waiting for the imminent return of Anselmo, Fulgenzio's brother, before performing the ceremony. There are no obstacles to their union, a fact which is underscored by the characterization of Fabrizio, Eugenia's uncle and legal guardian. The only character in the play who could function as a traditional blocking figure, Fabrizio is an ineffectual and bumbling fool. Consequently, there is no need for Eugenia and Fulgenzio to behave with ingenuity and resourcefulness. On the contrary, we see them acting foolishly and rashly to that point that they almost bring about their separation.

Eugenia and Fulgenzio, however, are no less in love than any other couple in comedy, for as Lisette, Eugenia's servant explains, if they did not love each other so much, they would not be so jealous of each other. Their jealousy causes them to act rigidly, to be intolerant,
possessive, narrow-minded, even cruel and vindictive. They also reveal a lack of self-knowledge by automatically assuming the worst in the other without considering his or her own reactions. But although they demonstrate alazon-like characteristics, they differ from the true alazon in that they act rigidly and mechanically only with each other. Moreover, the alazon-like reactions of the young lovers are often the result of youthful impetuosity, a characteristic special to lovers and alien to alazons. Impetuosity of rashness can be described as an excess of spontaneity and exuberance; to be rash is in a sense to be over-flexible. Impetuosity is restricting when it makes one act without thinking as Lélie does in L'Etourdi or blur reality with appearance as Giannina does in Un curioso accidente.

Instead of being able to understand intentional double entendres and to communicate with each other at a level unperceived by others, as the couples do in the plays already discussed, Eugenia and Fulgenzio attach secondary meanings where there are none to everything the other says and does. When Fulgenzio declines Fabrizio's invitation to stay for dinner, Eugenia and Fulgenzio see nonexistent motives in each other's reactions to this refusal. Eugenia thinks to herself, "Stupisco che non abbia piacere di restar a pranzo con me. Ci pensa poco, al vedere;" and Fulgenzio, "Mi fa specie che Eugenia non mi dice niente ch'io resti. Segno che non le preme" (p. 550). Because each is more concerned with nursing his or her private hurt, they neglect to communicate to each other their keen desire to be in each other's company. Their sense of being offended also makes them jump to wrong conclusions. Eugenia believes that Fulgenzio does not want to stay because of his solicitude for his sister-in-law and Rugenia scornfully lets him know it, "Vi preme di andare a casa, per non
lasciar sola la signora Clorinda vostra cognata. Ecco il perché. Ha ragione, signor zio. Non l'obbligate a dar un dispiacere a quella povera signorina" (p. 550). But Fulgenzio completely misunderstands Eugenia's reaction. Thinking that she does not want him to stay because of Roberto's presence, Fulgenzio analyzes her jealous outburst as something quite different from what it is, "Vuol rimproverar me, perch'io non abbia occasione di rimproverar lei" (p. 550). A similar misunderstanding occurs at the end of Act II when Fulgenzio and Eugenia, in a moment of reconciliation, are surprised by Clorinda and Fabrizio. Fulgenzio, who is kneeling at Eugenia's feet, is mortified by what Fabrizio will think at finding him in a compromising situation with Eugenia and therefore lets Fabrizio believe that he felt dizzy. Eugenia, however, is angered by Fulgenzio's explanation and immediately assumes, "Si scusa per cagione della cognata" (p. 559), and a bitter quarrel ensues. There is no clear-cut eiron-alazon contest in this comedy, no eiron in a subordinate position to an alazon, no reversal of power where the alazon is made the victim of the eiron's tricks; instead, Eugenia and Fulgenzio continuously dupe each other throughout the play. They are their own alazons, creating themselves the obstacles to their marriage.

Like Sganarelle, Filiberto, and Arnolphe, Eugenia and Fulgenzio insist on making another human being fit his or her expectations, except that with the alazons it is a one-way imposition of limitations whereas with Fulgenzio and Eugenia, it is a reciprocal process. As eirons acting like alazons, the young lovers constantly seek each other out and constantly pull each other apart, as if they were both simultaneously positive and negative magnetic poles. Throughout the play, Eugenia and Fulgenzio
repeatedly come together only to separate; and the structure of the play can be described as a series of pulsations, of systolic and diastolic phases, to borrow Knutson's terms. The young lovers' coming together is a contraction, a reconciliation or an affirmation of their love but they cannot sustain this state of contraction; each time they are drawn together, they inevitably fight and separate and an ebb or dilation time follows until the next systolic phase. This cycle would repeat itself indefinitely were it not for the timely arrival of Fulgenzio's brother which removes Clorinda as the object of Eugenia's jealousy and permits Fulgenzio to set a wedding date. It is not only, as Bonino explains, "la gelosia furiosa che per alterne fasi separa ed avvince i due giovani amanti,...ma c'è in loro anche una forte (si vorebbe dire, biologica) attrazione ad abbandonarsi ad una pura vita sentimentale che non sa nutrirsi di altro che di se stessa." This search for exclusiveness is self-defeating and ultimately risks their happiness: it leads Fulgenzio to attempt suicide in Act II and Eugenia to desire entering a convent and to agree to marry Roberto, who she does not love. Interestingly, both of Eugenia's reactions are usually the conditions imposed upon a heroine by a blocking figure. These are self-consummating actions, indicative of tragedy and not comedy which suggests that rigidity, when it is not counteracted and overcome by flexibility, leads to tragedy. After all, if the blocking figures had their way in comedy, none of the endings would be happy. When we go from comedy to tragedy, the comic formula which portrays flexibility as positive and rigidity as negative is reversed. Rigidity is the over-riding characteristic, particularly as the inability or refusal to compromise, of the tragic hero or heroine. When we find flexibility in tragedy, it is the characteristic
of the non-heroic characters, of the collaborators, whether they are confidants or traitors. This tragic reversal is exemplified in *Othello* where Iago, the trickster-like figure, is villainous, and Othello, the hero, is rigid and inflexible. In Goldoni's *Il ritorno della villeggiatura*, for example, Giacinta acts and sounds very much like a tragic heroine when at the end of the play she resolves for honour's sake to marry Leonardo even though she loves Guglielmo and expresses her anguish, "nell'abbandonare un sì caro oggetto mi si stacca il cuore dal seno, ed è un miracolo ch'io non soccomba. Ma lo stato mio lo richiede, la mia virtù mi sollecita, l'onore a ciò mi consiglia." For Giacinta, the question of resorting to dissimulation and deception in order to marry Guglielmo never even arises. Bonino describes this comedy as the celebration of the triumph of "la socialità ('le genti', 'il mondo')" over "l'eros... ma in un'aura così stravolta, così cupa, da assomigliare... ad una sconfitta. Il sociale, anzì l'economico, ora inchioda l'individuale e lo soggioga." Gl'innamorati, however, unlike *Il ritorno della villeggiatura*, never risks becoming tragic for the simple reason that Eugenia and Fulgenzio continuously repeat themselves. At each of their encounters, they follow the same routine: Eugenia, sofistica and puntigiosa, finds fault with Fulgenzio who, being "caldo, intollerante, [e] subitaneo" (p. 539), overreacts and the two squabble. By the eighth scene of the first act, this pattern has been repeated twice; we thus know early on how Eugenia and Fulgenzio are going to react and we laugh each time our expectations are met and we see them trapped in this pattern of their own doing. We can agree with Flamminia, Eugenia's sister, that "si potrebbe far sopra di loro la più bella commedia di questo mondo" (p. 539). According to Bergson, a
character who repeats a gesture is comical because he resembles "une mécanique qui fonctionne automatiquement." The same thing is true for Eugenia and Fulgenzio. Even though it is their reaction and responses which are repeated, it is still "de l'automatisme installé dans la vie." However, we do not laugh at them in the same way that we laugh at blocking figures. As Knutson explains, "seventeenth century comic theory is in its broadest sense dualistic," and I would advance for Goldoni what Knutson advances for Molière: "along with derisive laughter directed at comic butts, we experience a more indulgent mirth for the young heroes and heroines of comedy. They are our moral equals and we share their vision of society; our only superiority over them is in our total knowledge of the situation and their partial awareness as they struggle against the machinations of the obstacle figure," and in the case of Gl'innamorati, as they struggle against their own paralysing passions. "This laughter...is indulgent, sympathetic, even tinged with pathos." Lanson makes this same point in his essay "Sur Le Rire de Bergson" when he agrees with Bergson that "il y a un rire de correction" but adds that there is also "un rire de sympathie."

A look at the role of the servants in L'Ecole des femmes and in Gl'innamorati will reveal further the different portrayals of love in the two plays. That the young lovers in L'Ecole des femmes are shown not to need the help of servants emphasizes the positive effects of love: it expands and liberalizes the mind and makes lovers inventive and resourceful. As a consequence the servants in L'Ecole des femmes are indifferent to the plight of the young lovers. Georgette and Alain are concerned rather about
their own survival. And if they help anyone, it is only because their own situation will benefit as a result. They therefore accept Horace's bribes and give him access to the house until Arnolphe discovers their involvement. When he threatens to beat them if they ever let Horace into the house again, their allegiance switches to Arnolphe, although through their blundering and clumsiness, they unwittingly save the situation for the young lovers. There are indications in the play that Georgette and Alain are not as stupid as they appear. When they insult and hit Arnolphe and keep his money, it is not certain to what extent they are feigning ignorance and enjoying mistreating him. What is certain is that they are brutalized by him and fear him. In Gl'innamorati, however, in order to underline the negative and restricting effects of love which make Eugenia and Fulgenzio create the obstacles to their happiness, the servants are sympathetic to and concerned about their young master and mistress but unable to help them. This is more like the situation in L'Ecole des maris and Un curioso accidente where the servants are sympathetic, although in these two plays the fact that they cannot help the young lovers is meant to underline the young lovers' resourcefulness. Both Lisette and Tognino are frustrated by the fact that they cannot do anything but feel sorry for Eugenia and Fulgnezio. This paralysis on the part of the servants is dramatized in the delightful first scene of Act III where, anxious about the angry noises that are coming from the other room, they peer through the key hole in order to follow what is happening, for all they can do, literally, is keep an eye on the young lovers. It is while they are taking turns looking through the key hole that Tognino thinks to himself, "Non vorrei né meno conoscerlo, non che essere al suo servizio. Mi fa compassione"
Similarly, Lisette says, "Certo, se durano a far questa vita, io non ci sto" (p. 563). Lisette and Tognino would prefer to seek employment elsewhere than stay and have to watch. Fido notes that the servants in *Gl'innamorati* "oltre che spettatori e attori, sono anche narratori e critici." This description of the servants as critics can be applied to the servants in *L'Ecole des femmes* as well for Alain must explain to Georgette, who finds Arnolphe's behaviour strange, the reason for his possessiveness and Alain can do no better than compare a man's wife to his soup. Fido's comment also relates to Bonino's description of *Gl'innamorati* as a comedy "sul doppio tema della decadenza della borghesia e delle timide speranze di una 'diversa' socialità affidate alle virtù native del ceto popolare." In *L'Ecole des femmes* the servants, who would be able to help the young lovers by dissimulating in front of Arnolphe, refuse to get involved, whereas in *Gl'innamorati* the servants, who are more than willing to offer their services, cannot do anything to help the situation. Although in each case, there has to be an outside intervention in order for there to be a happy ending, the role of the servants in either play is superfluous to the outcome of the lovers' happiness.

Eugenia and Fulgenzio are not the only lovers in comedy who are both eiron and alazon. Goldoni's *I due gemelli veneziani* (1747) and Molière's *Le Dépit amoureux* (1656) and *Sganarelle ou le Cocu imaginaire* (1660) (all three early works of the authors) are all similar to *Gl'innamorati* in that the young lovers are, like Eugenia and Fulgenzio, subject to jealousy and impetuousity which causes them to be the ones to create the obstacles to their happiness. Although there is a blocking father figure in *Sganarelle*, the young lovers make their situation worse, in particular,
the young heroine, who agrees to marry her father's choice in order to spite her lover, as Eugenia does at the end of Gl'innamorati. In I due gemelli veneziani, the young lovers have already overcome the blocking figures by running away, and in Le Dépit amoureux, Lucile's father approves of Eraste. In these comedies "the antithetical force...shifts from the father figure toward the rival; the dynamic principle comes from within the idealized society itself, not from a struggle between two opposing units: what interests us are the demands made upon the lovers by the relative success of the suitors in fulfilling these demands, the ensuing episodes of jealousy, misunderstandings, separations, disguises to preserve reputation or decorum."30 Blinded by their passion, the young lovers act mechanically and rigidly like Eugenia and Fulgenzio. Whenever they hear or see something which compromises the reputation of the other in their regard, they automatically assume the worst: betrayal. With the exception of Beatrice in I due gemelli veneziani, who confuses Zanetto for Tonino, all of the lovers are quick to believe in the infidelity of their beloved on the basis of hearsay alone, and on that basis are ready to break off their engagement. As in Gl'innamorati, the servants in these plays do not help the young lovers in getting together. In Le Dépit amoureux, Cros René, Eraste's valet, and Marinette, Lucile's servant, are also in love; they parallel Eraste's and Lucile's passion in a more crude form but act just as rigidly. In Sganarelle, Lélie's servant is more concerned about his next meal than his master's love. And Célie's servant advises her to marry whomever, as long as she gets a husband. Although there are servants in I due gemelli veneziani, they are not Beatrice's or Tonino's, and Arlecchino and Colombina are more interested in satisfying their own need for love than in helping anyone else.
Le Dépit amoureux, Sganarelle, and I due gemelli veneziani would appear to have little in common aside from the similar behaviour of the young lovers, but they are related in another way. They all bear the influence of the Spanish comedies of intrigue, or as they are also known, romanesque comedies. Mongrédien describes Le Dépit amoureux as "une comédie d'intrigue, romanesque, comportant un imbroglio extrêmement compliqué, aux péripéties innombrables." Although most of the characters in I due gemelli veneziani are those of the commedia dell'arte (and the distinction made between Zanetto and Tonino can be seen to represent the traditional dichotomy in the commedia dell'arte between Arlecchino, the doltish Zanni and Brighella, the astute one) and although it is said that the "commedia dell'arte è essenzialmente commedia di intreccio, e sempre di intreccio amoroso," there is in this comedy, "l'eco di una diversa, quasi antitetica tradizione drammaturgica: quella della commedia romanzesca o d'intrigo, folta di agguati, duelli, tentati omicidi, veleni, processi." Sganarelle is also based on an imbroglio; "c'est une étonnante suite de malentendus et de quiproquos," except that here Molière treats this subject "dans le registre de la farce." Frye distinguishes between "two ways of developing the form of comedy: one is to throw the main emphasis on the blocking characters; the other is to throw it forward, on the scenes of discovery and reconciliation," a distinction which harmonizes with the theme of flexibility and rigidity in comedy stressed in this study, for one is the form of the comedies L'Ecole des maris, L'Ecole des femmes, and Un curioso accidente where the young lovers must demonstrate ingenuity in face of opposition whereas the other describes the comedies of intrigue where "the impediments to true love stem. . .from the lovers themselves; false appear-
ances and misunderstanding become the main vehicles for plot development."

Interesting enough, though Frye says the former to be the "tendency of comic irony, satire, realism, and studies of manner" and the latter, "the tendency of Shakespearean and other types of romantic comedy," Gl'innamorati, which in more than one way fits the description of comedies of intrigue, is the most plausible of the comedies discussed so far in this chapter. Le Dépit amoureux, Sganarelle, I due gemelli veneziani, and Gl'innamorati are also similar in that the cause of the young lovers' unhappiness is due to an odd number of young people. Until the odd number is evened out, there can be no happy ending; this is exactly what happens in each of these comedies. In Le Dépit amoureux, when Frosine has explained everything to Polydore, Ascagne is revealed to be a woman and the one who has secretly married Valère. Eraste, therefore, no longer has to fear a rival. Moreover, since Mascarille refuses to marry, Gros-René and Marinette are free to make their happiness. Each of the two lovers in Sganarelle thinks the other is attached to another until La Suivante steps in so that Célie and Lélie can sort out their misunderstandings. Their troubles, however, are not over until Villebrequin arrives to say that his son has married someone else and Gorgibus can therefore no longer refuse his daughter to Lélie. In Gl'innamorati, with Anselmo's return, Clorinda once again forms a couple with her husband and as far as Eugenia is concerned, ceases to be a rival. And Flamminia convinces Roberto to withdraw his marriage proposal to Eugenia by explaining that her dowry will be very small. The ending of I due gemelli veneziani is a little more racy and sinister. In this play, there are too many young men for the number of young women, and Zanetto, the "gemello sciocco," must be killed off.
Once it is revealed that his fiancée, Rosaura, is his long-lost sister, however, his death is considered timely and even appropriate. At this point, Lelio, one of Tonino's rivals for the hand of Beatrice, agrees to marry Rosaura. The study of rigidity in young lovers, of eirons acting as alazons in the comedies of Molière and Goldoni would not be complete without a look at Goldoni's *Le baruffe chiozzotte* and Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules*, two completely different plays—*Les Précieuses ridicules* is actually only a farce—comparable to each other only in that both contain eirons behaving rigidly. It is, however, also interesting to note that both works were at first polemical, *Le baruffe chiozzotte*, for representing reality, *Les Précieuses ridicules*, for satirizing an affectation of the time. Goldoni found it necessary to defend his comedy in its preface where he says, "credo e sostengo, che sia un merito della Commedia l'esatta imitazione della natura;" and Molière "avait pris des précautions, répandant partout le bruit qu'il ne visait pas les excellentes précieuses parisiennes, mais leurs ridicules imitatrices, ces 'pecques provinciales' qu'il avait rencontrées dans ses pérégrinations." Les Précieuses ridicules interests us because it is in several ways the inverse of *L'Ecole des femmes*. First of all, the traditional comic plot and eiron-alazon alignment is inverted. Gorgibus, in insisting that his daughter and niece accept Du Croisy and La Grange as their husbands, is not the usual blocking figure of traditional comedy for neither Magdelon nor Cathos is in love with anyone else and they do not resist Gorgibus' order because of the lack of love in these arrangements but because Gorgibus' intervention and the young men's behaviour do not conform to the young ladies' ideas of love, gleaned from the pastoral and heroic novels of the time. According to them,
Il faut qu'un amant, pour être agréable, sache débiter les beaux sentiments, pousser le doux, le tendre et le passionné, et que sa recherche soit dans les formes. … Après cela viennent les aventures, les rivaux qui se jettent à la traverse d'une inclination établie, les persécutions des pères, les jalousies conçues sur de fausses apparences, les plaintes, les désespoirs, les enlèvements, et ce qui s'ensuit. Voilà comme les choses se traitent dans les belles manières et ce sont des règles dont, en bonne galanterie, on ne saurait se dispenser. (Précieuses, p. 230)

They rebel against Gorgibus' concept of marriage, saying that "il ne se peut rien de plus marchand que ce procédé" (p. 230), but if they take exception to this type of marriage, it is not because it makes of love a business transaction and women, property, but because it means "prendre. . . le roman par la queue" (p. 230). "To Gorgibus' conventional attitude concerning marriage, [they oppose] ideas just as conventional if somewhat more fashionable."42 Thus, Magdelon and Cathos are not true précieuses, for "ce mouvement précieux. . . recouvraint d'ailleurs un mouvement féministe très hardi, qui préchait l'émancipation de la femme, le droit à l'amour, et luttait vigoureusement contre les contraintes sociales du mariage bourgeois, où la jeune fille était alors le plus souvent sacrifiée à des intérêts d'argent."43

It is not of Gorgibus' plans that Du Croisy and La Grange are critical but of the young women's rudeness. Thus, the father's choice in this play, "usually inimical to the romantic interest of Molière's typical comedy, is here implicitly accepted as the right one,"44 and indeed, the normal procedure. "In 17th century France, a marriage was much less an arrangement between two individuals than an affair settled between two families."45 Given the realistic background, Gorgibus is behaving liberally in comparison to the average blocking father and probably more fairly than
the average father in 17th French society in allowing the young women to receive the young men before they are married. Though he has commanded Magdelon and Cathos to treat Du Croisy and La Grange "comme des personnes qu'[il] voulai[t] [leur] donner pour maris" (p. 229), he is giving them the opportunity, however small, to become acquainted, and when he questions the two young men after they have been rebuffed, "les affaires iront-elles bien? Quel est le résultat de cette visite?" (p. 228), he seems to imply that he is giving the young people a chance to decide for themselves whether they want each other or not. But after having heard Magdelon's and Cathos' "baragouin" (p. 231), Gorgibus reacts much more severely. His orders "je veux résolument que vous vous disposiez à les recevoir pour maris" (p. 231) and "je veux Être maître absolu... vous serez mariées toutes deux avant qu'il soit peu, ou, ma foi! vous serex religieuses" (p. 232) are much more imperative than "Vous avais-je pas commandé de les recevoir comme des personnes que je voulais vous donner pour maris?" (p. 229). In any case, Gorgibus does not function as an alazon in the play because that role is assumed by Magdelon and Cathos; it is after all they who are tricked here and not Gorgibus. Like all alazons, Magdelon and Cathos are easily fooled because they have restricted their minds to see only what they want to see; "their readings and their imagination serve merely to feed their vanity and their affectation." Consequently, they accept play for reality, a common error among alazons as we shall see in the next chapters. As long as Mascarille and Jodelet fit the forms, act the part, the content does not matter; Magdelon and Cathos cannot differentiate between gentilhommes and laquais.
Magdelon and Cathos act as blocking figures not only in that they refuse to acknowledge La Grange and Du Croisy as suitors but also because they reject the biological basis of love and marriage; they are not made spontaneous and exuberant by love; instead they want love to fit rigid forms and patterns. In this way, Magdelon and Cathos are the antithesis of Agnès in L'Ecole des femmes. The fact that they are tricked reinforces the link established in L'Ecole des femmes between love and flexibility.

Magdelon and Cathos want to disassociate carnal love from spiritual love. They find marriage "une chose tout à fait choquante" because of "la pensée de coucher contre un homme vraiment nu" (p. 231). One could expect such a reaction in a little girl but not in young women of marriageable age. Armande in Molière's Les Femmes savantes voices a similar sentiment when she asks Clitandre "vous ne goûtez point. . ./Cette union des coeurs où les corps n'entrent pas?/Vous ne pouvez aimer que d'une amour grossière?" (vv. 1195-6), though she is less sincere than Magdelon and Cathos for despite Clitandre's wish to love "toute la personne" (v. 1227), she is more than willing to marry him. Magdelon, Cathos, and Armande are essentially no different from all other alazons who reject "the basic reaffirmation of the rights of body over spirit, of freedom and desire over order and law, of community over property, of life over death." That Magdelon and Cathos are behaving childishly is further evidenced when they want to change their names to Polyxène and Aminte, the names of heroines in romances. Here, they recall the highly imaginative orphan girl, Anne, in the children's novel, Anne of Green Gables, who when she first meets Marilla asks, "Will you please call me Cordelia?...it's not exactly my name, but I would love to be called Cordelia. It's such a
perfectly elegant name. . .And Anne is such an unromantic name." But Anne is only eleven years old and what is excusable and maybe even refreshing in a little girl is ludicrous in young women. Magdelon and Cathos thus deserve to be tricked, to be played this "pièce sanglanite". (p. 247). Although there is no romantic fulfillment in Les Précieuses ridicules because there are no heroines to act as eirons, the play does affirm all the same the triumph of the eiron over the alazon.

Les Précieuses ridicules reveals Molière's aristocratic bias and his acceptance of the rigid hierarchy of social classes in 17th century France. In wanting to live like the heroines of romantic novels, Magdelon and Cathos are also attempting to live above their station in life; "leur ridicule naît en grande partie de la disproportion qui existe entre leur rang et leurs visées." La Grange says that he wants to play a trick on them "qui leur fera voir leur sottise, et pourra leur apprendre à connaître un peu mieux leur monde" (p. 228). It is not just the real world as distinct from the world of fiction that Magdelon and Cathos must come to terms with but also with the limitations of the bourgeoisie. "In refined society, . . .a suitor may indeed go through some of the courtship ritual of galanterie before the final matter of marriage is brought up; but in the 'précieuses' bourgeois world, such conduct from a future husband would probably have been thought of as affectation," which explains Gorgibus' as well as La Grange's and Du Croisy's negative reactions to the young women's aspirations. Magdelon and Cathos are as fit a subject of ridicule as Mascarille, La Grange's valet, "un extravagant, qui s'est mis dans la tête de vouloir faire l'homme de condition" (p. 228). There is a parallel between Magdelon and Cathos who turn up their nose at
their kind and Mascarille, "[qui] dédaigne les autres valets, jusqu'à les appeler brutaux" (p. 228). If Mascarille and Jodelet are beaten at the end of the comedy by their masters for having done what they were asked to do, these beatings are partly justified, from Molière's perspective, because of their vain expectations to become something more than valets.

Whereas for Molière, "le bourgeois fournissait à la comédie un type nettement délimité, avec ses défauts et ses ridicules: avarice, faiblesse de courage, jalousie, penchant, le plus souvent bafoué, à la tyrannie domestique, suffisance réjouissante, égoïsme et naïveté," a type distinct from the gentleman, from "le honnête homme...formé selon l'idéal de la civilité noble," Goldoni defends the bourgeoisie, especially in the figure of the merchant who, "laborioso e onesto, equilibrato e generoso, provvido e amorevole," "sarà...il portacolori di quel popolo borghese, nella cui condotta, moralmente ineccepibile, e nel cui benessere economico Goldoni tende a identificare il meglio di quanto abbia prodotto, nella stratificazione delle sue classi, la Serenissima," and exposes a decadent aristocracy. In the comedies of his maturity, however, the bourgeoisie as protagonist gives way to the popolo. An example of such a play is, of course, Le baruffe chiozzotte. Written in 1761, it is one of the last plays that he wrote before his departure for Paris in 1762 and it is considered one of his greatest works. With Le baruffe chiozzotte, however, Goldoni "sospende, in pratica, la sua ricerca drammaturgica." At Le Theatre des Italiens in Paris, Goldoni was to discover that "[ses] chers compatriotes ne donnoient que des Pièces usées, des Pièces à canevas du mauvais genre que [il avoit] reformé en Italie," and that he would have to start all over again. But
his reform "presupponeva un ben preciso rapporto tra teatro e società" and Goldoni was too much a realist not to see the absurdity of writing comedies of character in Italian for a French public. He therefore resigned himself to compromise and we see in the comedies of that period "l'accento spostarsi dai personaggi alle cose, dal dialogo all'azione, dai conflitti psicologici ai meccanismi degli eventi." The titles of his Paris comedies bear witness to this transformation. Whereas during his reform, Goldoni's comedies of character all have titles which are names or descriptions of persons, those of his Parisian period have, in most of the cases, titles or sub-titles "che pongono a protagonisti le cose o i meccanismi." Of this group of comedies, Il ventaglio is his most important work and of Il ventaglio, Momigliano writes, "è fra le cose migliori del Goldoni per l'agilità inesauribile delle complicazioni, per la densità e la rapidità dell'azione." 

Le baruffe chiozzotte is entirely in dialect, not, however, the dialect of Venice, but of Chioggia as it is spoken by "il popolo minuto dei popolani e dei pescatori, del tutto emarginato ed ancora privo di ogni coscienza di classe." Goldoni found it necessary to defend his choice of representing in this play and in previous comedies the lower classes which "la convenzione teatrale e una concezione reazionaria riteneva bassi e indegni di rappresentazione teatrale. . .e che egli sentiva invece parte viva, essenziale di un vasto tessuto sociale." In his preface to Le baruffe chiozzotte, Goldoni explains that he has written comedies to satisfy "tutti gli ordini di persone." He wants "il bottegaio, il servitore ed il povero pescatore" as well as "gli spiriti più seriosi e più delicati" to frequent and enjoy the theatre.
Consequently, Goldoni thought it "ben giusto, che per piacere a quest'ordine di persone, che pagano come i Nobili e come i Ricchi, facesi delle Commedie, nelle quali riconoscessero i loro costumi e i loro difetti, e, mi sia permesso di dirlo, le loro virtù."\textsuperscript{66} If Goldoni seems particularly fond of Chioggia and its people, it is because he lived and worked there for a time; being a lawyer, he was, while at Chioggia, employed "nello uffizio di Coadiutore del Cancelliere Criminale"\textsuperscript{67} and it would not seem too unlikely to see the character of Isidoro, the Coadiutore del Cancelliere Criminale in the play, as representing Goldoni himself. We get a glimpse of the playwright in lawyer's robes when Isidoro says after having witnessed the antics of the young lovers, "Anca questo per mi xe un divertimento,"\textsuperscript{68} he is the lawyer-playwright who at a later time will bring to the stage the comedy which he perceived in everyday life.

Without going any deeper into a sociological or class analysis of \textit{Le baurffe chiozzotte}, one thing does emerge which is relevant to this study and that is that young lovers react in the same way, whatever their social class. As in the other plays, the young lovers here create their own obstacles to their happiness. Lucietta and Titta Nane are engaged and so are Orsetta and Beppo; in both cases, the families approve of their engagement and all that is required is to set the wedding date. The young lovers are, however, blinded and restricted by their passion. Titta Nane and Beppo are subject to jealousy which causes them to believe automatically what others say about their fiancées and on the basis of hearsay alone, decide to break off their engagement. Lucietta and Orsetta, in turn, when they are rebuked by their young man, refuse to be reconciled. What causes the young lovers' misery is the presence of two other young people,
Toffolo and Checca, who are still unattached and looking for a marriage partner. Checca has her eye on Titta Nane and Toffolo likes Orsetta's and Lucietta's company. The young people repeatedly come together, exchange words, fight and separate, only to come together again a few scenes later. Most of the play takes place in the street, in front of the young lovers' houses, and it is made up of a series of meetings and separations, of systolic and diastolic pulsations as in Gl'innamorati, except that here we are dealing with groups of people rather than individuals. Unlike in the other comedies discussed, in Le baruffe chiozzotte, the young lovers involve the entire neighbourhood in their quarrels; sides are taken and fights and reconciliations become a group effort. Le baruffe chiozzotte is not a play concerned with individuals but with social groups, "elevati, nella loro coralità, a protagonisti, proprio in quanto rappresentativi di un atteggiamento largamente condiviso: prototipi anch'essi, ma non più di una virtù o di un vizio individuale, quanto di un insieme di atteggiamenti, scelte, modi comportamentali."69

The fighting becomes serious at the end of Act I. Knives flash as Beppo and Titta Nane threaten Toffolo for being too friendly with their girls and it takes the intervention of the women and the other men to separate the young men. The act ends on an empty stage as the families pull their menfolk into their respective houses and Toffolo leaves, vowing revenge, "Sangue de diana, che li vôi querelare" (p. 933). Goldoni here footnotes that querelare means going to the magistracy "a dar una querela contro quelli che l'hanno offeso o insultato: solita vendetta di quel popolo minuto" (p. 933). Thus, Toffolo involves the Coadiutore Criminale in the neighbourhood baruffe. The fisherfolk are none too happy
about having the authorities intervene. Vicenzo tries to convince Isidoro that their squabbles can be resolved without going to trial and he distrusts Isidoro's interest in the affairs of the fisherfolk, taking it for a rather too keen interest in their women. "Sí sí, el xe un galantomo; ma in casa mia no ghe bàzzega. Dalle mie donne nol vien a far careghetta. Sti siori dalla perucca co nualtri pescaori ni i ghe sta ben" (p. 947). Orsetta and Libera, however, handle themselves quite well when they are questioned by Isidoro, revealing a natural astuteness in face of "sti siori dalla perucca" (p. 947). They succeed in frustrating Isidoro to the point that he can stand them no longer and sends them all home; "Licenziè quelle donne, mandèle via, che le vaga via, che no vôi sentir altro" (p. 957), he tells the comandador. The reaction of Lucietta and Pasqua, the women representing the other party, is comical as they feel slighted because Isidoro is sending them away without questioning them like the others. Lucietta complains, "L'ha sentîo quelle che gh'ha premesto, e nualtre semo scoazze" (p. 957), and Pasqua threatens, "E se faremo fare giustizia" (p. 957).

Isidoro's interference, however, is necessary to help resolve the play. He realizes the young lovers' quarrels are due to the uncoupled presence of Toffolo and Checca. He first tries to match up Checca, for whom he has a penchant, with Titta Nane since he is supposed to have split up with Lucietta. But Isidoro discovers that Titta Nane still loves Lucietta and that he wants no other girl; he had only left her out of jealous anger:

Lustrissimo, mi no ghe scambio gnente, lustrissimo.
L'abbia da saere che a Lucietta, lustrissimo, xe do anni che ghe fazzo l'amore, e me son instizzao, e ho
fatto quel che ho fatto, per zelusia e per amore, e la gh'ho licenzia. Ma la gh'abbia da saere, lustrissimo, che a Lucietta che voggio ben, ghe voggio; e co un omo xe instizziao, nol sa quello ch'a se dighe. Stamattina Lucietta l'averave mazzà, e za un puoco gh'ho volesto dare martello; ma co ghe penso, mare de diana! lustrissimo, no la posso lassare; e ghe voggio ben, ghe voggio. La m'ha affrontao, la gh'ho licenzià; ma me schioppa el cuor. (pp. 968-9)

Titta Nane's words are simple but sincere and they stir us as much as, if not more than, the words of a well-born lover. It does not take Isidoro very long, however, to realize that the situation could be righted if Toffolo and Checca were coupled together. Everyone is happy with Isidoro's suggestion and without too much difficulty, Orsetta and Beppo, and Lucietta and Titta Nane make up as everyone comes out of their house to join in the young couples' happiness. In helping to straighten out the misunderstandings which prevented the young people from being happily married, Isidoro has a similar function to Frosine in *Le Dèpit amoureux*, La Suivante in *Sganarelle*, and Flammina in *Gl'innamorati*. *Le baruffe chiozzatte* ends in a joyful dance, and the whole play could be described as repeated attempts to form a dance but in each case the dance was doomed to fail because the couples were not yet complete. It was as if the young lovers lacked a caller for the dance, a position successfully filled by Isidoro for it is only through his doing that the young people can join together to everyone's satisfaction and that the dance can go on.

* * *

We have thus seen in several plays how young lovers are so involved in themselves, so carried away by their passion that they need outside help in order to marry. Add to their situation a rigid and uncompromising blocking figure who opposes their union and the young lovers'
need for help increases. "As lovers tend to be impetuous and giddy, they need cooler heads to think for them." It must also be noted that since the young lovers are "usually portrayed as well-born" and their "decorum is fairly high"—all of the young women, Agnès, Isabelle, Giannina, who had to resort to trickery were worried about the propriety of their action—"it is more fitting for social inferiors to do the dirty work of comedy," which includes such ignoble actions as lying, cheating, and stealing. Thus, servants, unburdened by decorum and emotionally detached, their wits sharpened by the daily struggle for survival, are in an ideal position to help the young lovers. Whether or not they are motivated by personal reasons, servants are usually very willing to offer their services in the cause of love, and the next chapter will deal with these wily creatures as they are portrayed in Molière's and Goldoni's comedies.


4 In his preface to Un curioso accidente, where he claims that this comedy is based on a true story, Goldoni describes Filiberto as basically "un uomo di buon fondo" who acts very imprudently in advising "un giovane a rapire la figliuola di un altro" (in Tutte le opere, Vol. 7, ed. Ortolani, p. 701). In the original story, Filiberto's action seems to Goldoni to be unrealistic and out of character; consequently, Goldoni expands upon Filiberto's motives in order to make the comedy more realistic, and correlative, to justify Filiberto (that is the implication). Goldoni thus concludes his preface by saying that "per le Commedie convien prendere i caratteri dalla natura, e gli argomenti dalla favola, piuttosto che dall'istoria" (p. 701). Fortunately, Goldoni's moralizing in the preface does not extend to the comedy. He succeeds in making the story more plausible but not in redeeming Filiberto. Whether or not Goldoni was conscious of what he was, or rather, of what he was not doing, is unimportant; the fact remains that Filiberto is as much an alazon as Sganarelle, and that Filiberto's imprudence is commendable only because he commits it with an alazon's frame of mind and not in the spirit of an eiron. Otherwise, we would have to take Filiberto's complacent moralizing as well as Giannina's artfully contrived remorse at the end as sincere, and the comedy would require a heaviness of tone which contradicts its general lightness and sprightliness.

5 Frye, p. 169.


7 Frye, p. 165.

8 Frye, p. 169.

9 Knutson, p. 69.

10 Knutson, p. 73.
Bonino sees in the trials of the young lovers in this play the bourgeoisie in crisis. In order to give this comedy "tutta la sua profondità," he says that "converebbe guardare anche alla condizione sociale dei personaggi. . .Fulgenzio ed Eugenia sono dei 'borghesi' e dei 'cittadini' che si rimirano, si sdoppiano, si fingono quelli che non sono, in un disperato e a tratti crudele delirio trasformistico, senza recepire, della vita intorno, altro che la propria immagine" (p. XLV). In support of Bonino we can mention the ridiculous figure of Fabrizio as representative of a bourgeoisie which is oscillating "pericolosamente tra la grettezza di una vita misurata col contagocce e gli sperperi di un'esistenza pretestuosamente sfarzosa" (Bonino, p. XLVI-XLVII).

Langer describes tragic Destiny in a similar way for it "is what the man brings, and the world will demand of him." To tragic Destiny or Fate, she opposes "comic Destiny [which] is fortune--what the world will bring, and the man will take or miss, encounter or escape" (p. 352).
This theory of laughter was codified later by theorists such as Baudelaire and Freud who "advanced a more comprehensive view of laughter as situated on two levels, one not directly related to moral norms" in contrast to the "castigat ridendo mores theory. . .perpetuated by Hobbes and Bergson" (Knutson, p. 17).

Loc. cit.

Loc. cit.


Bonino, Introduction, Commedie, p. XLV.

Knutson, p. 121.

Mongrédien, Notice, Le Dépit amoureux, p. 139.


Bonino, Introduction, Commedie, p. XIX. Goldoni avidly read and admired Cicognini (1606-1660), "quell'inesausto manipolatore del teatro spagnolo" (Bonino, p. XIX) who introduced this theatre to Italy in the 17th century.

Mongrédien, Notice, Sganarelle ou le Cocu imaginaire, p. 249.

Loc. cit.

Frye, p. 166.


Frye, pp. 166-7.


Hubert, p. 18.


Knutson, p. 149.


Hubert, p. 16.


Knutson, pp. 149-50.

Bénichou, p. 176. Bénichou reminds us that "il ne faut pas oublier que la bourgeoisie, au XVIIe siècle, jouissait encore d'un bien faible prestige dans la société. Les choses s'égalisent davantage au siècle suivant" (p. 175).

Bénichou, p. 173.

Bonino, Introduction, *Commedie*, p. XXII.
Molière's *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* and Goldoni's *La famiglia dell'antiquario* reveal the different class bias of our two playwrights. In Molière's comedy, the bourgeois who is trying to climb the social ladder is made fun of; he functions as an alazon and his rigid and mechanical reactions are seen as the result of his bourgeois upbringing. Monsieur Jourdain is tricked both by the young lovers and by the aristocrat, Dorante. Dorante is shown to be astute and quick like the young lovers; he is, moreover, on the side of love. On the other hand, in Goldoni's comedy, it is Pantalone, a representative of the bourgeoisie who is the most flexible and reasonable of all the characters, including the young lovers. He tries to modify the rigid and uncompromising behaviour of his daughter and her aristocratic mother-in-law in order that they may live together in some kind of harmony. In the process, Pantalone wins the respect and support of his aristocratic son-in-law who is willing to learn from him how to administer well a household, something he has not learnt from his father, Count Anselmo. In *La famiglia dell'antiquario*, it is the aristocrats who are ridiculed, in particular, Count Anselmo, whose obsession with antiques is bringing his family to ruin. The Count is tricked by his rascal servant, Brighella, into buying junk and it is only through Pantalone's intervention that the Count is undeceived.

54 Bonino, Introduction, *Commedie*, p. XLIV.

55 Bonino, Introduction, *Commedie*, p. XLVIII.


58 Lunari, pp. 20-1.

59 Lunari, p. 20.

60 Momigliano, quoted by Lunari, p. 25.

61 Lunari, p. 13.


63 Goldoni, Preface to *Le Baruffe chiozzotte*, p. 906.
Isidoro is willing to furnish Checca with a dowry. Although Isidoro's interest in Checca could be considered suspect—the fishermen are certainly suspicious of Isidoro—it was not an unusual practice in Goldoni's time for a rich man with honourable intentions to have compassion on a poor girl and to offer her his protection and a dowry. We find this same situation in Goldoni's *La putta onorata*.

When they become themselves involved emotionally, the servants lose some of their astuteness: Scapin in *Les fourberies de Scapin*, fearful of being beaten, confesses to past thefts; Truffaldino, in *Il servitore di due padroni*, concerned that he may not get to marry Smeraldina, exposes his alibi; Corallina in *La castalda*, upset by Beatrice's interest in Pantalone, reveals more than she should about her own intentions regarding her master, not to mention Valère, the lover disguised as servant in *L'Avare*. When Harpagon accuses him of having stolen his treasure, Valère, assuming that Harpagon means his daughter, loses his sang-froid, and tells all about his involvement with Elise.
Both Molière and Goldoni wrote comedies where the trickster, the architectus, is a servant figure. Molière's L'Etourdi, Les Fourberies de Scapin, Le Malade imaginaire, and L'Amour médecin and Goldoni's Il servitore di due padroni, La castalda, and La cameriera brillante fit the traditional comic plot; they all demonstrate the eiron-alazon polarity with the servant figures joining forces with the young people against the blocking characters. Molière's servants seem to act altruistically; they may complain about their situation as servants but they neither seek nor expect any personal gain for their efforts. Goldoni's servant figures, on the other hand, are actively working not only for the young lovers' happiness but also for their own. They let us know that they have their own needs to consider, that if they do not look after themselves, no one else will. There is a certain humanizing of Goldoni's servant figures which seems to prepare the way for his later comedies where the characters are drawn entirely from the classe popolana. Yet,
trickery as a means to survival, to improving one's lot in life is not altogether alien to Molière's servant figures, for it is a tradition which dates back to Latin comedies where the young master promises freedom to his astute slave in exchange for his help.¹

Molière's *L'Etourdi* and *Les Fourberies de Scapin* demarcate his writing career. *L'Etourdi*, written in 1655 is his first full length comedy and the three-act *Fourberies de Scapin*, from 1671, is one of his last. The characters in these two plays are highly stylized, based on the types from the commedia dell'arte: the scheming valet, the miserly and tyrannical fathers, the young lovers. The respective characters in either comedy are almost carbon copies of each other; Lélie in *L'Etourdi* is indistinguishable from Léandre and Octave in *Les Fourberies de Scapin* and the same can be said for the young women and the father figures. In neither comedy do we find "[un] souci de psychologique ou [une] peinture de moeurs,"² which characterize for example Molière's *Tartuffe*, *Dom Juan*, and *Le Misanthrope*. Whereas *L'Etourdi* is one of Molière's first attempts "de se libérer du cadre trop étroit de la farce,"³ a stepping stone in the direction of *la grande comédie*, *Les Fourberies de Scapin* represents a return to farce. This comedy, "réglée comme un mouvement d'horlogerie de haute précision,"⁴ is a lasting homage to the virtuosity of the commedia dell'arte, whose death Molière paradoxically helped to bring about with the creation of his great comedies of manner and character. *Il servitore di due padroni* was first written in 1745 as a scenario for a commedia dell'arte troupe. Goldoni rewrote it into a full length comedy in 1753. Although Goldoni was fascinated by the theatrical mechanics which the commedia dell'arte so skillfully set into motion and which Molière epito-
mized in *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, there was much in the commedia dell'arte which Goldoni disliked; in particular, "lo infastidiva la monotonia esasperante dei tipi, codificati in ruoli con relativa maschera, incapace non solo di esprimere la costante mutevolezza degli stati d'animo, ma di suggerire... una plausibile caratterizzazione dell'individuo, collegandolo ad un qualche status sociale, ad un ambiente, ad un'epoca."\(^5\)

Although it has been said that *Il servitore di due padroni* "constitutes the crowning glory of the commedia dell'arte,"\(^6\) it contains "the seed of something new rather than of something merely 'reexpressed.'\(^7\)

The characters in this play are taken directly from the commedia dell'arte: we find Pantalone de' Bisognosi and Dottore Lombardi, the wily valet from Bergamo, the young lovers, but they are not the uniform characters of the two Molière comedies. The young lovers and the father figures are, if not as well-rounded as Truffaldino, endowed with an individual personality. Dottore Lombardi is a reasonable man, somewhat more sensitive to the young people's desires whereas Pantalone is ruled by his greed. Silvio is immature and spoiled; Clarice is sulky but loyal; Florindo seems brighter and more mature than Silvio but he can be arrogant and hot-headed; Beatrice is brave and clever, and although she can be compassionate, she is not above amusing herself at the others' expense. We thus perceive already in *Il servitore di due padroni*, which was originally destined for the commedia dell'arte, Goldoni's desire to write "commedie de carattere."\(^8\)

Aware, however, of the public's as well as the theatrical troupes' attachment to the types of the commedia dell'arte, Goldoni was not willing to abolish them immediately, but proceeded slowly to change them; "svuotando man mano le maschere dei loro tradizionali attribuiti, le..."
trasformerà in personaggi." We see the undergoing of this evolution in *Il servitore di due padroni*.

In the three comedies, the plots are similar in that there are two sets of young people who want to marry but are blocked from doing so by alazon figures. It is, however, the servant figure who commands our attention in all three plays. The three of them, Mascarille, Scapin, and Truffaldino, are virtuosos in the art of *fourberie*, stars worthy of top billing among the many scheming servants and slaves who have graced western comedies since classical times. Mascarille and Scapin, like Truffaldino, essentially serve two masters, and if Corbolo in Ariosto's *La Lena* defies Plautus and Terence for their characterizations of wily servants when he says

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Deh, se ben io non son Davo né Sosia,  
Se ben non nacqui fra i Geti né in Siria,  
Non ho in questa testaccia anch'io malizia?  

Ma che farò, che con un vecchio credulo  
Non ho a far, qual a suo modo Terenzio  
O Plauto suol Cremete o Simon fingere?  
Ma quanto egli è più cauto, maggior gloria  
Non è la mia, s'io lo piglio alla trappola?,
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Mascarille, Scapin, and Truffaldino could in turn challenge Corbolo. They must be even more ingenious than him for they have twice as many masters to outwit. Scapin serves two masters when he agrees to help Octave, Léandre's best friend, and also Léandre marry who they wish, and he thus has two blocking fathers to deal with. Mascarille, in helping Lélie win Célie, not only has to trick Lélie's father but also Léandre, Lélie's rival, and Trufaldin, the slave master who owns Célie; in fact, at two different points in the comedy, Mascarille actually pretends to serve, first Léandre, and later Trufaldin. He also promises to help Hippolyte marry Léandre.
though he does nothing in the comedy to directly aid her which is not a consequence of his helping Lélie. Mascarille and Scapin, unlike Truffaldino, are the servants of two masters in another sense. Mascarille as well as Scapin is employed by the father to be the personal servant of his son with the understanding that he is to help the young man in any way he can and at the same time to keep him out of trouble. Impossible feat! Rarely is the servant in such a position going to be able to satisfy both young and old master at the same time. Thus, in helping the young man to marry contrary to parental wishes, the servant is in a sense still serving the older master even when he is not. Mascarille and Scapin, in helping their young master, must inevitably trick the father. From the perspective of the young man, they are ideal servants, loyal and obliging beyond the call of duty; from that of the father's, they represent the most atrocious example of servants who will lie and steal to attain their ends.

By the end of the second scene of L'Etourdi, the eirons and alazons are aligned. The eiron figures identify themselves as Lélie begs Mascarille to help him win Célie, "cherche dans ta tête/Les moyens les plus prompts d'en faire ma conquête;/Trouve ruses, détours, fourbes, inventions,/Pour frustrer un rival de ses prétentions" (vv. 71-4), and after a few entreaties, Mascarille accepts. We learn who the alazons are when Lélie and Mascarille let us know that they must contend not only with Lélie's father who is miserly as well as hot-tempered but also with an adroit rival and a suspicious slave owner. Although Léandre is young and in love, he is listed with the alazons because he represents a resistance to Lélie's happiness. Léandre is not, however, a serious
threat to the happy denouement of the play because before the end of the first act, we also learn of Hippolyte's love for Léandre. Because we are in the world of comedy, she is bound to win him; and it is inevitable that Léandre will change his mind later on in the play and agree to marry her. In terms of the eiron-alazon alignment, it is a very similar situation in Les Fourberies de Scapin. In the first two scenes, we find out from Octave that he loves Hyacinte and that Léandre loves Zerbinette, and that Octave is in particular trouble for he has married Hyacinthe during his father's absence, knowing that his father had already arranged another marriage for him. In I, 2, Octave implores Scapin, Léandre's valet for his aid, "Ah! Scapin, si tu pouvais trouver quelque invention, forger quelque machine, pour me tirer de la peine où je suis, je croirais t'être redevable de plus que de la vie" (p. 225), and although Scapin hesitates to accept until the next scene, we know that Scapin is going to help Octave and, if he too were to need it, Léandre as well. If we are not already familiar with traditional comic plots, the title itself gives it away. It is obvious that Argante is going to be an alazon figure for Octave is in great fear of his father's anger. We understand his fear later in Act I when we learn that Argante is ready to disinherit his son if he does not agree to have the marriage annulled. We also expect Géronte, Léandre's father, to be a blocking character for from the beginning, Géronte and Argante are associated together. It is after all Géronte's daughter who is to marry Octave. In II, 2, Octave says, "Mon père, arrive avec le seigneur Géronte, et ils me veulent marier" [my italics] (p. 224); Géronte does not promise to be any more understanding than Argante. In fact, he will later surpass Argante in rigidity and
resistence. He blames Octave's secret marriage on Argante for not having been strict enough in his son's education; he is avaricious to the point of hesitating to give Scapin the necessary money to ransom his son from the Turks. There is no question here that he suspects Scapin of tricking him. And he reveals a streak of cruelty when he suggests sacrificing Scapin to the Turks in return for his son. Whether or not Géronte is serious, it is a proposition which Scapin does not appreciate at all. By the end of the second scene, as in L'Étourdi, the eiron-alazon contest is in place. Octave and Hyacinte, Léandre and Zerbinette, with the help of Scapin must resist Argante and Géronte. Although we do not meet Léandre until the next act, there are indications in the first two scenes of the play that he is one of the eirons: he, too, is in love, and if his father promises to be an alazon, it is inevitable that Léandre will have to oppose him; this fact alone identifies him as an eiron. When, at the end of Act I, Sylvestre, Octave's valet, throws in his lot to help the young people, the eiron-alazon polarization is complete. In these two comedies, those who are on the side of love and those who are against love represent the flexibility-rigidity contest. It is still symbolized as a contest between the younger generation and the older one because, biologically, the young are more flexible in mind and body than the aged. Although the valets are not necessarily young—Mascarille might be for he, too, desires a girl at the end of the play—they are on the side of youth, of love, of the life force. They believe in the freer and happier world which the young people seem to promise. Mascarille assures Lélie that he is "d'avis, que ces penards chagrins/. . . viennent. . . /Oter aux jeunes gens les plaisirs de la vie" (vv. 61-64). Scapin says to Octave, "je suis
homme consolatif, homme à m'intéresser aux affaires des jeunes gens" (p. 225). Although Mascarille and Scapin both hesitate at first to offer their genius to the service of love, they do so only "pour... sonder l'esprit" (Etourdi, v. 54) of the lovers. They are both compassionate men: Mascarille says, "il est certain/Qu'on ne peut me taxer que d'être trop humain" (vv. 57-8), and Scapin, "Il faut se laisser vaincre, et avoir de l'humanité" (p. 229). Compassion is related to flexibility for in order to be compassionate, one must be capable of being moved, something the blocking characters, with their unyielding and uncompromising ways, can never be.

Mascarille and Scapin are the architects of the comic action for once they have agreed to aid their young master, a decision which is made, as we have seen, in the first scenes of the play, they set the comedy into motion with their machinations. The comedy develops as the ideas churning in their fertile minds take form. The structure of L'Etourdi is a series of small stratagems, nine in all, and the first one takes shape while Mascarille muses, "Laissez-moi quelque temps rêver à cette affaire./Que pourrais-je inventer pour ce coup nécessaire?" (vv. 76-6). But each time Mascarille sets up a ploy, it must be abandoned and a new one invented due to Lélie's bungling. Les Fourberies de Scapin is organized around three stratagems, one in favour of each of the two sets of lovers and the third, to satisfy Scapin's desire for revenge. Like the Molière comedies, Il servitore di due padroni is concerned with the love stories of two couples. The play opens with the happy event of Silvio's and Clarice's engagement which is soon disrupted by the appearance of Beatrice disguised as her brother, Federigo, who until then, had been
supposed dead. Beatrice's stratagem brings into being the traditional eiron-alazon contest for Pantalone choses to honour the old marriage contract he had initially arranged with Federigo rather than the new one with Silvio. Deaf to his daughter's pleas, he prefers Federigo to Silvio only because he is the richer of the two. By the end of the third scene, the eirons and alazons are aligned: Clarice refuses to marry the person who she thinks is Federigo; Silvio vows revenge; Dottore Lombardi demands justice. The eirons seem united against Pantalone and Beatrice disguised as Federigo. We thus have here more or less the younger generation against the older one. However, the eiron-alazon polarization is not so clear cut. As we find out in the next scene, Beatrice is only pretending to be on Pantalone's side, for although the main alazon figure in Beatrice's and Florindo's story has been removed prior to the comedy with the death of Beatrice's brother, Pantalone would be a major blocking character to Beatrice's plans if he were to find out that she was Federigo's sister. She explains this in I, 5 to Brighella who recognizes her, "Se mi scopro, non faccio nulla. Pantalone principierà a volermi far da tutore; e tutti mi seccheranno, che non istà bene, che non conviene, e che so io? Voglio la mia libertà." Dottore Lombardi, although he is trying to help Silvio and Clarice, and says to Pantalone that "le ragazze non bisogna sacrificarle" (p. 40) does not in the end approve Beatrice's escapade: "Tropppe spirito, padrona mia," "Bella reputazione" (p. 85), he admonishes her. Also, Silvio comes near to being an alazon figure himself when blinded by his jealous passion, he refuses to trust Clarice and drives her almost to despair.
In *Il servitore di due padroni*, as in the two Molière comedies, the predicaments of the two couples are in the same plane; they generate deceptions which work together like two gears that mesh where the motion of one causes the other to move. From the beginning of the comedy, Beatrice's deception puts her story into play with that of Clarice and Silvio, and the resolution of the one becomes dependent on the other. When Clarice, sworn to secrecy, is told of Beatrice's ploy, she realizes that she cannot advance her cause without aiding Beatrice's. Likewise in *L'Etourdi*. In helping Lélie win Célie, Mascarille cannot but help Hippolyte win Léandre. Scapin, in tricking Argante and Géronte, plays one story against the other. He calms down Argante, angered at the news of his son's marriage, by hinting that Géronte's son has done something much worse; later, he tells Géronte that the 'brother' of the girl Octave married, the same 'brother' who wanted to beat up Argante for not approving his sister's marriage, now wants to beat up Géronte for supporting the annulment of this marriage.

*Il servitore di due padroni*, however, has a more complicated structure than *L'Etourdi* or *Les Fourberies de Scapin* for it contains another stratagem which operates at another level and which is set into motion by Truffaldino. We thus have a deception within a deception and each deception brings a different type of eiron-alazon contest into being. Truffaldino's story, which is in a sense also a love story, occurs in a totally different plane from the other two love stories. Like two separate gears that never mesh with each other, each story is a little comedy in itself. Goldoni, in his preface to the play, says, "se escludere vogliamo la supposta vicendevole morte de' due amanti, creduti per opera
di questo Servo, la Commedia si potrebbe fare senza di lui." In this sense, Truffaldino recalls Mascarille for, just as in the end Lelie gets the girl in spite of Mascarille's plotting or Lelie's bungling, Florindo and Beatrice, Silvio and Clarice get together without Truffaldino's help. Goldoni was in all likelihood thinking of L'Etourdi in particular when he defends Il servitore di due padroni by saying that there were "infiniti esempi" of comedies which preceded his and which, he explains, "io non adduco per non empiere soverchiamente i fogli. . .per altro il celebre Molière istesso mi servirebbe di scorta a giustificarmi." Scapin, on the other hand, successfully carries his stratagems to completion and it is because of his efforts that the young people are united at the end. Although the final recognition scene is purely conventional, it would not have been a happy one if Leandre had not bought Zerbinette—with the money Scapin cozened out of Geronte—in time from the Egyptians.

Mascarille and Scapin, in serving their young masters, serve the cause of love. Truffaldino, however, is in a different situation. He aspires to serve two masters without either knowing about the other, but while he is serving the one master, he is not only deceiving the other, he is also frustrating the cause of love. Unknown to Truffaldino, besides the fact that one of his masters is a woman, is that they are lovers and desperately looking for each other. Truffaldino's deceptions do nothing to bring them together; he actually drives them to the brink of disaster by leading each of them to believe that the other is dead. Despairing, they both try to commit suicide and are saved only by the fact that they coincidentally bump into each other. But Truffaldino is not a blocking character; he is antagonistic to the cause of Beatrice's and Florindo's
love only through ignorance. A case can be made, perhaps, that the effect of Truffaldino trying to serve Beatrice and Florindo simultaneously is to keep them together for he can successfully serve both of them only if they are in close proximity of each other. Thus, as long as Truffaldino aspires to serve both of them, their reunion is inevitable. If Truffaldino is superfluous to the play, as Goldoni says, he is so only to the 'comedy' of the four well-born lovers and only in that he does nothing positive to bring them together. He is, however, operative in keeping Florindo and Beatrice apart, and it is by trying to keep them separate that he weaves his deceptions and thus makes his own 'comedy'. Until the end of the play, Truffaldino is oblivious to Florindo's and Beatrice's love problems. There are several instances in the comedy, for example, the mixing of the letters and of Beatrice's portrait with Florindo's book, when Truffaldino should have realized immediately that his two masters were very much interested in seeing each other. But Truffaldino has other concerns to preoccupy him, mainly looking after himself. He is carried away by this novel idea of his to serve two masters at the same time and once his deception is set into motion, he is predisposed to think only in terms of keeping the two masters ignorant of each other; his mind shuts out all thoughts of seeing them together. Without knowing it, Truffaldino holds the key to a quick resolution of Beatrice's and Florindo's problems and consequently of Clarice's and Silvio's, and indeed, of the play. Truffaldino is thus the architect of the comic action; he is the main trickster figure of the play for Beatrice's stratagem is dependent on his. She cannot reveal herself until she finds Florindo and it is Truffaldino's ploys to keep the one master unaware of the other that keeps them
separate. Moreover, Beatrice's stratagem consists essentially of maintaining her disguise whereas Truffaldino must come up with several ploys to keep either master deceived.

Truffaldino is like Scapin in that he bounces one deception off another; the fictitious Pasquale who Truffaldino invents in order to get him out of one tight situation comes in handy in a later difficult moment. He is, however, more like a blending of Mascarille and Lélie for in the same way that Lélie foils each of Mascarille's stratagems, Truffaldino is often the snag in his own. All of the ploys which Truffaldino devises result from the implantation of his original deception of serving two masters at the same time and many of these ploys are necessary because he forgets about his original deception. Truffaldino goes to the post office thrilled to be going once for both masters but he trips himself up. Not knowing how to read, he stupidly confuses which letter belongs to which master and gives Florindo Beatrice's letter. In another moment of inadvertence, when Pantalone comes to him with Beatrice's money, he neglects to find out for which master it is intended. In unpacking Beatrice's and Florindo's trunks simultaneously, he foolishly mixes up some of their articles. But all of his deceptions function in the same way: Truffaldino finds himself backed into a corner where he must either divulge that he has two masters or invent a story in order not to give away the fact that he is serving another. Truffaldino, of course, chooses the latter. It is obvious that if either Florindo or Beatrice were to find out that Truffaldino is serving someone else, they would seek the other master out and consequently discover each other.
Like Mascarille and Scapin, Truffaldino can be said to be on the side of love, but he is looking after his own need for love just as he is looking after all his basic needs. Through his deceptions, Truffaldino advances his own cause while undermining his masters'; in order to better his condition, he must necessarily frustrate his masters' needs. Mascarille and Scapin are different in that they serve the cause of love by serving their young masters. At the level of Truffaldino's deceptions, he is a lone eiron figure who perceives all the other characters, with the exception of Smeraldina, as alazons, blocking his way to a better life. Beatrice acts with rigidity when she is slow in paying Truffaldino, especially since she is pleased with his work. Truffaldino would never have agreed to serve Florindo if she had been sensitive to his needs. If Truffaldino decides to serve two masters, it is because he is well aware that a servant's position is never secure nor are his wages guaranteed. Thus, the eiron-alazon contest that Truffaldino's deception brings into being is no longer the clash between generations but between classes. The eiron-alazon contest which we find in traditional comedy is in Il servitore di due padroni split into two separate eiron-alazon contests: the young versus the old and servants versus masters. Smeraldina is the link between the two deceptions, the two contests, for she is willing to help her mistress in the pursuit of love but she is also ready to enter into alliance with Truffaldino. Common to all the eiron figures at the level of either deception, however, is that in one way or another, they are all on the side of love.

Mascarille and Scapin are also different from Truffaldino in that they are from the beginning conscious of themselves as tricksters.
Il servitore di due padroni is, on the other hand, about the awakening consciousness of Truffaldino as trickster. In their respective comedies, the past escapades of Mascarille and Scapin are common knowledge and a matter of admiration for their young masters; it is they who approach their valets for help. Lélie praises Mascarille, "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" (vv. 14-7). Léandre begs Scapin, "je te prie de vouloir employer pour moi ce génie admirable, qui vient à bout de toute chose" (p. 241). And Octave speaks of "[le] secours merveilleux" (p. 229) which Scapin can give him. Both Mascarille and Scapin are proud of their art: Scapin boasts of having "un génie assez beau pour toutes les fabriques de ces gentillesses d'esprit, de ces galanteries ingénieuses à qui le vulgaire ignorant donne le nom de fourberies" (p. 225); Mascarille, in one of his many moments of exasperation, worries about his public image, thereby revealing his opinion of himself, "Et que deviendra lors cette publique estime/Quoi te vante partout pour un fourbe sublime,/Et que tu t'es acquise en tant d'occasions,/A ne t'être jamais vu court d'inventions?" (vv. 911-4). Both speak of the nobility of their enterprises; they are not common tricksters but creators of "gentillesses d'esprit," "galanteries ingénieuses" (Fourberies, p. 225), "intrigues fertile[s]" (Etourdi, v. 15); theirs is "un noble métier" (Fourberies, p. 225), "un noble travail" (Etourdi, v. 916). Neither Mascarille nor Scapin is involved in his young master's problems for profit or reward; they offer their services freely, for honour and glory only. It is interesting to note that both Mascarille and Scapin are deeply offended when their plotting is rendered suspect by
one of the young people. When Hippolyte calls Mascarille a traitor because she has misinterpreted what she has overheard, Mascarille retorts, "Me traiter de faquin, de lâche, d'imposteur" (v. 398) and when Léandre accuses Scapin of betraying him to his father, Scapin responds almost word for word like Mascarille, "Me traiter de coquin, de fripon, de pendard, d'infâme!" (p. 241). It is their honour that has been hurt; it is as if they have suffered a personal insult. When the disbelievers try to apologize, Mascarille says, "Apprenez qu'il n'est rien qui blesse un noble coeur/Comme quand il peut voir qu'on touche en l'honneur" (vv. 413–4) and Scapin lets them know, "J'ai cette insulte-là sur le coeur" (p. 241). In boasting that they fear no challenge, they parody tragic heroes. According to Mascarille's Corneille-like maxim, "Plus l'obstacle est puissant, plus on reçoit de gloire" (v. 1864) and for Scapin, "les difficultés qui se mêlent aux choses réveillent les ardeurs, augmentent les plaisir" (p. 254). We are amused by the discrepancy between their words and their feats: these valets are using the language of tragedy to describe their skill in trickery. On this subject, Knutson says that there is a contradictory attitude in Scapin "whose goal is aristocratic self-surpassing, but whose means are the base ones of his class, deceit and trickery," and Hubert, that malignant fate becomes in L'Etourdi "a persistent mockery of tragedy itself as well as a consistent devaluation of the heroic."

Unlike Mascarille and Scapin who have been with their respective masters for a long time and are almost considered family members, Truffaldino has only shortly been hired by Beatrice when the play opens. Truffaldino's loyalty to his master depends on how well he is treated. In I, 6, while waiting for Beatrice, a hungry Truffaldino complains about
being in her service: "Mezzozorno della città l'è sonà che è mezz'ora, e el mezzozorno delle mie budelle l'è sonà che sarà do ore. .. Quand ch'i dis, bisogna servir i padroni con amor! Bisogna dir ai padroni, ch'i abbia un poco de carità per la servitù" (p. 19). He decides to serve Florindo shortly afterwards only because he is hungry and without a cent. But he accepts Florindo's employment thinking that he has seen the last of Beatrice. When he later chances upon her and she, naturally, sends him on an errand, he is totally bewildered, "Mi no so quala far. Son l'omo più imbroia de sto mondo" (p. 23). Thus, he originally serves two masters unintentionally, and he is at first very confused about how to get out of his predicament. Most likely, he is worried about possible beatings from either or both masters. Left alone, he considers his situation: "Come diavol oia da far? Tutti do no li posso servir" (p. 23). Realizing however that chance has favoured him by having both masters lodge in the same inn, he thinks it over and comes to the conclusion that he has more to gain than to lose and decides to go along with the deception which he unconsciously set into motion:

No? E perché no? No la saría una bella cossa servirli tutti do, e guadagnar do salari, e magnar el doppio? La saría bella, se no i se ne accorzesse. E se i se ne accorze, cossa perdi? Gnente. Se uno me manda via, resto con quell'altro. Da galantomo, che me voi provar. Se la durasse anca un dì solo, me vòi provar. Alla fin averò sempre fatto una bella cossa. (p. 23)

In this monologue, Truffaldino already resembles his French predecessors in that he considers his project "una bella cossa" and he thinks of his trickery as something to be proud of, an honourable and noble enterprise, for "da galantomo" he wants to try. Truffaldino ends his monologue by saying, "Animo; andemo alla Posta per tutti do" (p. 24), and this line
humourously shows Truffaldino's resolution to succeed in his deception as he speaks of himself in the plural, as if he really were two servants.

Once the original deception of serving two masters is set into motion, Truffaldino encounters unexpected situations where he finds himself having to think up stories at a moment's notice in order not to give himself away. Truffaldino learns the art of fourberie through trial and error. He is never sure that his strategies will succeed until after he has tried them out. Truffaldino recalls Sganarelle in Le Médecin malgré lui whose "rudimentary common sense, more self-protection than anything else, turns into a kind of basic shrewdness and awareness" during the course of the play; like Le Médecin malgré lui, Il servitore di due padroni is essentially about the apprenticeship of a trickster. Before Truffaldino fabricates one of his stories, he wonders if it will work. When he encounters his first difficulty and must explain to Florindo how he got Beatrice's letter, he says in an aside, "Me vado inzegnando alla meio" (p. 28). Regarding his explanation about the letter mix-up, he is a bit apprehensive, "Se la porto fora netta, l'è un miracolo" (p. 28). While he is serving both masters at table simultaneously, he hopes, "Oh se me riuscisse... mo la saria la gran bella cossa" (p. 55). When he has to explain to Florindo how Beatrice's portrait got into his trunk, he worries, "Adesso mo no so come covrirla. Me inzegnerò" (p. 67). It is interesting to trace Truffaldino's different states of mind and his development as a trickster as he tells Florindo how this portrait got into his trunk. Truffaldino invents the story of an alleged former master, but at first he has no control; leaving it up to chance, he says, "Digo quel che me vien alla bocca" (p. 68). He gains in confidence as Florindo accepts his story and decides to be more creative, "Col crede tutto, ghe ne racconterò
delle belle" (p. 68). But Florindo's nagging questions soon become a nuisance and in order to put an end to the story, Truffaldino kills off this former master. He is, of course, expecting that this bit of news will kill off Florindo's interest as well, but to Truffaldino's discomfiture, it has the opposite effect. Truffaldino is compelled to continue his narration. He is temporarily baffled; "Un altro imbroio" (p. 69), he says, but he has the situation well under control now and brings his story to its close with the return of his former master's body to Torino. By having him buried elsewhere, Truffaldino has astutely foreseen that Florindo might want to visit the burial place and thus eliminates this possibility.

As the play progresses, Truffaldino gains in confidence and skill. He is delighted each time that he gets out of a tight situation and becomes more and more proud of his efforts, and like Mascarille and Scapin, he begins to boast of his genius. After he extricates himself from the letter mix-up, he says, very proudly, "Mo l'è andada ben, che no la podeva andar meio. Son un omo de garbo; me stimo cento scudi de più de quel che no me stimava" (p. 32). And when he is successful at serving both masters at table, he cheers himself, "evviva, l'ho superada, tutti i è contenti, no i vol alter, i è stadi servidi. Ho servido a tavola do padroni, e un non ha savudo dell'altro" (pp. 57-8). After his tour de force, when he has his masters believing that Pasquale is the rascally servant of the other, he challenges "el primo sollicitador de Palazzo" "a invenzion, a prontezza, a cabale" (p. 80).

Truffaldino alternates between astuteness and stupidity because he is still only a trickster in training. But when Truffaldino is astute,
he is even more resourceful than Mascarille or Scapin for whereas they know their masters and their particular quirks and vices, Truffaldino has only just met his superiors. Moreover, Truffaldino never has time to plan any of his ploys; he has to make up stories on the spot, never sure of their success until after he has told them. In this, he is again like Sganarelle in Le Médecin malgré lui. Mascarille and Scapin, on the contrary, are already accomplished artists; they conceive of everything in their minds before they put it into practice. Before each stratagem, Mascarille lets us know that he has something up his sleeve by saying such things as: "Que pourrais-je inventer pour ce coup nécessaire?" (v. 76), "Menons bien ce projet; la fourbe sera fine,/S'il faut qu'elle succède ainsi que j'imagine" (vv. 291-2), "Je roule en ma tête un trait ingénieux/Dont je promettrais bien un succès glorieux" (vv. 933-4). Scapin assures Silvestre that "la machine est trouvée" (p. 235), and when after having just tricked Argante, Scapin perceives Géronte, he says to himself, "Il semble que le Ciel, l'un après l'autre, les amène dans mes filets" (p. 248). They have everything under control and are certain of success. Mascarille has all sorts of blocking characters who trust him when he is in reality tricking them and who are even ready to pay him for false services. Scapin has Argante and Géronte actually begging him to do what he has tricked them into believing they need done: Argante must insist that Scapin take his money; Géronte pleads with Scapin to save him from Hyacinte's 'brother'. "Parbleu, Monsieur, je suis un fourbe, ou je suis honnête homme" (p. 248), Scapin has the wonderful audacity to say to Argante when he hesitates at first to give Scapin the money.

In instructing the others on how to deceive, Mascarille and Scapin use words from the theatre and sound like they are directing a comedy rather than attempting a deception. We are reminded of Ligurio, the trickster in Machiavelli's La mandragola, another famous "personaggio-regista" who holds "le redini della situazione e riesce sempre a far muovere e far parlare i vari personaggi a suo piacimento." Here again we see the connection between the deception and the play: acting is in a very real sense, pretending, dissimulating; theatre is an illusion, and comedy, to quote Corneille's title, is "l'illusion comique."

Like Mascarille and Scapin, Truffaldino is successful in his project—were it not for Lélie's untimely interferences, each of Mascarille's stratagems would have accomplished what he intended it to. Truffaldino keeps his masters in the dark and gets a wonderful meal in the process, although he does pay for it with a few beatings. But Truffaldino is the only one of the three valets who is not discovered in his deceptions. It is, moreover, inevitable, that the deceptions of Mascarille and Scapin
would be discovered for the father figures would sooner or later have to learn that their sons have married against their wishes with the aid of their valets. In the end Truffaldino weaves his most elaborate deception with the story of Pasquale, telling each master the story separately so each master believes Pasquale to be the servant of the other. Truffaldino has the right to feel proud of this final deception. It truly represents the culmination of his apprenticeship as trickster. It is worth noting that this is the one stratagem where he has had some time to prepare for it, and consequently, he does not preface it with worries about whether or not it will work. Once Beatrice and Florindo have discovered each other and are to be married, Truffaldino, at least for the near future, is safe; indeed, his masters do not find out that he was serving the other until he decides to confess it because he wants to marry Smeraldina. Contrary to the usual practice of eirons, Truffaldino must at this point, undeceive in order to win his love.

Not only are Mascarille and Scapin helping the young people beyond the call of duty but they are also putting themselves in a precarious position for they will ultimately be held responsible to their employer for their escapades. When Mascarille tells Lélie that he must calm his father who is enraged by Mascarille's latest deception at his expense, Lélie answers, "Nous avons fait la paix" (p. 102). But not with me, Mascarille informs him, and he has Lélie promise that he will support him against his father's wrath for Mascarille fears nothing less than imprisonment. Scapin, not content to have successfully united the young lovers insists on carrying out a little vengeance on Géronte, but even though he has first asked Léandre's permission, he cannot count on his protection.
Silvestre warns Scapin, "Prends garde à toi; les fils se pourraient bien raccommoder les pères, et toi demeurer dans la nasse" (p. 264). Although Mascarille and Scapin are unconditionally on the side of the love and the young people, there is no guarantee that their young masters will be able or willing to stand up for them and save them from a beating or a worse punishment. This element of danger in Mascarille's and Scapin's tricking of their masters reveals the unsecure world of servants at the time of Molière. Regarding the status of servants in seventeenth century France, Gaines notes that "low-ranking servants were completely at the mercy of their masters and mistresses. An infraction or misbehavior could result in a beating with fists or sticks, although, fortunately, it was considered ignoble to draw swords against a mere servant. While there are examples of upstart servants going unpunished, there are also incidents of servants being crippled, or even killed."\(^\text{19}\) It is very obvious in Il servitore di due padroni that a servant's lot was not a very pleasant one. Truffaldino often mentions that he is hungry. Particularly funny as well as poignant is the scene where Truffaldino must sacrifice his last bit of bread in order to seal the letter addressed to Beatrice that Florindo opened, but he keeps swallowing out of hunger the small pieces of bread which he must chew in order to make sticky. We know that he accepts employment from Florindo because he is famished and that he decides to serve two masters because he hopes to get twice as much money and twice as much food. We also witness with Truffaldino the mistreatment of the porters by both Florindo and Beatrice. Truffaldino himself fears beatings and he is twice beaten on the stage, once by each master. The acting out of beatings were de rigueur in commedia dell'arte performances but they were always
farcical; we see their continuation in slapstick. But in *Il servitore di due padroni*, the beatings that Truffaldino suffers seem to hurt. Before he is beaten, the play directions indicate that Truffaldino shows fear and trembles; afterwards, he complains "Cussì se tratta coi omeni della me sorte? Bastonar un par mio? I servitori, co no i serve, i se manda via, no i se bastona" (p. 64). In the Molière plays, however, it is the servants who give their masters a beating, and we have another example of the comic reversal wherein the servants demonstrate their superiority through trickery. Mascarille strikes Lélie supposedly to keep Truffaldin deceived about Mascarille's loyalty but Mascarille is not merely pretending to beat Lélie for Lélie says, "Tu devais donc, pour toi, frapper plus doucement" (v. 1617). Mascarille seems to be enjoying himself a little too much; he is evidently releasing some of his frustrations against Lélie's constant bungling. Scapin gives Géronte a sound beating in order to revenge the enormous indignity be suffered when Géronte was prepared, rather than pay the ransom money, to exchange Scapin's freedom for his son's. Although it is not as evident as in *Il servitore di due padroni*, there are indications in the Molière plays that a servant was often mistreated and that his life could be harsh. Mascarille at the beginning of the comedy, comments on how fickle his young master is, "Hé! trève de douceurs./Quand nous faisons besoins, nous autres misérables,/nous sommes les chérîs et les incomparables;/Et dans un autre temps, dès le moindre courrous,/Nous sommes les coquins, qu'il faut rouer de coups" (vv. 18-22). Although Lélie denies this, we see in *Les Fourberies de Scapin* that this is the very way that Léandre acts. One moment he is ready to beat Scapin and the next, he is entreating him for help. Scapin is afraid of being beaten by Léandre
and rather than endure his blows, confesses to past misdeeds. It is therefore likely that if a servant is reknowned as "le roi des serviteurs" (Etourdi, v. 17) or for "un génie admirable" (Fourberies, p. 241) with regard to trickery, he will use this skill against his masters for his own needs. It is apparent that Scapin, at least, does this all the time. He informs us at the beginning of the comedy of having become embroiled with "la justice" (p. 225) because of his fourberies. When Léandre accuses him of betraying him, Scapin lets out not only that he tricked Léandre out of some precious wine and a watch but that he has also given him a beating in the dark.

There is imbedded in the Molière comedies the other eiron-alazon contest explicit in Il servitore di due padroni where all the masters, young or old, are perceived as alazon figures. In both the Molière comedies as in Il servitore di due padroni there are indications that a servant's trickery was not necessarily restricted to helping the cause of young love; thus, not only "older members of almost any society are apt to feel" as Frye says, "that comedy has something subversive about it" but any person in a position of social prestige. In real life it is another matter, but in comedy, trickery is idealized. As Beaumarchais explains in his preface to Le Mariage de Figaro, "on...pardonne tout [à Figaro] dès qu'on sait qu'il ne ruse avec son seigneur que pour garantir ce qu'il aime et sauver sa propriété." Trickery makes it possible for young people to fulfill their desires in a world where others have the power to decide their happiness and for servants to survive in a world where blows and hunger can occur at the whim of another.

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The formulating and running of the machinations in *L'Étourdi* and in *Les Fourberies de Scapin* are totally in the hands of male tricksters; in *Il servitore di due padroni*, however, not only do we have Beatrice, whose stratagem frames part of the play, but also Smeraldina, a female servant figure, who, although she is not involved in either Beatrice's or Truffaldino's deception, reveals herself to be sly and very willing to help both her mistress and herself in the pursuit of love. She lets us know from the very beginning of the play—the sixth line of the opening scene—that she is eager to marry, a fact that she communicates to Truffaldino when she first meets him and answers his question of "V. S. è la sposa?" (p. 10) with a sigh. Smeraldina further informs us in an aside that she likes "quel morettino" (p. 13), and by the end of the second scene, when she says to herself, "Voglio veder se mi riesce. . ." (p. 13), we know that she is hatching a plot to win him as her husband. Later on in the comedy, when Smeraldina is sent by Clarice to deliver a message to Beatrice who everyone, except Clarice, still thinks is Federigo, we get the distinct impression that although Smeraldina complains about her mistress's indiscretion, she is happy to have been sent on this errand for reasons of her own. As the waiter correctly perceives when Smeraldina prefers to receive Truffaldino on the street rather than go into the inn to meet his master, "Ho inteso. Il moretto le piace. Si vergogna a venire dentro. Non si vergognerà a farsi scorgere in mezzo alla strada" (p. 54). But unknown to the waiter is that Smeraldina has another reason for refusing to enter the inn. Beatrice is with Pantalone, Clarice's father, and Smeraldina cannot give Beatrice Clarice's letter in front of Pantalone without revealing Clarice's complicity and further endangering Clarice's
happiness. Thus, unlike Truffaldino, Smeraldina, in thinking of herself, is also aiding her mistress. Like all servants, Smeraldina is in a precarious position, susceptible to beatings and dismissal, and dependent on her master for permission to marry. Like Truffaldino and Molière's servants, she shows that she is adept at surviving, at looking after herself, resorting to trickery if necessary. Smeraldina may not have a big role in Il servitore de due padroni, and women tricksters may be non-existent in either L'Etourdi or Les Fourberies de Scapin, but both Molière and Goldoni have written comedies which feature servant girls as tricksters who rival Mascarille, Scapin, and Truffaldino in the art of trickery.

Molière's L'Amour médecin and Le Malade imaginaire and Goldoni's La castalda and La cameriera brillante are examples of comedies which have a trickster who is both a woman and a servant. The servant girl as trickster is an innovation for in past comedies such a figure was usually portrayed as the go-between, a figure which we still encounter in some of Molière's comedies, i.e. L'Avare and Monsieur de Pourceaugnac. The role of the go-between, however, was not without ambiguous and even negative connotations as, for example, Ariosto's La Lena demonstrates. L'Amour médecin, written in 1665 and Le Malade imaginaire, Molière's last comedy, written in 1672, shortly before his death, are works of a mature Molière whereas Goldoni's La castalda and La cameriera brillante, written two years apart, in 1751 and in 1753, respectively, are still representative of Goldoni's early career; both playwrights, however, were in their forties at the writing of these comedies. As in the comedies featuring a male servant trickster, the traditional eiron-alazon contest is set up in the opening scenes of each play. As before, the blocking figure is a father
and a widower; except for the woman servants and whatever maternal qualities can be attributed to them, there are no mother figures. Only in Le Malade imaginaire do we find a mother figure who is also an alazon, but Béline is only a stepmother. The woman servants deceive in order to help the young lovers, but in Molière's Le Malade imaginaire and in the Goldoni plays, the servant has personal reasons for aiding the young people; she is, however, like Smeraldina rather than like Truffaldino in that she helps herself in helping her young mistress to marry. For none of these comedies is the traditional eiron-alazon contest its sole raison d'être. Always within the framework of traditional comedy, Molière satirizes the medical profession as well and Goldoni also portrays the personal contest of woman servants in a society indifferent to the condition of servants. In each case, the servant is again the architect of the comic action, constructing deceptions which frame the comedy.

In the Molière comedies, the blocking father figures depend on doctors to solve their family problems. Sganarelle refuses to acknowledge his daughter's melancholy as love 'sickness' and calls on a number of doctors to cure her condition. Argan has convinced himself that he is very sick in order to hide his inadequacies, but we have Toinette's as well as Beralde's assurances that he is a healthy man. Not content to make the whole household suffer his every ache and pain and endure the continual to and fro of doctors, he insists that his daughter marry a doctor so that he can count on constant medical assistance from his son-in-law. Sganarelle and Argan react mechanically when they resort to doctors as cure-alls; they are inflexible in lending blind faith to their diagnoses. For both of them, this reliance on doctors has become an obsession.
Obsession is the comic vice, for as Bergson explains, it simplifies rather than complicates life. By resorting to doctors, they avoid confronting the real issues: Sganarelle, that his daughter has reached marriageable age; Argan, that he has unwisely married a younger woman.

The figure of the doctor is ridiculous in that he, too, reacts rigidly and mechanically. Inflexible in maintaining that his diagnosis and cure is the only correct one, he is

un homme qui croit à ses règles plus qu'à toutes les démonstrations des mathématiques, et qui croirait du crime à les vouloir examiner; qui ne voit rien d'obscur dans la médecine, rien de douteux, rien de difficile, et qui, avec une impétuosité de prévention, une roideur de confiance, une brutalité de sens commun et de raison, donne au travers des purgations et des saignées, et ne balance aucune chose. (Malade, p. 438)

Refusing to consider the experiments of contemporary science which, at the time, were disproving more and more the tenets of the ancients, he automatically turns to Aristotle and Hippocrates to support his diagnosis as if he believed "qu'il vaut mieux mourir selon les règles que de réchapper contre les règles" (Amour, p. 432). In describing "le comique professionnel," Bergson gives the example of Molière's doctors who "traitent le malade comme s'il avait été créé pour le médecin, et la nature elle-même comme une dépendance de la médecine," and who, consistent with their "endurcissement professionnel," have their own language and logic. To the rigidity of the doctors, Molière opposes the flexibility of nature. When Argan asks his brother, Beralde, who has been criticizing doctors, "Que faire donc quand on est malade?" Beralde answers, "Rien. Il faut demeurer en repos. La nature, d'elle même, quand nous la laissons faire, se tire doucement du désordre où elle est tombée" (p. 438). The doctors insist that their knowledge is certain when the functioning of the human
body is still a mystery "où les hommes ne voient goutte" (p. 437). The certainty of the doctors is completely subverted by the fact that in either comedy no one is really sick, and their very presence is thus extraneous. This is already implicit in the titles for both titles deny the need for doctors: in *L'Amour médecin*, love is the great healer and in *Le Malade imaginaire*, the patient is not sick. In the *commedia dell'arte* as well as in gallic comic tradition, the figure of the doctor was often a source of ridicule; 26 Molière, however, in his portrayal of doctors goes beyond simply poking fun at them but attacks "bien avant la querelle des Anciens et des Modernes, . . . l'autorité excessive dont jouissaient les médecins de l'antiquité, le crédit aveugle fait à Aristote, à Hippocrate at à Galien. . . Aux Anciens, il opposait les découvertes des 'gens de maintenant', qui seules, selon lui, pouvaient véritablement faire avancer la science." 27

The doctors in *L'Amour médecin* and *Le Malade imaginaire* give conflicting diagnoses. Moreover, they have the notoriety of killing rather than curing the sick. This information is revealed to us in both cases by the trickster servant. When Argan describes the fortune that Thomas Diafoirus is going to inherit from Monsieur Purgon, Toinette comments, "Il faut qu'il ait tué bien des gens, pour s'être fait si riche" (p. 396). Lisette mocks the doctors when she tells them that they should bring to court "un insolent qui a eu l'effronterie d'entreprendre sur [leir] métier, et qui sans [leur] ordonnance, vient de tuer un homme d'un grand coup d'épée au travers du corps" (p. 435). Doctors are thus seen to be on the side of sickness and death rather than health and life. Death is the most rigid obstacle that imposes itself upon life—we even describe the
condition that sets in at death as *rigor mortis*—and there is no compromis­
ing with it. The doctors are anti-nature and anti-life in terms of the
traditional eiron-alazon contest as well as of their profession for they,
too, do not understand about love. In *L'Amour médecin*, they are blind
to the possibility that Lucinde may be in love. In *Le Malade imaginaire*,
the newly graduated doctor and Argan's choice as son-in-law, Thomas
Diafoirus, who is as ready to support Argan's tyrannical wishes as he is
to support Aristotle's or Hippocrates' outdated techniques, repels
Angélique's pleas to respect her desires. The doctors join the ranks of
the father figures as alazons for they uphold the father's obsession and
thus help to hinder the cause of love. It is their masters' obsession
with doctors that the servant women have to resist in their efforts to
aid the young lovers. In the two comedies, however, this obsession has a
different effect on the young lovers' situation: In *Le Malade imaginaire*,
Argan's dependence on doctors causes Angélique and Cléante to lose more
and more hope whereas in *L'Amour médecin*, Lisette is able to take advantage
of Sganarelle's blind trust in doctors to bring about Lucinde's and
Clitandre's marriage. The servant women go against their masters by being
on the side of health as well as love; it is by undermining the doctors'
authority that Lisette and Toinette seek to break their masters' control.
Thus, the health-sickness opposition in these two plays is a reaffirmation
of the servant-master contest.

There are no doctors in the two Goldoni comedies but the fathers
oppose their daughters' choice in marriage partner for reasons that are
just as selfish as Sganarelle's or Argan's. Although we find in both
comedies characters with typical *commedia dell'arte* names—in either comedy,
the father figure is called Pantalone—and Pantalone and the male servants retain their respective dialects, they have all lost their masks and become independent characters. La castalda and La cameriera brillante are similar in that the woman servant is interested in making her fortune as well as in helping her young mistresses to marry. In either comedy, the woman servant has come, through her personal charm and masterful running of the household, to occupy an important position in the family. She aligns herself with her young mistresses and uses her ascendancy over her master to render him more flexible with regard to his daughters' and niece's (in the case of La castalda) choice in marriage partner. The traditional eiron-alazon contest is therefore present in these comedies, but there is another contest going on which is more interesting than the traditional one and which can only be approximated to a servant-master one, for it is of a different nature than the one found in the other comedies which feature a servant trickster. First of all, the woman servant in La castalda and in La cameriera brillante is from the opening of the play in control. She has been so for some time before the play begins and she is certain of her strength; she is able to manage her and her master's affairs as she wishes. In La castalda, Corallina tells Frangiotto, a fellow servant, "Sono tre anni che non solo faccio io a mio modo, ma egli [Pantalone] fa a modo mio." When at the beginning of La Cameriera brillante, Flaminia expresses concern that Clarice's threats to have Argentina dismissed may come true, Argentina assures her, "Non dubitate; non me n'anderò. Il padrone non mi lascierebbe andare per centomila ducati." Later on in the same scene, she further explains to Flaminia, "Non sapette che quando io voglio, meno gli uomini per il naso? Il signor
Pantalone principalmente per me farebbe moneta falsa" (p. 193). We see the basis of the servant-master contest not so much in the struggle of Argentina and Corallina to secure their position and prepare for their future, which they achieve with relative ease, but rather in the depiction of less fortunate servants. In both *La castalda* and *La cameriera brillante*, we find servants whose condition contrasts sharply with Corallina's and Argentina's and we understand their concern in wanting to strengthen and secure their position in the household. In *La cameriera brillante*, when Argentina has succeeded in having both Ottavio and Florindo invited to dinner, Traccagnino, Ottavio's servant, asks Argentina if he, too, can stay. She tells him that since no arrangements have been made for him, he will have to go and eat at the inn. But Traccagnino explains that he has no money for Ottavio has not paid him, "El spenderà dei zecchini per farse creder un signor grando; ma per el povero servitor nol gh'ha gnente de carità" (p. 226). Argentina commiserates with him and criticizes irresponsible masters, "Poverino! vi compatisco. Ecco qui quel che fanno tanti e tanti di questi signori, . . . spendono tutto in grandezze. Abiti, trattamenti, divertimenti, e la servitù patisce. . . .Che serve il regalare per vanità, per fasto, quando i servitori si lamentano che no corre il salario?" (p. 226). In *La castalda*, it is Arlecchino who reveals his harsh condition as the servant of an impoverished nobleman, again, by the name of Ottavio. The comedy opens as Arlecchino eats hungrily away at the food which Corallina provides for him. He is heartily grateful to her for feeding him and tells her, "vu si fortunada, che servi un patron ricco: ma mi servo un maledetto spiantà, povero e superbo" (p. 13). Unlike the servants in Pantalone's household, who at least are assured of regular
meals, Arlecchino's three meals a day consist of "Polenta, acqua e bastonade" (p. 13). When Ottavio, a few scenes later, promises Corallina that if she is ever in need of employment, he will gladly take her on, she says to herself, knowing him for what he is, "Io, grazie al cielo, non ho bisogno di lui" (p. 18).

Moreover, the woman servant in these plays is set on marrying her master and in this way permanently assuring her security. Either comedy "svolge il tema, caro al settecento, della serva padrona, ossia della serva che riesce a sedurre e a sposare il vecchio padrone." But neither Corallina nor Argentina is "la serva padrona dei troppi seguaci di un Pergolesi (un figurino divenuto presto di maniera, buono per le maliziose cadenze di voce e gesto delle soprano amorose), ma una avveduta fattoressa che alle moine della seduttrice accoppia un pacato calcolo di potere." There are hints throughout La cameriera brillante that Argentina's interests lie in marrying her master but she does not openly admit it until the end of Act II when she proposes, though in a very roundabout way, to Pantalone. In the last of the three skits which she acts out in front of the family, she dresses up in Pantalone's clothes and assuming his role, speaks for him: "E saveu chi xe una putta de sesto, che me piase assae? Arzentina. Anca ella, poverazza, no la xe né altiera co fa un basalto, né gnocca co fa una talpa: la gh'ha anca ella un no so che de mezzo, che me piase anca a mi. Sangue de diana! Sibben che so vecchio, la vôi sposar" (p. 240), whereby praising herself and putting herself forward as a worthy and willing marriage candidate. In La castalda, Corallina at first misinterprets Pantalone's intention to remarry and for a while works at cross-purposes to her interests. Not suspecting that he has her in
mind, she tries to dissuade him from this intention for serving his wife would go contrary to her plans. "Avrei finito allora di comandare e di metter da parte" (p. 23), she thinks to herself. When Pantalone, however, makes it clear that it is she that he wants to marry, she quickly changes her tune and lets him know that in marrying her, he would be doing a wise thing. Corallina as well as Argentina is in the difficult position of having to go against her master's wishes in order to help her young mistress while at the same time trying not to alienate him from herself. If Argentina and Corallina are happy to help the young lovers it is in large part because it is to their advantage to have their young mistresses married and thus out of the house. Moreover, in showing themselves allied to the young people, Argentina and Corallina win in exchange their young mistresses' approval in marrying their father or uncle.

Although Toinette cannot expect to marry her master for he has recently married—it would, moreover, have been unconceivable in the seventeenth century for a master to marry his servant—she is like Corallina and Argentina in that she too is intent on securing her position in the household. That she has been in the family for some time is indicated by Angélique's trust in her and by her reply to Argan that Angélique "obéira [à moi] plutôt qu'a vous" (p. 398). But due to Argan's remarriage, Toinette's security is threatened for Argan has married a greedy and calculating woman who successfully manipulates Argan to do as she desires. It is with Béline's approval and largely through her instigating that Argan oppresses his family and household. In plotting to expose Béline's true nature to Argan, Toinette expects not only to assure Angélique's marriage with Clitandre but to improve her own situation
as well. If Argan is ready to disinherit and send off to the convent his daughters in order to please his wife, how much less is he going to be concerned about Toinette's welfare, no matter how many years she has faithfully served the family. Should his wife choose to dismiss her, Toinette can hope for no support from Argan. Although she speaks frankly and even rudely to Argan, Toinette is careful not to do so in front of Béline. Thus, Toinette, like Corallina and Argentina, in order to help the young lovers get married, must be careful not to alienate her employer, in this case, her mistress. If Béline discovered that Toinette was working against her, if Pantalone realized that Corallina was winning the favour of others at his expense, if Argentina's bold proposal were refused, dismissal would be imminent. All three of these plays, therefore, strike a realistic note with regard to the precarious position of servants. However, although unemployment is for them a very real possibility, all three servant women are conscious of their power and their ability to manipulate their masters. In fact, Argentina and Corallina are both able to threaten to leave in order to get what they want; and Toinette has been so skillful in dissimulating before Béline, that when Argan, whom she has openly antagonized, wants to dismiss her, it is Béline who defends Toinette, "Mon Dieu! mon fils, il n'y a point de serviteurs et de servantes qui n'aiment leurs défaut. . .Celle-ce est adroite, soigneuse, diligent, et surtout fidèle" (p. 399).

There is no suggestion of a servant-master contest in L'Amour médecin. Like Mascarille and Scapin, Lisette is an adept inventor of stratagems and conscious of her art. "Vous verrez que je sais des détours" (p. 424), she says encouragingly to the despairing Lucinde. Later, she
tells Clitandre, "et si cette aventure nous manque, nous trouverons mille autres voies pour arriver à notre but" (p. 436). She thus shares Macarille's and Scapin's philosophy that if one stratagem fails, another one can be quickly invented. Lisette altruistically volunteers her services because she believes that a girl is completely justified in rebelling against an unreasonable father. "Il ne faut pas," she advises Lucinde, "se laisser mener comme un oison; et pourvu que l'honneur n'y soit pas offense, on peut se libérer un peu de la tyrannie d'un père" (p. 424). Again, like Mascarille and Scapin, Lisette maintains an unwavering faith in young love: "Je ne puis voir deux amants soupirer l'un pour l'autre, qu'il ne me prenne une tendresse charitable, et un désir ardent de soulager les maux qu'ils souffrent" (p. 436).

Corallina and Argentina, however, share an unenthusiastic attitude toward love and marriage which reveals a cynical though more realistic understanding of life. Corallina, a widow, has an unhappy memory of her marriage. She asks Frangiotto, "Non ho da ringraziare il cielo, che mi ha levato d'attorno un marito il più fastidioso di questo mondo?" (p. 19). And although she feels a slight regret in having chosen to marry Pantalone rather than Frangiotto because he is young and handsome whereas Pantalone is old, she quickly re-adjusts her line of thought, "ma non sono si pazza a perdere la mia fortuna...i denari fanno parer tutto bello. I denari hanno una forza indicibile; scemano gli anni, lisciano la pelle, raddrizzano le gobbe e coprono le magagne" (p. 54). And for the rest of the comedy, Corallina feels no more regrets. When, in III, 5, Rosaura says that her happiness should be the greater of the two because her husband-to-be is young and Corallina's is old, Corallina thinks to
herself, "Per me vorrei ch'egli avesse altri vent'anni di più, purché per ogni anno gli crescessero mille scudi" (p. 60). Argentina is no less cynical about love and marriage. In a monologue, she informs us, "L'amore, per quel ch'io sento, è una cosa che fa ridere e che fa piangere. Io pero finora non ho mai pianto; e spero che per questa ragione non piangerò. Io faccio all'amore, come si fa quando ascoltasi una commedia. Fin che mi dà piacere, l'ascolto; quando principia ad annoiarmi, mi metto in maschera e vado via" (p. 193). We will hear Mirandolina in La locandiera echo similar sentiments in the next chapter. In Le Malade imaginaire, when she cautions Angélique about the sincerity of lovers, Toinette also uses an analogy to theatre in describing love, revealing a slight cynicism on her part: "Les grimaces d'amour ressemblent fort à la vérité; et j'ai vu de grands comédiens là-dessus" (p. 393). One thinks in particular of Béline. Toinette, then, although she does believe that a girl "doit épouser un mari pour elle" (p. 395), is not automatically on the side of love as Lisette is. She is, however, prepared to do everything in her power to help Angélique, for to Angélique's pleas for help, she answers, "Moi, vous abandonner? J'aimerais mieux mourir. Votre belle-mère a beau me faire sa confidente, et me vouloir jeter dans ses intérêts, je n'ai jamais pu avoir d'inclination pour elle, et j'ai toujours été de votre parti. Laissez-moi faire: j'emploierai toute chose pour vous servir" (p. 403).

If Argentina and Corallina reveal a certain cynicism towards love and marriage, they are not for this reason callous about their young mistresses' future happiness. They may be serving their own interests in helping the girls get married but they, too, like Toinette, believe that a
girl "doit épouser un mari pour elle" (Malade, p. 395). Argentina actually expresses her concern for Flaminia's future before she worries about her own, "Mi preme... la signora Flaminia, e la servirò come va. Mi preme poi me medesima e non perderò di vista l'interesse mio" (p. 213). Although she antagonizes Clarice, it is only "per risvegliarla" (p. 192), and teach her to be less haughty and to mellow her moods, that is, to be more flexible; otherwise, she will never succeed in marrying Florindo nor in being happy with him. When Corallina refuses to accept Pantalone's proposal until he has arraigned for Rosaura's marriage, it is because it suits her to have Rosaura married and out of her hands. But when Pantalone explains that he has already done so by promising Rosaura to Lelio, Corallina, knowing that it is Florindo who her young mistress loves, is ready to oppose Pantalone and take Rosaura's side. Thus, if Argentina and Corallina are anxious to help their young mistresses to marry, it is for the sake of the girls' happiness as well as their own.

A comparison of the Molière plays with Goldoni's reveals that Le Malade imaginaire resembles La castalda in particular and that L'Amour médecin and La cameriera brillante have characteristics in common. In the former plays, the woman servant is not the only trickster and both Corallina and Toinette must proceed with caution, guarding themselves against the deceptions of other tricksters which go contrary to their own plans. Although the other tricksters are their social superiors, Corallina and Toinette prove to be more than their match. In L'Amour médecin and La cameriera brillante, the woman servant is the sole trickster and both Argentina and Lisette ultimately overcome the alazon figure by involving the characters in a comedy. In these two plays, the comedy-within-the-
comedy serves the same function as a stratagem; here the two meanings to the word play come together. In staging a comedy, Argentina and Lisette are able to manipulate by putting into 'play' the difference between reality and illusion.

Whereas L'Amour médecin is a short play—if the ballet scenes are disregarded—with stylized characters and a simple development, La cameriera brillante is a full-length play where the traditional eiron-alazon contest is complicated by the fact that each of the lovers—with the exception of Flaminia who is perhaps too pliant in accepting Ottavio as he is—reacts rigidly. Thus, the lovers in the Goldoni play act both as eiron and alazon, being themselves partly responsible for the obstacles which bar their respective marriages. In order to realize the young lovers' marriages, Argentina, unlike Lisette whose only objective is to resist the blocking father figure must contend not only with Pantalone's misanthropy but also Clarice's pride, Ottavio's presumptuousness, and Florindo's boorishness.

Like Sganarelle in L'Amour médecin, Pantalone in La cameriera brillante refuses to acknowledge the fact that his daughters have reached marriageable age and are anxious to marry. Pantalone insists, "no vòi visite, no vòi complimenti, no vòi nissun" (p. 197); as long as he sees no one, he avoids confronting the issue of finding husbands for his daughters and finalizing marriage contracts. Before she resorts to staging her comedy, Argentina must persuade Pantalone to invite Ottavio and Florindo. Her foremost persuasive method is by entertaining and she demonstrates throughout the play her theatrical ability. Aware of Pantalone's fondness for her, Argentina manipulates his desire for her by playing games with
him; she jests and teases him, sighs at opportune times, beginning to speak and then hesitating to continue so that he has to plead with her to tell him what she is thinking. In this way, she never allows herself be pinned down but maintains an aura of elusiveness about her. Though a misanthrope, Pantalone seeks her company. She keeps him guessing about her feelings for him until she judges that it is the right moment to reveal them. And even when she does reveal them, she does so under the guise of an entertainment for she lets him know that she wants to marry him while impersonating him. Pantalone is entralled by Argentina.

"La m'ha incocallo (p. 240), "la m'incanta" (p. 198), he expresses throughout the comedy, and he happily admits, "Mi son de natura piuttosto caldo, piuttosto furioso; e custia la me reduse co fa un agnello" (p. 198).

Pantalone, however, is willing to be enticed by Argentina only as long as she plays with his amourous feelings for her. The moment she brings up the subject of his daughters and arranging their marriages to Ottavio and Florindo, he does not want to talk about it and appreciates no jests or teasing on that subject. Thus, in order to get the young men invited to dinner, Argentina must put her jokes and games aside for a while and resort to other persuasive methods. She consequently threatens to resign if Ottavio is not invited to dinner, accusing Pantalone of not maintaining his word to her, a promise, however, which Pantalone had originally made only under pressure from her. But she is not satisfied when Pantalone agrees to invite Ottavio. Florindo must come, too. In a very adept speech, wherein she shows that she has foreseen all his objections, Argentina points out to Pantalone how much he gains and how little he loses in inviting Florindo as well, "Il signor padrone, con un poco di
più, soddisfa a tutte le convenienze, a tutti gl'impegni: salva il decoro, la politica, l'interesse. Soddisfa le figliuole e si fa un onore immortale" (p. 222). Her speech has its intended effect; Pantalone is won over.

Argentina encounters greater difficulty in trying to render the personality of the young lovers more malleable. Unless they mellow themselves, they are unsuitable as marriage partners and as social beings; in order to survive in a marriage and in society, it is necessary to find a balance, to follow "la strada de mezzo" (p. 239), which is what Argentina tries to demonstrate throughout Goldoni's play as well as in her own. Argentina is brillante because of her wit and her ability to entertain others to laugh. But although at the beginning of the play Argentina assures Flaminia, worried that Clarice may have Argentina dismissed, that she can win Clarice over by entertaining her; "le dirò tante belle cose, tante buffonerie; la bacierò, la preghero, le ballerò dinanzi, la farò rider e non sarà altro" (p. 192), and Flaminia admits that Argentina "Farebbe ridere i sass" (p. 192), we only ever see Pantalone and Flammina amused by Argentina's antics. By the end of Act I, it is clear that Clarice, Florindo, and Ottavio have no sense of humour. They do not laugh because they take themselves too seriously and respond to everything literally. They do not understand subtlety and for that reason Argentina's jokes and jests are lost on them. Moreover, laughter is spontaneous, and thus, a sign of flexibility, a quality, however, which is somewhat lacking in these lovers. They function rather like agroikos or kill-joy types; they are the opposite of the buffoons, who in this play are represented by the servants, Brighella and Traccagnino. We can see in La cameriera brillante how "the contest of eiron and alazon forms the
basis of the comic action, and the buffoon and the churl polarize the comic mood. Argentina handles these churlish figures by giving them a dose of their own medicine: she pretends to take them literally. Although she amuses herself in the process, they never realize that they are being taken in. At the beginning of Act I, Argentina skillfully antagonizes Clarice by taking her orders to their literal limits. Later on in the play, when Clarice and Florindo are quarrelling, Argentina pretends to approve of Florindo's model of an austere and solitary life—Florindo prefigures the rusteghi—by exclaiming how well it would suit Clarice. Infuriated, Clarice cuts the conversation short by telling Florindo that she has no intention of marrying him. When he answers, not the least bit disconcerted, "Pazienza, se non averò voi, no troverò un'altra" (p. 212), Argentina offers herself in Clarice's stead. As an example of their inability to understand subtlety, both Florindo and Clarice take Argentina's offer seriously. In this way, Argentina is able to make Clarice decide once and for all that she does want to marry Florindo. Argentina responds to Ottavio by grossly exaggerating his aristocratic pretensions. She hopes to deflate his ego by inflating it, but in his answers to Argentina, Ottavio reveals that he, too, is a literal person. When Argentina explains to Pantalone that he should be honoured to know a person such as Ottavio for he is descended from four kings, Ottavio, in all seriousness, interrupts, "No, no, non sono tanti" (p. 217). Next, Argentina overstates his income and Ottavio must again correct her. She continues her game by naming smaller amounts of money until at thirty zecchini, Ottavio stops her by admitting "in circa" (p. 217). Ottavio never realizes that Argentina has all along been discrediting his
claims to nobility and wealth. In fact, when later in the same scene
Argentina threatens to leave Pantalone, saying that she will go and work
for Ottavio instead, Ottavio, responding like Pantalone to her offer as
if she were serious, agrees to take her on.

By the end of Act II, Argentina has succeeded in having Ottavio
and Florindo stay for dinner and persuaded the company to watch the little
skits which she has prepared for their entertainment, although Pantalone
resists at first, due to his inability to differentiate between reality and
play. "Ma se no xe vero...Ve digo che no xe vero" (pp. 234-5), he
insists when Argentina presents herself as "la contessa dell'Orizzonte"
and says "facciamo il conto che sia vero" "[che] le figlie del signor
Pantalone devono maritarsi con questi due cavalieri" (p. 234). With the
help of Traccagnino, she hopes to duplicate for each character their
particular feature of rigidity, to catch and freeze it so that they can
see themselves reflected outside of themselves. In the first skit, aimed
at Ottavio and Clarice, she depicts a couple with aristocratic pretensions
who have become alienated from each other and whose household is on the
brink of ruin; in the second, aimed at Florindo and Flaminia, she shows a
peasant couple who live in solitude and austerity, without benefit of
society. But consistent with their lack of flexibility, none of them
sees him or herself ridiculed in the little skits. Instead, they each
approve of the figure that was supposed to caricature them. Argentina's
first theatrical production entertains her spectators but fails to
convince those concerned that "Sior Ottavio va troppo in alto, sio
Florindo el va troppo basso;...Flaminia xe troppo umile; Clarice xe
troppp altiera" (p. 239). Argentina is going to have to resort to yet
other means in order to make them alter their ways. Argentina has more success with Pantalone, who approves of the image of himself that Argentina projects when she dresses up as himself. It is the positive image of a man who follows "la strada de mezzo" (p. 239); "Nol xe omo che ghe piasa grandezze, ma no ghe piase gnanca l'inciviltae" (p. 239), a man, moreover, who wants to marry Argentina and arrange for his daughters' marriages.

In L'Amour médecin, Sganarelle also reveals himself to be a literal person. In her first attempt to make Sganarelle realize the extent of Lucinde's unhappiness, Lisette tells him that her condition is serious and that unless something is done right away, "elle ne passera pas la journée" (p. 426). Lisette fails to make Sganarelle understand that the cure for Lucinde's 'sickness' is a husband for he responds literally to her description of Lucinde's condition as if it were a real physical disorder, requiring the need for doctors. Lisette, however, is not undaunted and uses this unexpected turn of events to her advantage. She is able to present her little comedy to Sganarelle and have him suspend his belief for the very reason that he is dependent on doctors and ready to believe everything they say.

The final stratagem that both Lisette and Argentina resort to is to direct a comedy in which they involve the young lovers and the fathers. Both Lisette and Argentina openly suggest to the alazon figures the playing of a comedy but whereas in L'Amour médecin, the young lovers are aware that the comedy is being presented to deceive, none of the characters in La cameriera brillante is aware of Argentina's "secondo fine" (p. 230). Furthermore, Sganarelle is the only one in L'Amour médecin with-
out a part and the only one who is tricked; in La cameriera brillante, everyone acts and is manipulated by Argentina according to plan. Lisette's plan is to have Clitandre pretend to be a doctor and tell Sganarella that he can cure Lucinde by an innovative method which requires flattering "l'imagination des malades" (p. 439). Clitandre consequently convinces Sganarelle that he can lift Lucinde out of her melancholy by enacting a marriage ceremony with himself as her supposed husband. Neither Clitandre nor Lucinde, however, is pretending; they are in fact realizing a long-held dream. "L'homme qui écrit [les] remèdes" (p. 440) is really a notary who writes up an authentic marriage contract. And Clitandre and Lucinde truly acknowledge their love for each other and truly exchange their vows while Sganarelle, who thinks he is only watching a comedy, enjoys himself immensely. When the young lovers leave, "[pour] achever le reste du mariage" (p. 441), Lisette brings Sganarelle back to reality by telling him, "vous avez cru faire un jeu qui demeure une vérité" (p. 441), and Sganarelle's pleasure turns into anger.

The play which Argentina organizes is called I spropositi and it is actually a reproduction of La cameriera brillante; there are the same number of characters with the same characteristics, only their names are different. In order to counteract the rigidity of her people, she assigns them a part in exact opposition to their personality, thus forcing them to say what they have so far refused to say in Goldoni's comedy.

With the introduction of a comedy-within-the-comedy, both Lisette and Argentina bring into play the difference between reality and illusion. Lisette is able, due to Sganarelle's blind faith in doctors and to the fact that "[il] n'est pas des plus fins de ce monde" (p. 436),
to reverse reality and illusion. Sganarelle never suspects that he is seeing reality; instead, he suspends his belief and enjoys the scene before him as if he were at the theatre. Thus, he thinks he is watching an illusion when he is watching reality, which is the opposite of what is supposed to happen at the theatre, where a play lulls us into thinking we are watching reality when we know all along that it is an enactment.

Argentina's actors, however, are not willing to suspend their beliefs. In the same way that their literalness does not allow them to understand the subtlety of Argentina's jests, it does not allow them to accept the make-believe nature of theatre, and they rebel against acting out parts which are antithetical to their nature. They thus confuse illusion in a play with reality. Giannina, in Un curioso accidente, we recall, had a similar problem. In Argentina's comedy, the young lovers, forced to say what they would never say in reality, feel the need to explicate themselves and they each interrupt his or her own lines as well as those of the others.

Argentina must coach them in the saying of their lines, often having to point out that such and such a line is not in the part. In order to keep them acting, she must constantly remind them that it is a play; she must keep the distinction between illusion and reality clear. Pantalone, too, slips from the play into reality but unlike the others, he is enjoying his part, for it gives him the freedom to woo Argentina, and he adds his own lines: "Son vostro, se volè, caro ben mio" (p. 251) and "Sì, sè bella, e sè le mie raîse" (p. 252). But Argentina insists with Pantalone as well as the others, "questo non vi è nella parte" (p. 252). With Pantalone, Argentina succeeds as she had hoped "di faglì fare di quelle cose, che pensandovi sopra con serietà
forse non le farebbe" (p. 242). More evidence of Pantalone's blurring of reality and illusion, with even more humourous results, is indicated when he refuses to say as part of his lines that he is "[un] vecchio impotente" (p. 253). When Brighella, who is doing the prompting, says that "El poeta se lamentaría" if Pantalone does not say his lines right, Pantalone answers, "El poeta nol sa i fatti mii; e da qua un anno el vederà che l'ha dito mal" (p. 253). By the last scene of Argentina's comedy which coincides with the last scene of _La cameriera brillante_, the young lovers have begun to change their approach to the play for after having refused to be involved any further, they all agree to act out the final reconciliation scenes. As a further example of their literal-mindedness, it must be pointed out that it is not so much the acting out of their alter ego which has the therapeutic value and which allows all the characters to come together in marriage but the fact that they take literally the out-of-character lines of their respective lover. When Pantalone, persuaded by Argentina, asks the young people if they are willing to get married, they all give their consent with Clarice admitting, "a me sono piaciute le ultime parole del signor Florindo" (p. 255), and Ottavio explaining, "Ed io, trovando in vostra figlia i sentimenti d'una eroina, la preferisco a cento dame che mi sospirano" (p. 253).

Still within the bounds of _I spropositi_, Argentina gives her hand in marriage to Pantalone, Flaminia to Ottavio, and Clarice to Florindo. There is still some resistance from Clarice and Pantalone who, continuing to blur reality with illusion, protest the final couplings, though neither protests his and her own marriage. Argentina must once again remind them that they are speaking out of line. Once the respective parties have been
appropriately coupled, according to the ending in *I spropositi*, Argentina insists for the last time on the difference between reality and the play, saying, "Ecco, la commedia è finita. Voi non siete più Anselmo, ora siete il signor Pantalone" (p. 255). Having allowed them to enact a happy ending, she now gives the young lovers and Pantalone a chance to make the illusory ending a real ending, and she asks Pantalone, "Un matrimonio che fatto avete con me per finzione, vi vergognereste di farlo con verità?" (p. 255). Thus, whereas before she was careful to keep the distinction between reality and illusion clear, Argentina now does the reverse: what was play can become reality. Pantalone has no difficulty in going "dal falso al vero" (p. 255) with regard to his marrying Argentina, but when he hesitates to allow the young lovers the same prerogative, it is Argentina this time who blurs the distinction between reality and play, equating rather than reversing the two as Lisette does: as there were three marriages in *I spropositi*, there must be three marriages in Pantalone's family or none. In each of the two plays, the comedy-within-the-comedy has its intended effect on the characters of the main play: the young lovers come together in marriage; Pantalone agrees to marry Argentina and in all likelihood, Sganarelle loses his interest in doctors. However, although in the process Argentina and Lisette are ridiculing the rigidity of the alazons and enjoying themselves at their expense, the alazons never see themselves as ridiculous.

In *Le malade imaginaire* and *La castalda*, Toinette as well as Corallina demonstrates her expertise not only in concocting and organizing stratagems but also in dissimulating, in maintaining a mask in front of those who either pose a danger or can be of help to her. Toinette has
correctly understood Béline as being like those women who, in Angélique's words, "font du mariage un commerce de pur intérêt, qui ne se marient que pour gagner des douaires, que pour s'enrichir par la mort de ceux qu'elles épousent, et courent sans scruple de mari en mari, pour s'approprier leurs dépouilles" (p. 427); Toinette knows that Béline is sustaining Argan's obsession for ulterior motives and that she has no real concern for his health. Toinette is thus careful to back all of Béline's opinions and ideas when in her presence. And even when not in her presence, it must be noted that Toinette never criticizes Béline to Argan. Unlike Angélique and Béralde, she cannot risk to have her real intentions known to Argan. When Angélique utters the above quoted words to Béline, revealing that she is aware of her game, Toinette keeps silent. When Béralde, near the end of Act III, warns Argan that he is sacrificing his daughters in order to please his conniving wife, Toinette pretends to defend Béline, "Ah! Monsieur, ne parlez point de Madame: c'est une femme sur laquelle il n'y a rien a dire, une femme sans artifice, et qui aime Monsieur" (p. 449). We know Toinette's words to be ironic and so does Béralde, but Argan takes them literally and Toinette is able to convince Argan to participate in the little stratagem that she has planned in order to demonstrate to Béralde "comme Madame aime Monsieur" (p. 450) only because Argan thinks that Toinette's plan is going to reveal Béline's loving nature. Similarly, in Tartuffe, Orgon will agree to Elmire's plan because he does not believe all that has been said about Tartuffe. In I, 6 Argan complains to Béline about Toinette's insolence. But when Béline asks her, "Pourquoi donc est-ce que vous mettez mon mari en colère?" (p. 399), she pretends not to understand his reason for being angry and lies to Béline, "Il nous a dit
qu'il voulait donner sa fille en mariage au fils de Monsieur Diafoirus; je lui ai répondu que je trouvais le parti avantageux pour elle; mais que je croyais qu'il ferait mieux de la mettre dans un couvent" (p. 399), knowing very well that this is what Béline wants and that Béline will believe her before she will give credence to one of her husband's many complaints.

That Toinette feels secure that Béline trusts her is evidenced later in the same scene when Toinette disregards Béline's warning, "Ecoutez, Toinette, si vous fâchez jamais mon mari, je vous mettrai dehors" (p. 399), and continues to antagonize Argan, this time by throwing pillows at him (always, however, behind Béline's back). At the end of Act I, Toinette explains to Angélique, "pour vous servir avec plus d'effet, je veux changer de batterie, couvrir le zèle que j'ai pour vous, et feindre d'entrer dans les sentiments de votre père et de votre belle-mère" (p. 403), but she has by this time already demonstrated that she has won Béline's confidence. As a further proof of Toinette's success in ingratiating herself with Béline is that Béline completely believes Toinette's recounting of Argan's 'death' and not only reveals to her in front of Argan's 'body' her true sentiments: "Que tu es sotte, Toinette, de t'affliger de cette mort" (p. 450), but also asks her to keep Argan's death a secret for a little while in order that she may first help herself to his cash. Although Béline has revealed herself to be an able trickster in that she successfully manipulates Argan to do as she wishes to the point that he is ready to repudiate his daughters, she proves not to be as clever as Toinette. Béline's greed, which is her obsession, her characteristic rigidity, blinds her into making the serious error of under-
estimating Toinette, of not thinking it necessary to maintain a mask in front of her.

Toinette's superiority as trickster is further underscored by comparing her to the young lovers, Angélique and Cléante, who also attempt to deceive Argan. Without Toinette's help, though he has her backing, Cléante organizes a stratagem of his own (a stratagem which has been repeated in many comedies; one thinks in particular of _Le Barbier de Séville_) and is able to enter Argan's house disguised as a music teacher, substituting for Angélique's tutor. Angélique reveals her ingenuity by quickly adjusting to the shock of seeing Cléante in her house and adapting herself on the spot to Cléante's ploy. They communicate their love for each other under the guise of a love song and as further demonstration of their astuteness, they improvise the words to the song. In a similar manner to Clitandre and Lucinde in _L'Amour médecin_, they are revealing their true feelings for each other while the alazons think they are only performing. Argan, however, unlike Sganarelle, has his suspicions. Perhaps if Cléante had pretended to be a doctor instead as Clitandre did, he would have had more luck. Indeed, when Toinette attends Argan disguised as a doctor, Argan is completely fooled, even though this doctor bears an uncanny resemblance to Toinette. Argan wishes to see the music sheets which Angélique and Cléante are holding and when he asks, "où sont donc les paroles que vous avez dites? Il n'y a là que de la musique écrite" (p. 424), Cléante is quick-witted enough to respond, "Est-ce que vous ne savez pas, Monsieur, qu'on a trouvé depuis peu l'invention d'écrire les paroles avec les notes mêmes?" (p. 424). Cléante and Angélique, however, are not careful dissimulators. Angélique, unlike Toinette, cannot maintain
a mask in front of Béline and lets her know that she sees her falseness. Béline thus doubles her efforts to be rid of Angélique. Spying on them, she catches Cléante, who does not know enough to leave when he should, in Angélique's room and dutifully reports back to Argan.

Toinette knows that it is Béline more than the doctors who control Argan. In disguising herself as a doctor, Toinette attacked only the uselessness of the medical profession. In order for the young people to marry, she must organize a stratagem which will break, once and for all, Béline's hold on Argan. Toinette's plan is to have Argan play dead. After having pretended all along to be sick, Argan surprisingly fears this role: "N'y a-t-il quelque danger à contrefaire le mort?" (p. 450), he asks Toinette, revealing a blurring of reality and illusion which reminds us of L'Amour médecin and La cameriera brillante. Pretending to be dead is too close for comfort for Argan. Toinette's victory over Béline is complete when, using the same method, she also proves to Argan Angélique's love for him and Cléante's virtue. The comedy ends on a theatrical note. Argan consents to Cléante marrying his daughter if he promises to become a doctor, showing that although the young people have overcome his resistance to their marriage, Argan has not relinquished his obsession with doctors. Béralde therefore suggests that Argan himself become a doctor. At Argan's protesting that he is too old to study, Molière, in a final jab at the medical profession, has Béralde say, "En recevant la robe et le bonnet de médecin, vous apprendrez tout... et vous serez après plus habile que vous ne voudrez" (p. 453). Argan's final deception is to believe that he has been accepted into the faculty of médecine when instead he will have been the butt of a farcical ceremony organized by Béralde and a group of actors.
When Angélique expresses the fear that Béralde is making fun of her father, Béralde assures her, "ce n'est pas tant le jouer que s'accomoder à ses fantaisies" (p. 454). Béralde's accommodating of Argan's obsession is of a totally different nature than Béline's: under Béralde's direction, Argan's obsession has become harmless, for in having Argan believe that he is doctor as well as patient, everything cancels out.

Whereas Toinette dissimulates mainly in front of Béline, Corallina does so with all the characters for her plan is much more ambitious. Corallina's foremost tactics is to be pleasant with everyone as well as with her master, and thus win friends everywhere, "per tutto quello che potrebbe nascere" (p. 13). With regard to Rosaura, Corallina has not needed to try very hard to win her trust and affection, for as Corallina herself admits, "Secondando io qualche sua inclinazione, qualche suo amoretto, l'ho fatta mia" (p. 21), and as long as Corallina helps her to marry Florindo, Rosaura is ready to support anything Corallina says and does, including approving of Corallina's marriage to Pantalone. However, the other characters are not as flexible as Rosaura and in order to gain ground with them, Corallina must reckon with Ottavio's pride, Frangiotto's jealousy, and Pantalone's avarice. But she demonstrates remarkable expertise in manipulating each character, undermining or endorsing a character's obsession according to the situation. In the same way that Toinette never criticizes Béline, Corallina never rebukes any of the characters in La castalda nor does she ever make it known to any of them that she is aware of their particular rigidity or weakness, a factor which reveals that Corallina and Toinette are aware of what is effective in persuading as well as of their precarious position in the household. On
the contrary, neither Argentina nor Lisette hesitates in being critical, although Argentina often hides her criticisms behind jokes which usually go unperceived. In La castalda, Arlecchino, Ottavio's valet, is hungry; Corallina feeds him and in this way acquires information from Arlecchino regarding his master's situation which Corallina later uses to manipulate Ottavio. In II, 5, Ottavio tries to maintain the cover that he is a great and wealthy man by criticizing everything Corallina offers him, although he is famished. Corallina, who has been enlightened by Arlecchino, goads Ottavio into explaining that in his home hot chocolate is made in a cauldron "quando l'invito è grande" (p. 17). Corallina, knowing that polenta, which is all that is usually eaten in Ottavio's palazzo, and not chocolate, is cooked in his cauldron, adds maliciously "e poi la tagliam in fette" (p. 17). Corallina continues to give similar smart answers to Ottavio, amusing herself at his expense by taking advantage of his inflated pride. We see in Corallina the origins of Mirandolina and Argentina whose philosophy in life is "Rider di tutti, burlar quando posso" (Cameriera, p. 213). When Ottavio begins to suspect that Corallina is making fun of him, she quickly changes tactics, humbling herself and playing up to his illusory grandeur so that in the end, Ottavio not only grants her his protection but promises her employment in his household should she become dissatisfied in Pantalone's service, still oblivious to the fact that Corallina knows full well how much she would lose in changing masters. Shortly after her encounter with Ottavio, we see Corallina's adeptness in handling Frangiotto. To begin with she deceives him into thinking that she loves him and then arouses his jealousy by telling him, "procuro di guadagnarmi l'amore e la stima di tutti quelli che frequentano questa
casa" (p. 21). When Frangiotto suspects her of compromising her virtue in gaining the affection of others, she accuses him of not loving her and in the end, it is Frangiotto who must persuade Corallina that he loves her.

Corallina also demonstrates that she is just as able to fend them off as she is to draw them to her. After Pantalone has proposed to her, Corallina realizes that as the future mistress of his home, she no longer has to worry about winning many friends, and that she can henceforth cease to be generous with everyone. "Cambiero stile affatto... In questa casa gli scrocconi non troveranno più da far bene" (p. 51) she tells herself, and she demonstrates her new technique with Frangiotto and Ottavio. However, until Pantalone makes his proposal public, she is going to proceed with caution. Consequently, she handles Ottavio and Frangiotto in such a way that should Pantalone go back on his word she could continue with them as before. She tells Frangiotto that she no longer loves him but without explaining why and Frangiotto, beguiled and enticed by her enigmatic answers, believes she is only pretending in order to arouse his feelings. Corallina rather cruelly leaves him in this belief, although she does feel some compassion for him. In this way, if she married Pantalone, neither Pantalone nor Frangiotto can accuse her of leading Frangiotto on for she has explicitly told him that she does not love him; if, however, Pantalone changes his mind, she has left enough unsaid that she could easily resume her relationship with Frangiotto where she left off and marry him. She has, thus, in her treatment of Frangiotto left herself a way out. She does likewise with Ottavio and Arlecchino whom she sends away without dinner by inventing a deception. She had promised
them dinner early in the play and succeeded in getting Pantalone's permission to invite them before he surprised her with his proposal. But when in III, 2, they present themselves, Corallina tells them that there is going to be no dinner because the stove has caught on fire and all the food and utensils have been burnt. Here too, Corallina enjoys herself; "Ora voglio dar gusto a questi due affamati" (p. 55), she says in an aside, and she describes to them all the fine dishes that the cook had prepared before they all went up in flames. Corallina succeeds in getting rid of them for the time being, but depending on what lies ahead for her, she could without any difficulty continue to draw them and their like to Pantalone's home. Neither Ottavio nor Frangiotto realize how well she has manipulated them.

Although Pantalone is miserly, she spends his money freely. When he complains for example, in Act I, that the chocolate is disappearing too quickly and asks, "E a tutti, chi va e chi vien, s'ha da dar la cioccolata?" (p. 23), Corallina persuades him that in doing so she is only thinking of his good name, that she does not want him prejudiced in the eyes of society, when in reality, it is part of her plan to offer hot chocolate to whomever comes by the house in order to win friends. When she asks him, "Un uomo della vostra sorta, ricco, senza figliuoli, che ha una nipote che non ha bisogno di voi, che volete che dica il mondo, se vi date allo sparagno, alla spilorceria?" (p. 23), Pantalone cannot disagree with her. What Corallina says is in fact true. By being generous with his goods, she has improved his image in society; under her management, people are no longer speaking of Pantalone with little respect. Later on in the act, when Pantalone refuses to invite Ottavio to dinner, she
confidently overrules his refusal by appealing again to his reputation, saying, with some truth, "Eh via, signore; non date in queste viltà... Vengano tutti; il signor Pantalone è gentile, è cortese, è affabile, è generoso" (p. 30). An example of Corallina's excellent judgement of character and her ingenuity in meeting a situation is demonstrated in I, 8. Here, by taking advantage of the fact that Pantalone has overheard her shouting at Frangiotto, Corallina is able to arouse and appease Pantalone's anger at will. Pretending to be angry at Frangiotto, who leaves with Pantalone's arrival, for not following her orders, she succeeds in stirring Pantalone up against Frangiotto to the point that he wants to dismiss him immediately. Having gotten him angry, Corallina turns around and calms him down, telling him that she will take care of disciplining Frangiotto because she does not want Pantalone's health to suffer, thus apparently demonstrating that she is concerned for his welfare as well as for his household. She has the audacity to say, "No, signor padrone, siete troppo caldo; non voglio che la bile vi faccia male" (p. 22), when she was the one to arouse his anger in the first place and on a false pretence. Furthermore, she is able to blame the fact that Pantalone was kept waiting for his hot chocolate, a failing on her part, on Frangiotto.

We find in *La castalda* another trickster figure in the character of Beatrice, a young widow who is a friend of Rosaura. When she comes to visit in II, 1, Beatrice wants to have some fun and play a trick on the foolish but rich Lelio who has accompanied her to Pantalone's house. She has Rosaura pretend to be Corallina and Corallina, Rosaura. Although she is not amused by Beatrice's deception, Corallina goes along with it, but not before she has Beatrice promise that should anything arise from it,
she will acquit her of any complicity. Corallina does not like it when others do the deceiving in Pantalone's house; she always wants to be in control of a situation. Moreover, she does not want to compromise herself in any plots unless they are of her doing and for her benefit. In the case of Beatrice's trick, however, she is later able to take advantage of it and use it against Beatrice when Beatrice turns out to be Corallina's rival. Beatrice, like Béline in Le malade imaginaire is socially superior to the woman servant and poses a threat to her security. Although she does not seem as nasty as Béline, Beatrice is also motivated by greed in wanting to remarry. Beatrice reveals to Corallina that she is interested in marrying Pantalone, if he were to give her "una contradote" (p. 39). In direct contrast with Le malade imaginaire where Béline is the one person with whom Toinette is careful to maintain a mask, Corallina, who dissimulates in front of everyone, never does so with Beatrice. Corallina is being totally frank when—still unaware that Pantalone is interested in making Corallina his wife and no one else—she refuses Beatrice's request for help in marrying Pantalone and tells her, "Se voi siete venuta qui per questo, maneggiatevi per altra via. . . Già in questo mondo tutti pensano al loro interesse" (p. 39). Corallina lets Beatrice know that she is not going to allow any woman to come into Pantalone's house and usurp her long-strived for power in Pantalone's household without a fight; and she warns Beatrice that any woman with such intentions "l'avrebbe a fare con me" (p. 40). Corallina acts rigidly with Beatrice in refusing to listen to her; this causes Beatrice to become angry with Corallina and to decide to win Pantalone if only to spite her. Although Corallina has dropped her mask before Beatrice and let her know where she
stands, Corallina, the servant, reveals herself to be superior to Beatrice in dissimulation and charm. Corallina, realizing her mistake—that Pantalone wants to marry her and no other—interrupts Beatrice's and Pantalone's conversation in III, 7 at a timely moment. Although Beatrice has been making some headway with Pantalone who is flattered that a woman such as Beatrice, "una persona civile, una garbata vedova, una fresca donna (p. 62)—to quote Corallina's own words—is interested in him, Corallina succeeds in turning the tables on Beatrice. In Corallina's and Beatrice's vying for Pantalone, we see more of the servant-master contest, wherein Beatrice reveals herself to be an alazon figure. Through marriage to Pantalone, Corallina can expect to improve her position in life and assure her future. Whereas her wanting to marry Pantalone is for Corallina a question of survival, Beatrice's only reason for marrying an old man is, like Béline's, greed. From the vantage point of her superior social position, Beatrice promotes herself as a marriage candidate in front of Pantalone by disparaging Corallina for being a servant. "Bell'onore, per altro, che voi fareste alla vostra casa!" (p. 60), she admonishes Pantalone for wanting to marry Corallina; and she advises him to marry a widow, "basta che la vedova sia una donna civile, e non sia una servaccia" (p. 61). Corallina, knowing very well that her inferior position puts her at a disadvantage, does not defend herself and attack Beatrice. Rather she reverses her normal procedure of dissimulation and responds by being completely honest with Beatrice and Pantalone which turns out to be a brilliant plan on her part. Both Célimène in Le Misanthrope and Mirandolina will resort, with similar success, to this same type of strategy. Corallina admits Beatrice's superiority and under-
mines herself. When Beatrice goads her about being jealous of her authority in Pantalone's household, Corallina answers truthfully, "Penso al mio stato, penso al mio interesse, e son compatibili, se temo di perdere la mia fortuna" (p. 62). Corallina tells Pantalone that she wishes to spare him the trouble of dismissing her by resigning now for if he is to marry Beatrice, Corallina would be the first to go. Corallina is being realistic. In the same way that Béline would never put up with Toinette should Toinette's true loyalty be discovered, Beatrice, as Pantalone's wife, would soon be rid of Corallina since Beatrice is already familiar with Corallina's intentions. Corallina succeeds in totally confusing Pantalone who does not want to hear Corallina speak of going away or of losing her fortune. At Pantalone's hesitation to announce his love for her to Beatrice, Corallina breaks into tears and accomplishes her tour de force. In a very artful speech, she tells Pantalone that she is grateful for his kindness and bears him no grudges while reminding him of all that she has done for him. She even begs him to forgive her for having had the audacity to think herself loved by him. What is wonderful about Corallina's speech is that it is all true; it could easily be played straight for Goldoni gives no other instructions except that Corallina is crying. We see, however, that Corallina has carefully planned what she had to say for even if Pantalone were to renege on his promise of marriage, he could not after what she has said allow her to be dismissed without providing for her. Beatrice is not blind to Corallina's skill and her superior prowess, as she mutters to herself, "Che maledetta arte ha costei!" (p. 63). Corallina further alienates Pantalone from Beatrice by turning Beatrice's former trick on Lelio against her and making it appear as if
Beatrice had planned behind Pantalone's back to marry off Corallina to Lelio, thereby arousing Pantalone's jealousy.

A comparison between *Le malade imaginaire* and *La castalda* would not be complete without mentioning the resemblance between Béline and Corallina. Like Béline, Corallina has her eyes on an old man's fortune. But whereas Béline is trying to acquire Argan's fortune by usurping his daughters—Argan has a younger daughter as well—Corallina is not standing in the way of his heirs. His niece, Rosaura, has already been well provided for by her family. Béline supports Argan's obsession in order to win his complete trust and in the likelihood that one of the doctors' many cures will kill him sooner than expected. Corallina, on the other hand, in contending with Pantalone's avarice, may have helped herself, "dispensando le grazie del padrone, senza da lui dipendere, e facendo[si] merito colla roba sua" (p. 21), but she has also improved his image in society and administered with competence his household. When she questions Pantalone, "Par a voi che io non sappia dirigere una casa? spendere con ragione? risparmiar con decoro?" (p. 50), he offers no objections but answers that he trusts her. Béline, however, has only made Argan look worse in the eyes of his household and society by playing up to his obsession as well as increasing his expenditures. Whereas Béline has succeeded in making herself disagreeable to everyone except the doctors and Argan, Corallina is sought after and loved by all. The difference between Corallina's and Béline's technique is best summed up by Corallina when she describes herself in a monologue, "Vero è, che per avanzare tutto per me, dovrei far tener di mano al padrone, ma se facessi così, mi renderei odiosa e sospetta a tutto il resto del mondo. Vo' far il mio
interesse con buona grazia; non voglio essere di quelle castalde che vogliono tutto per loro, ma di quelle più accorte, che sanno pelar la quaglia senza farla strillare" (p. 31). Beatrice criticizes Rosaura's approval of Pantalone's marriage to Corallina by saying, "Ora, signora Rosaura durerete fatica a trovar marito" (p. 66), but unlike in Le malade imaginaire where Beatrice's prediction is realized by Béline who does everything in her power not only to prevent Angélique from marrying Cléante but from marrying at all, Corallina's first function as Pantalone's wife is to arrange for Rosaura to marry her beloved Florindo. Corallina's graciousness in handling people is extended to Beatrice as she asks her to forgive and understand because she, too, though a servant, has a right to happiness. She promises to look after Pantalone with the utmost care, so that Pantalone "non si penta d'aver onorato colla sua mano la sua Castalda" (p. 67). Even though we know that Corallina will be able to manipulate Pantalone as she wishes, she will do it, as she has shown throughout the comedy, without Pantalone even realizing it. Unlike Argan, we believe that Pantalone will never have reason to repent having remarried.

As we have seen, the servant-master contest in these four plays is modified. In L'Amour médecin and in Le malade imaginaire, the traditional eiron-alazon contest is supplemented by a health-sickness opposition and in La castalda and La cameriera brillante, by Corallina's and Argentina's desire to marry their masters. But in all four comedies, the woman servant is the link between the two contests for she functions in both as an eiron figure. As a woman, the servant figure in these comedies should also bring into play an opposition between women and men, which is
yet another variation of the eiron-alazon contest. But this contest between women and men is only implicit here. Lisette is as stylized as Mascarille and Scapin, and Toinette has to contend more with another woman than with Argan. In Goldoni's plays, the emerging of Corallina and Argentina as positive heroines may very well reveal the re-evaluation of women and their increased social flexibility in eighteenth century Venice where, influenced no doubt by the age of enlightenment, "i periodici non lesinano articoli di pronunciata adesione al nuovo ruolo della donna nella moderna società civile." But Corallina and Argentina represent "un particolare tipo di creature femminile che potremmo definire 'ascendente' o 'emergente': nel senso che realizza appieno la propria personalità nell'emergere rispetto ai componenti del proprio gruppo sociale o, ancor più audacemente, nell'ascendere dalla propria classe ad una superiore." They are thus servants who triumph as members of an inferior class rather than as women. The analysis of La locandiera in the next chapter, which is dedicated to the contest between women and men in Molière's and Goldoni's comedies, will reveal this difference.
NOTES

1 Frye, p. 174.


3 Mongrédién, Notice, L'Etourdi, p. 51.


5 Bonino, Introduction, Commedie, p. XVI

6 Riedt, p. 19.

7 Loc. cit.

8 Bonino, Introduction, Commedie, p. XXI:


13 Loc. cit.

14 Loc. cit.

15 Knutson, p. 33.

16 Hubert, pp. 2-3.

17 Knutson, p. 31.

19 James Gaines, "Social structures in Molière's Theater," Manuscript to be published by Ohio State University Press, p. 15.

20 Frye, p. 164.


22 Another similarity between the two Molière plays is that they are both comedy-ballets; however, since the ballet intermissions do not advance or complicate the plot, this discussion will not be concerned with them.

23 Bergson, p. 11.

24 Bergson, p. 136.

25 Loc. cit.


28 It is interesting to note that Goldoni has written a comedy, *La finta ammalata*, whose title is very similar to *Le malade imaginaire* and whose source Goldoni admits to being *L'Amour médecin*, but where, contrary to Molière, Goldoni opposes a good and wise doctor to ignorant and ineffectual ones. It is to the credit of the good doctor in Goldoni's comedy that he can not only differentiate between real and pretended sickness but also recognize love "sickness" when he sees it. Needless to say, Goldoni's comedy remains inferior to Molière's biting satires.


Through the characters' refusal to hold to their lines, Goldoni is also commenting on the *commedia dell'arte* actors who heretofore still insisted on improvising and resisted learning written parts, for Argentina explains to Brighella, who thinks that the young lovers are doing a bad job of acting because they are not suited for their parts, "ma questo non succederebbe, se i rappresentanti fossero comici, e fossero in un teatro, dove sogliano dir tutto ciò che viene loro assegnato" (pp. 250-1). Argentina describes *I spropositi* as "una piccola commediola studiata...tutta caratteri" (p. 241), and though it is written by "una persona che non vuol essere nominata" (p. 241), we know that the author is none other than Goldoni himself. *I spropositi* is, after all, another rendition of *La cameriera brillante*.

A rustic dish eaten in northern Italy, it is a type of thick porridge made from cornmeal which is usually allowed to set and then served sliced. **Polenta** was until recently an important staple and even a bread substitute in certain parts of Italy.
CHAPTER THREE

"ARTE, ARTE SOPRAFFINA": THE WOMAN–MAN CONTEST

The contest between women and men is implicit not only in the comedies which feature women servants as tricksters but also in such comedies as L'Ecole des maris, L'Ecole des femmes, and Un curioso accidente where the young woman takes the initiative against a tyrannical father figure. This contest is, however, explicitly referred to in Il servitore di due padroni and it is Smeraldina who brings it to our attention. When Silvio accuses women of being deceitful and unfaithful, Smeraldina defends her sex by turning the accusation around, saying that men are worse than women for "le donne hanno la fama di essere infedeli, [ma] gli uomini commettono le infedeltà a più non posso" (p. 45). Smeraldina explains that "delle donne si parla, e degli uomini non si dice nulla... Perché le leggi le hanno fatte gli uomini; che se le avessero fatte le donne, si sentirebbe tutto il contrario" (p. 45). Smeraldina's argument is that of modern feminists: it is men who make the laws, who write the books; power is in their hands and women are consequently subordinate to them.
All women are included in Smeraldina's analysis, be they daughters, wives, or servant-girls for unlike young men who can, with time, expect to be heads of families, all women are always subservient to and dependent on men. It is therefore no coincidence if in traditional comedy, blocking figures are for the most part fathers and husbands. This is certainly the case in Molière's and Goldoni's comedies.¹ We have already encountered female tricksters in the figure of the young *amoureuse* and of the servant-girl. In this chapter, we will study comedies where the main trickster is again a woman but this time she is either a wife and therefore mistress of a household as in *Tartuffe*, *I rusteghi*, and *Sior Todero* *brontolon* or a woman who enjoys financial independence as in *Le Misanthrope* and *La locandiera*. It is thus in the comedies which are representative of Molière's and Goldoni's greatest works that we find the eiron-alazon contest expressed in terms of women versus men. There is a close parallel between servants and married women, even when they are well-born: like a servant, a wife must answer to a master: her husband. As with servants, the choices, freedoms, and expectations of married women are severely limited. In order to relieve their oppressed state, to try and achieve a better life, it is true for both servants and wives that guile and dissimulation are often the only recourses available to them. It is therefore not surprising that wives in traditional comedy should join forces with the young lovers against their husbands, showing that they too are dedicated to the cause of love and freedom. Servant figures from the comedies of Menander down can rest easy if their traditional role in comedy has been taken over by wives. The likes of Elmire, Felice, and Marcolina reveal themselves to be expert tricksters, very capable of
helping to bring about the young people's happiness.

_II rusteghi_, written in 1760, is the first of a series of comedies which culminates with _Le baruffe chiozzotte_ and which represents Goldoni's boldest and most mature comedies. Like most of the comedies in this group, _II rusteghi_ is written entirely in Venetian dialect. The title of the play is itself a dialect word whose meaning Goldoni thought necessary to explain in his preface to the play for it differs from the word _rustico_, its Italian counterpart. "Noi intendiamo in Venezia per uomo _Rustego_," writes Goldoni, "un uomo aspro, zotico, nemico della civiltà, della cultura, e del conversare," a definition which approaches that of our word _boor_ which is how the comedy's title is translated in English. The title itself leaves little doubt about who are the alazons in this comedy. The merchants, Lunardo, Simon, Maurizio, and Canciano form a close-knit quartet in which they complement each other perfectly.

Gasparo Gozzi, although brother to Carlo Gozzi, Goldoni's most vociferous enemy, was an avid admirer of Goldoni's comedies and he had this to say about the boors: "Nella... commedia quattro sono caratterizzati _Rustici_, onde le situazioni nascono e germogliano da sé facilmente; ed un medesimo carattere compartito in quattro uomini, ha quattro gradi e quattro aspetti diversi che non violentati si affacciano agli uditori con varietà più grata." The boors share the same views on the world, particularly with regard to money, family life, and society, and they react with extreme rigidity and narrow-mindedness to whatever does not conform to their prejudices. Over-confident, they never question their motives or methods: they always know what is best not only for themselves but also for their wives, sons, and daughters, and consider the slightest disagree-
merit or opposition as a direct challenge to their authority. "Son paron mi," "Commando mi," they assert repeatedly. They have an unwavering belief in their superiority over the rest of society in handling money, treating their wives, and raising children. They are distrustful of all social interactions unless they are business ones; only when at home or at their business office (mezza) do they feel happy. As a consequence, their wives and daughters are not free to frequent the places where civilized society mingles—theatre, promenades, dances. For their women, the home is literally a prison, since they are not even permitted to visit the office.

The notion of the woman, daughter or wife, as prisoner in her own home recalls Molière's L'Ecole des maris and L'Ecole des femmes. In fact, the title of Wolf-Ferrari's Die Vier Grobiane, an opera buffa based on I rusteghi is translated in English as The School for Fathers. The following dialogue between Lunardo and Simon found in II, 5, demonstrates how closely they resemble Sganarelle and Arnolphe in their treatment of women. Lunardo and Simon have just admitted that they like women but with the following stipulations:

Lunardo: Ma in casa.
Simon: E soli.
Lunardo: E co le porte serae.
Simon: E co i balconi inchiodai.
Lunardo: E tegnirle basse.
Simon: E farle far a nostro modo.

And we can wonder along with Lisette in L'Ecole des maris, "Sommes-nous chez les Turcs pour renfermer les femmes"? (v. 144)? In imposing his authority, Lunardo hardly differentiates between wife and daughter. His wife, Margarita, however, insists on making a distinction for she believes that as a married woman, she is entitled to certain privileges. "Ela xe
puta, e mi son maridada" (p. 618), she tells Lunardo but he rebuts her by saying, "Le maridae ha da dar bon esempio a le pute" (p. 618). Although in *L'Ecole des maris* and *L'Ecole des femmes*, Isabelle and Agnès are daughter figures and not wives, these plays deal with the treatment of wives as well as daughters for Sganarelle and Arnolphe make it very clear that would allow their future wives no more freedom than they had as their wards. As the titles themselves indicate, Isabelle's and Agnès's upbringing is a preparation, an apprenticeship for the role of wife. Thus, in these two comedies, the eiron is essentially both daughter and wife; the alazon, both father and husband, and the two eiron-alazon contests of youth versus age and wife versus husband are here one and the same, a fact which is not without incestuous implications and which accounts for part of the audience's distaste for Sganarelle and Arnolphe who, in raising a girl from childhood to womanhood, have the presumption to take her as their wife after having acted as her father.

Along with keeping their women locked up at home, the boors, like Arnolphe and Sganarelle, expect them to spend their time in servile activities, even though they can well afford servants. Sganarelle wants that Isabelle "enfermée au logis, en personne bien sage/...s'applique toute aux chose du ménage,/A recoudre mon linge aux heures de loisir,/Ou bien à tricoter quelques bas par plaisir" (vv. 119-22). Arnolphe prepares Agnès for marriage by telling her that "A d'austères devoirs le rang de femme engage" (v. 696). In *I rusteghi*, Lunardo has put their very words into practice. The play opens with Lunardo's wife, Margarita, and his daughter, Lucietta, knitting. As they work, they complain about having to stay home all the time, an imprisonment which is especially hard to bear.
now that it is carnival time. But they must not let their conversation distract them from their work. Even as Margarita hints that Lunardo has chosen a husband for Lucietta, a subject of no little interest to the girl, she admonishes Lucietta, "Animo laorè, l'aveu gnancora fenìa quella calza? . . . Se el vien a casa élo, e che la calza no sia fenìa, el dirà che sè stada su per i balconi" (p. 589). Indeed, when Lunardo makes his entrance a few lines later, he does not even greet his wife and daughter in order not to interrupt their work. When Margarita reproaches him, "Sioria. No se saludemo gnancà?" (p. 591), he answers, "Laorè, laorè. Per farme un complimento tralassè de laorar?" (p. 591). In the same manner as Sganarelle and Arnolphe, the boors rule their women with regard to their clothes as well. They abhor fashion and want their wives and daughters to go dressed as simple as possible. When Lunardo discusses Lucietta's dowry with Maurizio, her future father-in-law, Maurizio tells him, "No stè a spender in abiti, che no voggio. . . In casa mia no voggio sea. Fin che son vivo mi, l'ha da andar co la vesta de lana e no vôi né tabarini, né scuffie, né cerchi, né toppè, né cartoline sul fronte" (pp. 547-8). Later, Lunardo has a row with Margarita and Lucietta because of their dress. Margarita is in andrié and cascate\(^6\) as befitting a married woman of her status who is to receive guests, for Goldoni instructs us that she is "vestita con proprietà" (p. 613). Lucietta, although she is wearing a simple dress, has removed her apron and enhanced her outfit with "un per de cascate. . . [c] una colana de perle" (p. 614) which she had pleaded with Margarita to lend her in order that she too may "comparir co fa le altre" (p. 614). Margarita obliges her stepdaughter despite Lucietta's claims that it is only a half-hearted attempt. In any case, Lunardo soon
puts a stop to Lucietta's fancies by making her remove "quei diavolezzi... quei sporchezzi" (p. 618). Lunardo's contempt for fine clothes extends to his wife as well for he orders her, "andève subito a despoggiar" (p. 618). When shortly after Simon arrives with his wife, Marina, Lunardo complains in their presence that Margarita is overdressed and expresses his anger at her refusal to change, to which Simon adds his say, "Anca mi ho combatù do ore co sta mata. La s'ha volesto vestir a so modo" (p. 621). He then tells Marina to go home and change into her cotus, thereby revealing the ridiculous lengths which the rusteghi will go to in restraining fashion, for Goldoni explains in a footnote that a cotus is "un abito assai succinto, che si usava molti anni prima" (p. 621). We recall Sganarelle's and Arnolphe's hatred for fine clothes. Sganarelle expects that "d'une serge honnête [Isabelle] ait son vêtement,/Et ne porte le noir qu'aux bons jours seulement" (vv. 117-8), and one of Arnolphe's maximes stresses that a wife "ne se doit parer/Qu'autant que peut désirer/Le mari qui la possède" (v. 754).

Though Sganarelle, Arnolphe, and the rusteghi have the same ideas on how to treat their wives and raise daughters, their motives differ. Both Sganarelle and Arnolphe are obsessed with the idea of cuckoldry and if they refuse to allow Isabelle and Agnès any freedom, it is because of this fear. Sganarelle and Arnolphe reason along these lines: Let women be idle, and they will think of more amusing ways to pass the time; permit them to adorn themselves and they will seek to attract the attention of other men; give them the freedom to frequent "les belles compagnies,/Les divertissements, les bals, les comédies" (Maris, v. 187), and you will no longer be able to save "[Votre] front de maligne influence"
(Femmes, v. 80). The underlying assumption in their reasoning is that women are essentially immoral and treacherous and consequently must be strictly governed. The rusteghi, however, are not misogynists; they do not want their women to participate in social functions not so much because they will compromise their virtue but rather because they will neglect their work and waste money. Instead of immoral creatures, they consider women to be undisciplined; that is, if women had their way, they would never chose to work. For this reason, they see liberty as a corrupting force. When Lunardo and Simon criticize the spendthrift ways of modern youth, they blame mothers for raising their children with too much freedom. Lunardo caricatures an example of such a mother:

Sior sì; cussì le dise; Pover putelo! che el se deverta, povereto! voleu che el mora da malinconia? Co vien zente, le lo chiama: Vien qua, fio mio; la varda, siora Lugrezia, ste care raïse, no falo voggia? Se la savesse co spiritoso che el xe! Cânteghe quella canzoneta: dighe quella bela scena de Truffaldin. No digo per dir, me el sa far di tuto: el bala, el zoga a le carte, el fa dei soneti; el gh'ha la morosa, sala? El dise, che el el se vol maridar. El xe un poco insolente, ma paenzia, el xe ancora putelo, el farà giudizio, Caro colu; vien qua, vita mia; daghe un baso a siora Lugrezia.

(pp. 624-5)

Despite Lunardo's scorn, we see only a mother's delight in her child, and this portrait convinces us more of Lunardo's paranoia than of her indulgence, especially since we know how tyrannically Lunardo and Maurizio have brought up their children. In the scene where they discuss Lucietta's dowry, Lunardo praises his daughter, "La mia puta sa far de tuto. In casa ho volesto che la faza de tuto. Fina lavar i piati" (p. 599), and Maurizio lists the merits of his son, Felippetto, "Anca mio fio xe una perla. No gh'è pericolo che el buta via un bagatín... E a mio fio, perché no voggio che co le serve el se ne impazza, gh'ho insegnà a tirar suso i busi de le
calze, e meter i fondelli a le braghesse" (p. 599). It must be remembered that they are wealthy men; Maurizio himself says to Lunardo, "Ghe xe pochi, che gh'abbia dei bezzi come che gh'avemo nu" (p. 599), but the only qualities which they consider praiseworthy in their children are those of industry and thrift.

Thus, for the rusteghi idleness is dangerous not so much because pleasure-seeking activities would replace work but because that would mean a lessening of work and an increase in expenditures. They think of social events only as an inducement to spend money needlessly, which is also why they are intolerant of fashion. Although Sganarelle and Arnolphe will not allow their wards to participate in social events, they do not, unlike the rusteghi, decry them as useless activities, of no possible enjoyment to anyone. Indeed, it is one of Arnolphe's chief pleasures to observe society for he considers it one great comedy. Before he knows what Horace's intent is, Arnolphe greets the young man warmly and generously lends him the money he needs. Arnolphe does not think less of Horace for his being a society man, a galant "de taille à faire des cocus" (v. 302). Likewise, Sganarelle "trouve [Valère] honnête homme" (v. 610). The rusteghi, however, make it clear that they hold social functions in abhorrence. Moreover, Felippetto is no more free to attend the theatre or a dance than Lucietta is. The rusteghi resent even visits among family and friends because they do not want to feel obligated to anyone and they do not want anyone to owe them anything. One of their main characteristics, which is also a perpetual source of distress for their wives, is their total lack of civility. But there is a purpose to their rudeness: they do not want anyone to know "i fati [loro]" (p. 599); if their manners are gruff, other people are more likely to mind their own business. Moreover, being
polite is a gratuitous action, and they see no value in any social interaction that does not entail a profit. Their only enjoyment is in seeing their money accumulate and their profits rise. In the conversation between Lunardo and Simon in II, 5, we are able to gather that the two men were bitten early in their youth by the money-making bug. When as a child he was asked to choose between going to a puppet show or being given money instead, Lunardo says, "Mi me taccava ai do soldi" (p. 624). And Simon recalls the sensation he felt the first time he earned interest on his money; "gh'ho," he tells Lunardo, "un gusto cussì grando, che no ve posso fenir de dir" (p. 624).

Like Plautus' and Molière's misers, the rusteghi derive no pleasure in spending money. But whereas Euclio and Harpagon prefer to store their money in a portable chest so that they can contemplate and fondle and count their pieces of gold to their heart's content, Goldoni's eighteenth century capitalists are eager to invest their money in order to reap the interest. When Lunardo asks Muarizio how he wants Lucietta's dowry to be paid out, Maurizio answers, "I bezzi mi no li voggio. 0 zirème un capital de zecca; o investimoli meggio che se pol" (p. 597). This difference in the use of money indicates the different economic base existing in seventeenth century Paris, let alone ancient Rome, and eighteenth century Venice. In arranging Lucietta's and Felippetto's marriage, not only are Lunardo and Maurizio without the least consideration for the young people's feelings but they also treat them as property or goods with which to bargain or trade. For Lunardo and Maurizio, their children's marriage is just another business transaction; they list Lucietta's and Felippetto's merits as if they were dealing with merchandise and wanted to increase its
value. Lunardo's reason for keeping his daughter entirely separated from society is also due to his considering her as one of his possessions. As a reputable merchant, he must stand by his goods. According to Lunardo and his fellow rusteghi, a young girl who is seen in society represents soiled goods. When Lunardo tells his wife, "mia fia no vói che nissun possa dir d'averla vista, e quel che la vede, l'ha da sposar" (p. 596). "Vói poder dir, co la marido: tolè, sior, ve la dago...che no la s'ha mai messo maschera sul viso; che no la xe mai stada a un teatro" (p. 594), he reveals his mercantile interests: it is in dealing with top-quality merchandise that a merchant maintains his reputations and increases his business.

Like all blocking figures, the boors are characterized by a lack of self-knowledge. In the first place, they render themselves ridiculous in denying that they are these salvadeghi, these rusteghi, these tartari their wives say they are. Lunardo, in particular, is guilty of speaking the truth without being aware of it. He criticizes the behaviour of his wife and of women in general: "No ve contentè de l'onesto; ve piaserave i chiasseti, i pacchieti, le mode, le buffonerie, i putelezzi. A star in casa, ve par de star in preson" (p. 593), oblivious to the fact that for his wife and daughter, their home is a veritable prison. When the women's plot is discovered, the men debate among themselves how to handle the situation. Canciano wishes, "poderessimo tegnirle in casa, saræ in t'una camera; menarle un pochetin a la festa con nu, e po tornarle a sera, e che no le vedesse nissun, e che no le parlasse a nissun" (p. 644), and Lunardo has the audacity to ask, "Ma che è quel omo, che voggia far l'aguzzin?" (p. 644) when that is exactly what he has been doing all along. The
The rusteghi are convinced that they know how to enjoy life, but besides making profits, there is little else that they find pleasure in: they begrudgingly admit to liking women and not being able to live without them; they also enjoy eating "dei boni caponi, de le bone polastre, e des boni strauli de vedèlo" (p. 598), especially if they were bought at a good price. It is on the subject of food that Lunardo and Maurizio finalize Lucietta's and Felipetto's marriage contract:

Lunardo: Via, femolo sto sposalizio; destrighemose.
Maurizio: Co volà, compare.
Lunardo: Ancuo v'aspeto a disnar con mi. Za savè che ve l'ho dito. Gh'ho quattro latesini, vegnimo a dir el merito, ma tanto fati.
Maurizio: I magneremo.
Lunardo: Se goderemo.
Maurizio: Staremo aliegri.
Lunardo: E po i dira che semo selvadeghi!
Maurizio: Puffe!
Lunardo: Martuffi!

(p. 599)

Thus, on the basis that they like to eat well, Lunardo and Maurizio refute the assertion that they are boors. When Margarita complains to her husband about having married him, Lunardo reproaches her, "Povera grama! ve manca el vostro bisogno? no gh'ave da magnar?" (p. 619). To such a total lack of understanding, Margarita can only answer ironically, "Certo! una donna, co la gh'ha da magnar, no ghe manca altro!" (p. 619). In the same vein is Lucietta's response to Margarita's assurances that she looks fine even in her plain dress, "Eh sì sì, stago ben! Co no son amalada, stago ben" (p. 613). The rusteghi believe that as long as their women are fed and clothed, they should have nothing to complain about. What they never realize or refuse to accept is that people do not live on food alone, that human beings are social creatures and that there is a deep need in everyone to want to communicate with others, to establish ties, to cultivate
friendships. But in being the self-proclaimed enemies of social life and in wanting to isolate their families from the rest of society, the rusteghi are acting in bad faith. As merchants they are very much involved in society and are dependent on social interactions for their livelihood. In scorning the women's wish to participate in social events, the rusteghi overlook the fact that they themselves have the opportunity to interact socially every day through their business.

Whereas the women worry about not being like everyone else, about clashing with social norms with regard to fashion and manners, the rusteghi do not care at all what the rest of the world thinks. They do, however, value each other's opinion. When Maurizio tells Lunardo that his son wants to get married but that he would like to see his intended bride first before deciding, Lunardo says, "con isdegno," "Sior no, questi no xe i nostri pati" (p. 597). But Maurizio quickly assures him, "Via, via, no andè in colera, che el puto farà tuto quello che voggio me" (p. 597). Later, in ordering Margarita and Lucietta to change into less fancy clothes, he tells them, "cossa voleu che diga quei galantomeni [my italics] che vien da me?..No me vôi far smatar" (p. 617), "no voggio che i diga che la fia xe mata, e che el pare no gh'ha giudizio" (p. 618). When Simon hears that Lunardo wants his wife to go and change, he insists that his wife do the same in order not appear any less liberal than Lunardo. The formidable aspect of the rusteghi is due to this compact that exists between them, this shared understanding of what it means to be men. They are afraid of not measuring up, and thus act as models for each other in order to reinforce each other's toughness. Canciano, however, has slipped a little in the others' esteem for he cannot govern his wife as they do.
Simon comments on this, "[Lunardo e mi] no ghe lassemo la brena sul colo, come mio compare Cancian" (p. 644). It is only when in the company of his friends and with their support that Canciano confronts his wife. Felice knows, however, that "el fa el bravo, perché xe in compagnia" (p. 646), and she does not fear him, even though he threatens to strike her.

But the other women do have reason to fear being beaten, for the rusteghi are violent-tempered. They shout constantly as a means to make their wives cower. In fact, Lunardo comments to himself, after having sent Margarita away in order that he may be left alone to speak with Maurizio, "Con le bone no se fa gente. Bisogna criar" (p. 597). Earlier, he had told Lucietta to leave or he would slap her. While Sganarelle, and Arnolphe in particular, also display violent natures, we never see them attempt to strike their wards. Throughout I rusteghi, however, there is an undercurrent of violence, which surfaces when the men discover Riccardo and Felippetto in their wives' company. In his rage, Lunardo tries to strike Margarita and must be dragged away by Simon and Canciano. In the discussion that ensues among the men regarding how to control their women, they reject the idea of beating them only because it is ineffective. "Ghe ne xe dei omeni che bastona le so muggier, ma credeu che gnanca per questo i le possa domar?" (p. 645), Simon asks and he answers his own question by saying, "Oibò; fa pezo che mai; le lo fa per despeto; se no i le copa, no gh'è remedio" (p. 645). Lunardo, in true blocking figure fashion, takes Simon at his word and interrupts him, "coparle po no" (p. 645), thereby revealing that even the rusteghi have their limits, although this is of little consolation to their wives.
Margarita and Marina continually protest their condition but in order to have peace in the household or, in extreme cases, to avoid being beaten, they must eventually give in to their husbands' demands and obey their order. From Felice, however, they learn of a way that is more effective in dealing with such dehumanizing conditions—that of trickery. We first hear about Felice from Marina who says of her, "So marìo xe de la taggia del mio; ma Felice no se tol suggizion; la la vol a so modo, e quel poverazzo ghe va drio, come un can barbin" (p. 605). Although Marina considers her own husband "un salvadego. . .un tangaro" (pp. 602-3), she speaks disparagingly of Canciano for not being able to stand up to his wife. One could say that she has heard her husband's opinion so often regarding "chi xe omeni. . .[e] chi no xe omeni" (p. 625) that she has come to believe it herself. Or else, in criticizing Canciano, Marina is unconsciously voicing her envy of Felice who acts as if Canciano really is happy "che so muggier se deverà, che la fazza bona figura, che la staga in bona conversazion" (p. 607). The only acting that Felice does, however, is in pretending that Canciano approves of her behaviour. Indeed, as his asides reveal, he does not. We see from his uncivil treatment of Marina and of Riccardo that he is as much a boor as the rest of them. But this does not prevent Felice from moving freely in society and enjoying its pleasures: she dresses well, cultivates friendships, exchanges visits, goes to the opera and the theatre, no more, no less than what was considered acceptable behaviour for a woman of her station and means. Felice represents reason, civility, graciousness, elegance, and is in direct contrast to the rusteghi. She is therefore a positive portrayal and there is no doubt that Goldoni holds up her lifestyle as exemplary. In fact, that Felice's lifestyle is a desirable alternative
to the one which the rusteghi force their wives to live is a point made very early in the play. In the opening scene, Margarita contrasts her present situation with her girlhood and depicts the life she led prior to marriage when she participated fully in social life. She was, however, always accompanied by her mother who was very selective with regard to acquaintances and entertainment. In emphasizing that she had a happy girlhood while insisting that she was well brought up, Margarita is making a distinction which is integral to the play: there are pleasures to be had from society which are legitimate and worthy of pursuit, a differentiation which the rusteghi never make for they consider pleasure to be synonymous with immorality and extravagance. This point is of particular importance to Goldoni for it implies a defense of theatre and of the playwright whose role it is to entertain, to bring pleasure. The rusteghi, after all, are as much the enemies of playwrights as they are of women. In fact, when Margarita says of her mother, "La procurava de andar dove la saveva che se fava de le comedie bone, da poderghe menar de le fie e la vegniva con nu, e se divertivimo" (p. 588), we are reminded of Orazio's description in Il teatro comico of the new type of comedy which was being presented all over Italy:

non solo è sbandito qualunque reo costume nelle persone, ma ogni scandalo dalla scena. Più non si sentono parole oscene, equivoci sporchi, dialoghi disonesti. Più non si vedono lazzi pericolosi, gesti scorretti, scene lubriche, di mal esempio. Vi possono andar le fanciulle senza timor d'apprendere cose immodeste o maliziose. (p. 131)

The change in comedy which Orazio is referring to is essentially due to Goldoni's reform which sought to replace the decadent commedia dell'arte with comedies of character. In Il teatro comico, which is basically "un
manifesto in atto, una commedia sull'arte della commedia," not unlike Molière's *L'Impromptu de Versailles*, Goldoni not only puts forward his ideas on what constitutes good comedy but he also shows its positive social value. Anselmo, in *Il teatro comico*, sums up Goldoni's opinion:

"La commedia l'è stata inventada per corregger i vizi e metter in ridicolo i cattivi costumi; e quando le commedie dai antighi se faceva cosi, tutte el popolo decideva, perché vedendo la copia d'un carattere in scena, ogn'un trovava o in se stesso, o in qualche altro, l'original" (p. 104).

Molière says basically the same thing in his first preface to *Tartuffe*,

"Le devoir de la comédie étant de corriger les hommes en les divertissant, j'ai cru, que, dans l'emploi où je me trouve, je n'avais rien de mieux à faire que d'attaquer par des peintures ridicules les vices de mon siècle."  

Like Margarita's mother, Felice is "una donna sutila" (p. 587), and she is consequently able to oppose her husband and live a good life. When Felice and her husband come to visit Marina in II, 9, we witness her expert handling of Canciano. Felice unlike the other women, does not waste time protesting. Instead, she publicly praises her husband to his face for being a "galantomo" (p. 607), "un omo civil [e] de garbo" (pp. 612, 610), and feigns offense whenever Marina or Riccardo imply that Canciano is rude. She explains away his behaviour in such a glib manner that Canciano is often at a loss for words, and prefers to "inghiotir" (p. 606) rather than confront her. As he himself admits, it is as if she enchants him with her words. Marina is not blind to Felice's method. Throughout their conversation, she comments on it: "Oh, co furba che xe custía!" (p. 606), "O che gaïna!" (p. 610), and when she tells Felice, "sè una gran diavola" (p. 608), Felice explains, "se no fasse cussì,
morirave etica con quel mio mario" (p. 608). When Canciano cannot be managed by blandishments alone, Felice threatens him, but always so the others do not hear. As Gozzi says of her, "si rende il giogo leggiero con la destrezza, ma però con riguardo." When Canciano objects, for example, about going to the opera, Felice says aloud that Canciano "burla" but to him she whispers, "Senti sa, no me far el mato, che povereto ti" (p. 610). Although Felice occasionally resorts to the rusteghi's proven method of offense as the best defense in confronting her husband, there are many things that she can only achieve through trickery. One of these things is her wish to help our Lucietta and Felippetto. The young people are in desperate need of someone to intervene for their sake. They cannot depend on any servant figures; in fact, contrary to the tradition of comedy, Felippetto's servant is an agent of his father, for as Felippetto explains to his aunt, Marina, his father will not let him go anywhere without a servant and Felippetto had difficulty in persuading his servant to let him come and visit her. Unlike the young people in L'Ecole des maris and L'Ecole des femmes, Lucietta and Felippetto are not lovers trying to marry in opposition to their fathers' wishes. On the contrary, their marriage has been approved by the two fathers. Their problem is of another nature: although Lucietta is as eager as Felippetto to marry, they would like an opportunity to meet and see if they like each other before going through with the marriage. The situation of the young people in I rusteghi is much closer to contemporary reality than it is in most of Goldoni's and Molière's plays in that the young people take for granted the fact that their parents have arranged a marriage for them, an accepted norm at that time. The rusteghi, however, overstep their authority in insisting that
Lucietta and Felippetto marry without ever meeting. Lunardo actually wants Lucietta not to know that she is to be married until just before the ceremony. When near the end of Act II, Lunardo and his friends interrupt the women who are secretly conferring with Felippetto and Riccardo, and Lunardo announces to Lucietta, "In presenza de mia muggier, che te fa da mare, in presenza de sti do galantomeni, e de le so parone, te fago la niova, che ti xe novizza" (p. 639), he believes this to be the first time that Lucietta hears that she is betrothed. He then informs her that she is to be married, "ancuo, adessadesso" (p. 640), as soon as Maurizio returns with Felippetto, a matter which he had kept secret from his wife and which causes the women's plot to be discovered for they are, of course, hiding Felippetto in the next room. It is this wish of the rusteghi not to let Lucietta and Felippetto see each other before marriage that horrifies both the young people and the wives (a fact which implies that the latter had a little more say in their own marriages). Felice speaks for them all when she says, "Acordo anca mi, che le pute no sta ben che le fazza l'amor, che el mario ghe l'ha da trovar so sior padre, e che le ha da obedir, ma no xe mo gnanca giusto de meter a le fie un lazzo al colo, e dirghe: ti l'ha da tior" (p. 649). Although, initially, the women are not equally prepared to unite against them, they all agree that this time the rusteghi have gone too far. Felice thinks up "l'invenzion de la maschera" (p. 649) and with Marina's support and Margarita's approval, arranges for Lucietta and Felippetto to meet "avanti de serar el contrato" (p. 630).

The parallel that was drawn at the beginning of the play between Margarita's mother's lifestyle and comedy where the former is commendable as a lifestyle and the latter as entertainment continues in greater depth
in the character of Felice. As the main trickster, Felice is also the
architect not only of the deception to help the young people but also of
the play itself, as is often the case in plays where a servant is the
trickster figure. Although Felice does not make her entrance until the
end of Act I, she immediately assumes responsibility for helping the young
people. "Lassème el travaggio a mi" (p. 609), she assures Marina. The
deception which Felice sets up is very theatrical: Felippetto and Riccardo
are masked, and Felippetto is dressed up as a woman. Felippetto plays his
part so well that he charms the women, especially Lucietta. In witnessing
the tender and happy scene between Lucietta and Felippeto at their first
meeting, Riccardo says to himself, "Sono obbligato alla signora Felice,
che oggi mi ha fatto godere la più bella commedia di questo mondo"
(pp. 637-8).

Several times in the play, Felice actually breaks the illusion of
the theatre which confirms her role as the architect of the comedy and
reinforces the positive association made earlier between her way of life
and the theatre. When her plot is discovered, Felice is determined to
remedy the situation. She therefore engages Riccardo's help once again,
but when he asks her how she is going to make things right, she answers
him, "se ghe digo el come, xe fenìa la comedia" (p. 642), and with these
words, she ends the second act. In Act III, Felice attempts to reason
with the rusteghi. After listening to her, Lunardo is uncertain what to
do and asks the others for advice. Simon, in true rusteghi fashion,
suggests, "Prima de tuto, mi dirave de andar a disnar" (p. 650). Canciano,
however, thinks that the "el disnar s'avesse desmentegà" (p. 651); for the
discovery of the women's plot had put other thoughts into their minds. But
Felice interrupts him by saying, "Eh, chi l'ha ordena; no xe aloc. El s'ha sospeso, ma nol xe andà in fumo" (p. 651). Here, Felice is not referring to their host, Lunardo, who is in their midst, but to the author of the play, as Goldoni himself indicates in a footnote. Thus, Felice takes up the playwright's defense in the very instance that she draws the rusteghi's attention back to the heart of the problem: how to deal with the women and the young people. In most comedies, it is the trickster who has the last say. This is also the case in I rusteghi. In her final words, Felice once again reminds us that we are in the world of comedy, this time by alluding to us, the audience: "Stemo aliegrì, magnemo, bevemo, e femo un brindese a la saulte de tuti queli che con tanta bonta e cortesia n'ha ascoltà, n'ha sofferto, e n'ha compatio" (p. 657).

Whereas in the first two acts of the play, the concerns of the eiron have more to do with preventing a marriage than in realizing one, the plot of the third and last act reverts back to that of traditional comedy. Here, we find that Lucietta and Felippetto, who have seen each other and like what they have seen, are willing to marry; but the rusteghi are now against the marriage. Because his plans have been thwarted, Lunardo no longer wants Lucietta to marry Felippetto, or for that matter, any other man. He says of her, "Maì più, che no la parla de maridarse. La manderò a serar in t'un liogo, lontana dal mondo, tra quatro muri, e la xe fenìa" (pp. 643-4). Similarly, Arnoiphe wishes to punish Agnès and to revenge himself not only by impeding her marriage to Horace but also by sending her to "un cul de couvent" (v. 1611).

The women must find the means to make the rusteghi approve the marriage as well as forgive their wives. Since more trickery would be
unbecoming to "una donna civil" and "d'onor" (pp. 648, 647), Felice decides to deal with the boors by appealing to reason and to the rules of civility. But in order to get them to listen, a difficult feat to achieve with men who prefer to settle things by shouting, Felice must first get their attention. And her strategy is again theatrical. For a play to run its course, the audience must be willing to sit back and listen; the more effective is the opening scene in capturing our attention, the more interested will we be in the proceedings of the plays. Felice therefore handles the men by openly confronting them: by interrupting their heated debate and taking them aback, her entrance in the second scene of Act III has its intended effect. Felice essentially wants to show the rusteghi that it is in the best interest of everyone, and hence the most logical alternative, that they allow Lucietta and Felippetto to marry.

It is unclear how convinced the rusteghi are by Felice's argument for it is not until Marina and Margarita show their support for Felice that the rusteghi finally give the go ahead for Lucietta's and Felippetto's marriage and forgive the young people and their wives. But whether or not the rusteghi will henceforth be more liberal with their wives voluntarily—Cozzi seems to think not for he says that "[1] Rustici [sono] obbligati a cedere dalla circostanza, non da cambiato carattere"—the women's triumph over the rusteghi is not a temporary condition. In helping the young people, the women also improve their own condition as wives for to the extent that the rusteghi's faith in themselves is shaken, the women's is strengthened. Whereas the unity of the rusteghi is weakened, in particular by Canciano, who admits that he is proud of his wife's "gran chiaccola" (p. 651), "Bisogna po dirla: gran mia muggier!" (p. 657), the
women come together and find strength in unity. The play is also about the awakening of Marina and Margarita to the cause of the young people and of liberty. It is Marina who first involves Felice in the young people's problem. And at the end of the play, Marina is prepared, in front of the rusteghi, to take her share of the blame in helping Lucietta and Felippetto. Margarita is at the beginning an ambivalent character, oscillating between being an alazon and an eiron: she agrees that Lunardo is being grossly unfair with Lucietta but she is too afraid to intervene for Lucietta's sake. Her repetition of the word *figurarse*, which is made fun of by Lucietta, parallels Lunardo's repetition of *vegnimo a dir el merito* and it is indicative, as Bergson says, of mechanical and rigid behaviour. As a stepmother, Margarita is neither greedy like Béline in *Le Malade imaginaire* nor concerned like Elmire in *Tartuffe*; Margarita, however, does let the other women persuade her to let Felice go through with her plan. Ultimately, when Maurizio and Lunardo continue to hesitate in approving Lucietta's and Felippetto's marriage, Margarita shows her solidarity with the young people. Following Marina's example, she intervenes in their behalf by telling Lunardo, "Che voggio mo intrar anca mi in sto negozio. Sì, sí, m'ha despiasso che [Felippetto] vegna: l'ha fato mal a vegnir; ma col gh'ha dà la man, no xe fenò tuto? Fina a un certo segno me l'ho lassada passar, ma adesso mo ve digo, sì, sì, el l'ha da tor, el l'h da sposar" (p. 654). It is at this point that Lunardo gives in, "Che el la toga, che el la sposa, che el se destriga: son stuffo; no posso più" (p. 654). Through her new found courage to confront her husband, Margarita also wins Lucietta's respect. Heretofore, Lunardo had been able to rule his women more effectively by taking advantage of the antagonisms between them.
We find fused in the character of Felice the two figures of trickster and *raisonneur* which is also found in many of Molière's and Goldoni's comedies. In her speeches to the *rusteghi* in Act III, Felice sounds very much like Ariste in *L'Ecole des maris* and Chrysalde in *L'Ecole des femmes*. When she tells them, "La maniera che tegnì co le donne, co le muggier, co la fia, la xe cussì stravagante fora de l'ordinario, che mai in eterno le ve poderá voler ben; le ve obbedisse per forza, le se mortifica con rason, e le ve considera no marii, no padri, ma tartari, orse e aguzzini" (p. 649), she is using Ariste's and Chrysalde's argument that there is no merit in a woman who is virtuous by force. With regard to fashion, Felice says that there is nothing immoral about it "co no se va drio a tute le mode, co no se ruvina la casa" (p. 657) and she seems to echo Ariste who says that "tout homme bien sage/Doit faire des habits ainsi que du langage,/N'y rien trop affecter, et sans empressement/Suive ce que l'usage y fait de changement" (vv. 43-6). One can be extravagant in fashion by wearing outmoded clothes just as much as by primping novelties, for in polite society, calling attention to oneself, through dress or other means, is always affected behaviour.

In trying to persuade the *rusteghi* to be more liberal-minded, Felice is simultaneously improving the lot of their wives and helping the young people to marry happily. In this play, the contest of wives versus husbands is therefore superimposed on that of youth versus age, although the former promises to disappear in the next generation for Felippetto assures the women that he will treat his wife "su l'ordene che ha dito siora Felice" (p. 657). Like Ariste and Chrysalde Felice points out to the alazons that they are setting themselves up to be derided, to be
tricked, "sta rusteghezza, sto salvadegume che gh'ave intorno, xe stà causa de tuti i desordeni che xe nati ancuo e ve farà esser... rabiosi, odiosi, malcontenti, e universalmente burlai" (p. 656). If the rusteghi refuse to act according to the rules of civility and continue to condemn their wives' actions indiscriminately, their wives will have no choice but to resort to trickery in order to make life bearable. Where reason and good will prevail, "una donna d'onor" (p. 648) has no need to be deceptive. "Abiè giudizio vu, se volè che ghe n'abia[no] anca [nu]" (p. 657), she advises them, "In soma, se volè viver quieti, se volè star in bon co le muggier, fe da omeni, ma no da salvadeghi; comandè no tiranneggiè, e amè, se volè esser amai" (p. 657), which is essentially a reiteration of the golden rule.

*   *   *

Both Molière's _L'Ecole des maris_ and _L'Ecole des femmes_ and Goldoni's _I rusteghi_ are critical of the bourgeoisie: the alazons' inhuman treatment of women as possessions is perceived by each of the two playwrights as part of the bourgeois mentality. To the narrow-minded values of the bourgeoisie, Molière opposes those of the aristocracy. He has Ariste and Chrysalde contrast Sganarelle's and Arnolphe's rigid mentality by having them uphold the aristocratic notion of _honnetêté_, and we recognize in Ariste's and Chrysalde's arguments the "twofold aspect of aristocratic liberalism: freedom of thought and action legitimized by the inherent moral excellence of the aristocrat," the "fay ce que voudras" motto of the Abbaye de Thélème. Felice's speeches to the rusteghi suppose a society which is in opposition to them; it is not, however, a society which has meaning only for aristocrats but for all
people who are prepared to live according to the rules of civility and reason. Felice's appeal to the golden rule has after all, universal application. With I rusteghi, "Goldoni entra," according to Bonino, "in netta polemica con il conservatorismo ormai rozzo della class cui appartiene e in cui ha per molto tempo ciecamente creduto." In I rusteghi as in Sior Todero brontolon, written two years later, the merchant figure loses the positive qualities attributed to him in earlier comedies, such as La famiglia dell'antiquario, where, "nei panni di Pantalone, aveva impersonato il prototipo di un individuo socialmente responsabile, consapevole dell'interesse proprio ed altrui, aperto e illuminato." Like I rusteghi, Sior Todero brontolon is a criticism of the bourgeoisie; Todero, however, supersedes the rusteghi in following the "dettami del proprio, privatissimo interesse." In Sior Todero brontolon, the "miope logica del profitto" is carried to absurd limits. What was with the rusteghi an over-zealous interest in business and profit-making becomes in Todero an obsession. Like Harpagon in L'Avare, Todero is more interested in saving money than in making it. Although he has no casette to hide, Todero is as much a miser as Harpagon and worthy to join the ranks of famous misers in literature. The rusteghi are proud of being good money managers and if others were to call them avaricious, they would consider it a sign of envy. Harpagon and Todero, however, both deeply resent being called misers; at the same time, they want the world to believe that they are poor. In that famous scene where Harpagon searches his valet, La Flèche, and asks him to show his other "hands", La Flèche mutters under his breath, "La peste soit de l'avarice et des avarieux!"
his words. In trying to reason with his father, Cléante tells him that he has no need to worry about bad times because he is well off, but Harpagon reproaches him, "Comment? j'ai assez de bien! Ceux qui le disent en ont menti. Il n'y a rien de plus faux; et ce sont des coquins qui font courir tous ces bruits-là" (p. 332). When Meneghetto, come to reason with Todero regarding his granddaughter's marriage, tells him, "Se disse che la la vol maridar al fio del so fattor, gnente per altro che per el sparagno miserabile della dota" (p. 883), Todero retorts, "Chi disse sta baronada? Chi disse sta falsità? No xe vero gnente. Che dago siemile ducati. . .disèghelo a ste lengue indegne che me crede un avaro, che son galantomo, e che ghe dago a mia nezza siemile ducati." With his family, Todero insists, "Son poveromo; mi no posso pagar un fattor" (p. 897), unaware of the inherent contradiction that a poor man has no need for a steward. Moreover, contrary to Lunardo who is prepared to provide his daughter with a good dowry, Harpagon and Todero arrange marriages for their daughter and granddaughter that will not require a dowry.

There are several parallels between these two plays. One thinks, for example, of the scenes with the master and his cook which reveal the ridiculous limits of the misers' avarice. Todero wants Gregorio to start cooking "i risi. . .a bonora, acciò che i cressa, acciò che i fazza fazion" (p. 840). In this way, "mezza lira de risi basta per otto o nove persone" (p. 840). In a similar frame of mind, Harpagon reasons that "quand il y a à manger pour huit, il y en a bien pour dix" (p. 353). Harpagon and Todero expect their cooks to work miracles in the kitchen: Gregorio is supposed to make water boil with a fire of twigs and Maitre Jacques, "bonne chère avec peu d'argent" (p. 353).
It is obvious that Goldoni had Molière's *Avare* in mind as a model for his Todero. Goldoni makes this apparent by having Todero repeat Harpagon's famous line, "sans dot" (p. 337). In both plays, "nous entrevoyons dernière ce mot qui revient automatiquement, un mécanisme à répétition monté par l'idée fixe," which in this case is the misers' obsession with money. Although Harpagon as well as Todero repeats this phrase to the young lover (Harpagon, however, does not know that Valère is his daughter's suitor), the instance of its repetition differs in the two plays. To each of Valère's attempts to persuade him to reconsider the marriage that he has arranged for Elise, Harpagon answers, "sans dot" to show that all of Valère's reasons are negligible in view of the fact that Harpagon has found a husband for Elise who is willing to marry her without a dowry. At Harpagon's fourth repetition of "sans dot," Valère must admit, "Cela ferme la bouche à tout" (p. 337). In *Sior Todero brontolon*, however, it is the young lover, Meneghetto, who resorts to Harpagon's type of reasoning in trying to persuade Todero to let him marry Zanetta. When Meneghetto asks Todero, "No la se degnera de darmela a mi, che la torria senza dota?" (p. 883), it is as if he had seen *L'Avare* and knew which argument would be the most effective with an old miser. Todero's reactions, in particular his repetition of "senza dota" (p. 883), indicate that Meneghetto was on the right track to winning Todero's approval. But Todero, after stopping to weigh the two choices, concludes that marrying Zanetta to Nicoletto would still be the more profitable arrangement for him.

Although there are many similarities between the characters of Harpagon and Todero, as a play, *Sior Todero brontolon* resembles more closely *Tartuffe*, perhaps Molière's best known play. Originally presented
in 1664 as a three-act play, *Tartuffe* was to be banned and rewritten twice before it was finally allowed, in 1669, to be presented in the five-act version which is the only one extant today. Orgon and Todero are parallel characters in that they are both heads of a household and misuse their authority. Their particular obsession, avarice in the case of Todero and an almost paranoia distrust of his family in that of Orgon, not only makes them insensitive to the needs of the young people but also causes them to betray their family. Although Orgon is the father and Todero, the grandfather, in their respective families, three generations are represented in the Molière play as well. Orgon's mother, Madame Pernelle, who thinks exactly like her son, appears at the beginning and at the end of the play. Moreover, we can safely assume that Orgon's second wife, Elmire, is considerably younger than he is, at least young enough to appeal to Tartuffe. Therefore, in terms of age ratios, Elmire occupies a similar position to Marcolina in *Sior Todero brontolon*: in age, Elmire is halfway between her husband and her stepchildren just like Marcolina is between her father-in-law and daughter.

Both Orgon and Todero betray their families by allowing an outsider to penetrate the intimacy of their home. After witnessing his great acts of devotion and charity at church, Orgon is so taken by Tartuffe that he brings him home to stay. To his family's disbelief, Orgon attributes to him qualities of saintliness and ascetism. Whereas the members of his family realize that Tartuffe is a hypocrite and an imposter and that he has used his influence over Orgon to gain access into his home and "s'impatronise[r]" (v. 62), Orgon cannot distinguish between "l'hypocrisie et la dévotion" (v. 332), between "le masque et le visage"
(v. 334). His infatuation with Tartuffe is such that he can no longer see the obvious, let alone "l'artifice...[et] l'apparence" (vv. 335-6). As Tartuffe himself admits to Elmire, he has succeeded in making Orgon "voir tout sans rien croire" (v. 1526). Early in the play, Dorine tells Cléante, Elmire's brother, about Orgon's inability to perceive Tartuffe's gluttony even when the man is gorging himself before Organ's very eyes. Her words are borne out when a returning Orgon asks her how things have been at home. Dorine contrasts descriptions of Elmire's poor health with descriptions of Tartuffe's robustness but Orgon is only interested in hearing about Tartuffe. Moreover, although Dorine depicts a man who is bursting with vigour, Orgon expresses concern for him. "Le pauvre homme" (pp. 276-7), he repeats several times, and this mechanical repetition of the same line is, as in the case of Harpagon and Todero, indicative of his idée fixe.

Not content to have brought Tartuffe into the home, Orgon wants to subject his family to Tartuffe's moral tyranny. The opening scene of the play reveals that Orgon's family is a respectable bourgeois family, comfortably well-off and comprised of honnêtes gens who, before the coming of Tartuffe, were all happy and free to enjoy those social pastimes, "ces visites, ces bals, ces conversations" (v. 151) which Madame Pernelle joins with her son and Tartuffe in condemning. This Molière play presents for the first time a positive image of the bourgeoisie. The family, which includes servants such as Dorine who have been with it for a long time, is outraged by the control that Tartuffe, "un inconnu...[et] un gueux" (vv. 62-3), has acquired, with Orgon's approval, in their home. Dorine has her personal objections to Tartuffe: she has to put up with his servant, Laurent, interfering in her affairs as well as Tartuffe.
In the Goldoni play, Pellegrin, his wife, Marcolina, and their daughter, Zanetta, live with his father, Todero, who is the head of the family. Here, as in the Molière play, servants are also part of the household. Although the family business is doing well, Todero tries to disclaim it and he tyrannizes his household with his avarice and constant complaining. We have already seen how miserly he is with such staples as rice and firewood, but Todero is grasping in terms of his authority as well. "In sta casa," he insists, "no ghe xe altri patroni che me" (p. 839); he gets very angry when the servants fail to address him as patron and even more so when they refer to Pellegrin and Marcolina as patron and patrona. Moreover, Todero has always completely dominated his son; consequently, even as "un omo de trentacinque o trentasie anni, maridà, pare de fioi, contanta intrada," Pellegrin is "soggetto al pare co fa un putello" (p. 826), Pellegrin is allowed no say in either the household or the family business, and Todero does not permit him "de spender un ducato a so modo" (p. 826). As a result, Marcolina, even after all the years that she has lived in her father-in-law's house, is also "parona de gnente" (p. 826). There are times, for example, when she cannot have her morning coffee because Todero, in one of his many attempts to economize, has locked up the sugar and the coffee. Todero, like Madame Pernelle and the rusteghi, does not approve of social functions, and his daughter-in-law complains that not once in her married life has she participated in any divertimenti. Marcolina's life contrasts sharply with Elmire for whereas Elmire has been dealing with Orgon's obsession for only a short time, Marcolina has had to put up with Todero's avarice all of her married life.
Todero considers his son worthless in matters of business because of his passivity. But if Pellegrin is "un alocco" (p. 840), "un bon da gnente" (p. 897), it is largely due to having lived all his life under his father's strict authority. Thus, at the same time that he resents his son's submissiveness, Todero demands it. Although Todero admits, "son vecchio; certe fadighe no le posso più far" (p. 840), he refuses to go to his son for help for that would mean lessening his hold on the family and the business. Instead, he employs Desiderio as his steward and Desiderio's son, Nicoletto, as his helper. Despite Todero's claim that they are related "alla lontana" (p. 840), they are basically strangers to the family. Thus, Todero puts the control of his household and business into the hands of an outsider whose trust has not been proven; and he wrongs his family in the same way as Orgon, although not to the same extent for whereas Todero risks only financial ruin, Orgon risks imprisonment as well.

Like Orgon, Todero is blind to the obvious and completely taken by a self-seeking interloper. Todero believes Desiderio to be "un galantomo... un omo attento... fedel" (p. 840), whereas the rest of the household knows that Desiderio is only looking after his own interests. Although Todero is very pleased with Desiderio's and Nicoletto's work, he does not pay them a salary. He thinks that if he treats them as family members, letting them take their meals with the rest of the family, they will be in his debt and therefore not expect a salary. Since both Marcolina and Desiderio mention that they eat all together and imply that this is an uncommon occurrence, it indicates to what degree Desiderio and Nicoletto have penetrated the intimacy of the family. For Todero,
Desiderio is the realization of a miser's dream: someone who will work without a salary. Blinded by his avarice, Todero refuses to acknowledge that no one works for nothing. If Desiderio is staying on without being paid, it is because the arrangement suits him; more specifically, he is paying himself by helping himself to Todero's wealth on the sly. The rest of the family is well aware of this situation, for Marcolina says to Cecilia, the servant girl, "s'ha da véder sta mostruosità, che un capo de casa. . .se lassa menar per el naso"—Tartuffe describes Orgon as "un homme. . .à mener par le nez" (v. 1524) as well—"da un tangaro, de un fattor, che se fa la ponga per elo" (p. 826). That this is what has been happening all along is confirmed at the end when Todero dismisses Desiderio and he at first refuses to go, saying that he expects some recompense for his work or he will sue. But when Meneghetto suggests that "sior Desiderio renda conto della so amministratzion" (p. 898), Desiderio undergoes a quick change of heart and departs in a hurry. Todero subjects his family to his niggardly economy measures while Desiderio is enriching himself at their expense in the same way that Orgon expects his family to observe Tartuffe's moral maximes while Tartuffe is free to eat like a glutton and drink like a fish.

In both plays, although the families are highly critical of the outsiders, they are resigned to their presence in the home; they have, moreover, little say in the matter. But when the head of the family decides to integrate further the outsider into the family by marrying him to his daughter, in the case of Orgon, and to his granddaughter, in that of Todero, the families realize that they can no longer be tolerant and that they must resist parental authority. In neither play, however, is it
just a question of the traditional comic plot. Mariane and Valère love each other and so do Zanetta and Meneghetto, but if their families are ready to help them marry against the blocking figure's wishes, it is not only because the young people are in love. Comic conventions aside, both Orgon and Todero are, with regard to their times, overstepping their authority. Although it was common practice in seventeenth century France for the father to choose a husband for his daughter, Orgon, in wanting to give Mariane in marriage to Tartuffe, is going back on his word for he had already promised her to Valère. In eighteenth century Venetian society, it was still the practice for fathers to choose husbands for their daughters. Todero, however, is Zanetta's grandfather, and although he maintains, "mi son el pare del pare, e son paron dei fioi, e son paron della nezza, e della dota, della casa, e de tutto quel che voggio mi" (p. 845), he does not have the right to arrange a marriage for Zanetta, especially behind her parents' back. We have proof of this from the play itself. Marcolina insists that a girl only needs her parents' approval to marry. And although Meneghetto will not marry Zanetta "senza che el nonno lo sappia" (p. 872), he nevertheless admits that "xe vero che el pare e la mare gh'ha autorità sulla putta" (p. 873). Moreover, the marriages which Orgon and Todero want to arrange are social transgressions. At the time of Molière and Goldoni, when a father chose a husband for his daughter, he gave utmost consideration to a man's social standing and financial situation in order that her future may be secure. It is obvious that both Tartuffe and Nicoletto, whose social positions are unclear and who have no fortune, would make poor husbands in the eyes of Molière's and Goldoni's contemporaries. Conversely, Valère and Meneghetto are the
young women's social equals and of financially secure families.

Like Argan in *Le Malade imaginaire*, neither Orgon nor Todero wants his daughter or granddaughter to marry the man that he has chosen for any other reason except that it suits him. Orgon, who seems to be undergoing some kind of middle-age crisis, a case perhaps of persecution complex, or as some directors have suggested, of latent homosexuality, has convinced himself that he cannot live without Tartuffe. The only way that he can be certain of always having Tartuffe with him is to make him his son-in-law. Similarly, Todero believes that he cannot do without Desiderio. It is quite clear that Desiderio, like Tartuffe is very well aware of the amount of influence that he exerts over the head of the household. Todero thinks that he can kill two birds with one stone by having Nicoletto marry his granddaughter: "[xe] la maniera de beneficar [Desiderio] senza darghe un bezzo del mio" (p. 840) as well as "[d'obligar] pare e fio a star con mi, e a servirme come vôi mi" (p. 843). According to Todero's perverted reasoning, he does not expect to have to pay out Zanetta's dowry because the young couple and Desiderio will owe him their living expenses. Moreover, as if he were never to die, Todero plans for the future for he believes that this marriage will assure him a long line of unsalaried workers: "se nassera dei fioi. . .[e] se i sarà maschi, i vegnirà grandi, i me servirà. I manderò fora in tei mi loghi, i me servirà da fattori" (p. 843).

In each of the two plays, the family first tries to dissuade the blocking figure from his purpose by appealing to reason. In *Sior Todero brontolon*, Meneghetto wants to use "delle strade oneste, dei mezzi fortì e civili per mover l'animo de Sior missier" (p. 873). Meneghetto does get
close in persuading Todero to let him marry Zanetta. Todero is impressed by the young man's manner and bearing; in an aside he admits, "No se pol negar, che nol gh'abbia delle massime da omo civil" (p. 882). Meneghetto manages to prick that little sense of honour left in Todero by telling him that everyone thinks he is marrying off Zanetta to Nicoletto to save the expense of her dowry and at the same time, bait the old man's greed by promising to marry Zanetta without a dowry. Todero does hesitate, "Xe vero che maridando mia nezza co sto sior, in fazza del mondo parerave più bon" (p. 884), before he considers the alternative and decides to reject Meneghetto because he does not want to pay Desiderio and Nicoletto. Where Meneghetto has failed to persuade, no one else can hope to succeed.

Even before Orgon announces that Tartuffe is to be Mariane's husband, the family suspects that Mariane's marriage to Valère is in jeopardy because of Tartuffe. Consequently, Cléante attempts to discuss philosophically with Orgon the difference between true and false dévots and open Orgon's eyes to Tartuffe's real nature and to the danger he presents. He points out to Orgon that "ceux qui font beaucoup de bruit [ne sont pas]/Les bons et vrais dévots" (vv. 328-9) and he warns that "Ces gens qui.../Font de dévotion métier et marchandise/...Sont.../D'autant plus dangereux.../Qu'ils prennent contre nous des armes qu'on révère" (vv. 365-378). Cléante's basic argument that it is still waters that run deep is, however, antipathetic to Orgon, who like his mother, can only judge by external behaviour. In fact, at the beginning of the play, Madame Pernelle criticizes Mariane for being "discrète...[et] doucette" (vv. 22-3) because she believes that "il n'est...pire eau que l'eau qui dort" (v. 23). Both Orgon and Madame Pernelle "cannot even imagine that
spiritual values might exist apart from specific manifestations of piety."

Dorin's line of argument is more blunt and practical. She first questions Orgon's choice of a husband on society's terms, "que vous apportez une telle alliance?/A quel sujet aller, avec tout votre bien,/Choisir un gendre gueux?" (vv. 482-3). She discredits Orgon's claim that Tartuffe is an impoverished gentleman and resorts to an even more down-to-earth argument: "Sachez que d'une fille on risque la vertu,/Lorsque dans son hymen son goût est combattu" (vv. 507-8), "Et qui donne à sa fille un homme qu'elle hait/Est responsable au Ciel des fautes qu'elle fait" (vv. 515-6). But despite Orgon's zeal for virtue, her words fall on deaf ears. Dorine's argument is interesting for it also reveals the absurdity in the reasoning of Arnolphe and his like who, while they fear being cuckolded, insist on marrying a girl who does not love them.

Damis, who has overheard Tartuffe trying to seduce his stepmother, thinks he can use this information to convince his father that he has grossly misjudged Tartuffe. Unfortunately Damis does not realize that in order to succeed, his father must believe him over Tartuffe. Elmire, however, knows that even if she were to back Damis, the die is loaded in Tartuffe's favour. Moreover, she cannot risk her one advantage, and perhaps the family's only chance of getting rid of Tartuffe, by exposing to him where her loyalties lie. Unable to restrain Damis, she therefore prefers to withdraw from the ensuing scene. Not surprisingly, given Tartuffe's adeptness in handling Orgon—like many an able trickster, Tartuffe in this scene resorts to deception by way of truth—Orgon accuses his son of plotting with the others "pour ôter de chez [lui] ce dévot personnage" (v. 112). And when Damis refuses to beg Tartuffe's pardon, he banishes him
from his home. Consequently, Orgon also wishes that Tartuffe keep his wife constant company and that he be his only heir. Orgon himself explains that his motivation is "[pour] faire enragier le monde" (v. 1173), "pour confondre l'orgueil de toute [sa] famille" (v. 1126), an intention which indicates that Orgon is indeed suffering from a persecution complex.

Logical arguments have no effect on Orgon and Todero because such arguments imply that there is a rational basis to their behaviour. Orgon and Todero, however, are obsessed creatures; they respond to a logic which is rational only to them and their selfish interests have hardened their hearts against emotional appeals. When Mariane implores Orgon on her knees not to make her marry Tartuffe, Orgon hesitates, but even Mariane's emotional appeal is ineffective for Tartuffe has taught Orgon "à n'avoir affection pour rien" (v. 276). If Todero avoids meeting Marcolina, it is because he does not want to have to deal with her tears and anger and not because he is afraid of being moved. Both Elmire and Marcolina seem to have understood this for they do not put their trust in the attempts which seek to persuade the blocking figures through words. Marcolina admires Meneghetto's sincerity but she correctly foresees that he will not succeed in convincing Todero, "No i lo cognosse; no i sa chi el sia; no faremo gnente" (p. 873). In Tartuffe, everyone except Elmire tries to show Orgon that he is wrong by appealing to reason. Although Elmire does not come out like Marcolina and express her doubts about the ineffectiveness of using reason to dissuade a blocking figure, she is never seen discussing with Orgon the issue of Mariane's marriage. Both Elmire and Marcolina realize that the only way they can thwart the blocking figure is by resorting to trickery. Dorine, who is not blind to Tartuffe's interest in her mistress
probably suggests to Elmire to arrange a tête à tête with Tartuffe and to pretend not to find his attentions offensive in order to discourage him from marrying Mariane. Dorine demonstrates that she is as adept a trickster as any wily servant in comedy when she coaches Mariane how to act in front of her father. But Dorine's efforts come too late, for whether or not Mariane would have had enough spirit to put into practice her advice, Orgon decrees that Mariane is to marry Tartuffe that very evening. It is at this point that Elmire decides to take matters into her own hands and force Orgon to see Tartuffe "avec pleine lumière" (v. 1342). We do not know how successful Elmire would have been in her first encounter with Tartuffe if Damis had not interrupted them, but Elmire is prepared, despite Dorine's warning, to take Tartuffe on again and let Orgon hear the scoundrel for himself. "On est aisément dupé par ce qu'on aime" (v. 1357), she assures Dorine, "Et l'amour-propre engage à se tromper soi-même" (v. 1358). Elmire's foresightedness pays dividends: it is because she can say that she tried to restrain Damis and did not back him that Elmire can convince Tartuffe to trust her and to open his heart to her a second time. Elmire aptly leads Tartuffe on to the point that he also exposes his real opinion of Orgon. Even though his wife's honour and virtue are at stage—Elmire has coughed several times to warn him that "l'affaire [est] assez avant poussée" (v. 1382)—it is indicative of Orgon's egoism and rigidity of mind that he does not show himself until Tartuffe directly insults him.

In Sior Todero brontolon, Marcolina, unable to count on her spineless husband, finds an ally in Meneghetto's aunt, Fortunata, who acts as go-between for the two young people. Although Fortunata is not as
pessimistic as Marcolina regarding Meneghetto's ability to persuade Todero, the two women do not wait to hear from Meneghetto in taking matters into their own hands when the opportunity arises. Coming unexpectedly upon Cecilia rebuking Nicoletto for gloating about his future marriage to Zanetta when he had promised to marry her, Marcolina adds her string of insults to the poor fellow. Fortunata, however, approaches Nicoletto "fingendo dolcezza" (p. 888). Marcolina, taking her cue from Fortunata, quickly changes her tactics and the two women are therefore able to disarm the young man and get him to trust them. Together, with Cecilia's support, they are able to make him admit that he has no particular aspirations to Zanetta, that he agreed to marry her only because he is anxious to marry, and that he would prefer to have Cecilia as his wife. Although it is Cecilia who first makes Marcolina suspect that Todero is planning to marry Zanetta to Nicoletto, Marcolina does not realize until this moment the crucial role that Cecilia can play in frustrating Todero's plan. Reassured by Fortunata and Marcolina that they will stand by them and it is to the credit of the two women that they both keep their word at the end of the play—Nicoletto and Cecilia take each other as husband and wife, then and there, in the presence of Gregorio and the porter, Pasqual, who are called in on purpose to act as witnesses. It is at the end of this short marriage ceremony that a much saddened Meneghetto arrives to tell the gleeful women of his failure.

As in Tartuffe, the servant girl in Sior Todero brontolon is willing to go against the blocking figure's orders. Both Dorine and Cecilia demonstrate that they are dedicated to the cause of love. Although Dorine also has personal reasons for not wanting Tartuffe to become a
permanent member of the family, she reveals her genuine concern for Mariane and Valère in II, 4, when she has them make up after their dépit amoureux. Cecilia, however, is dedicated to her own need for love. Although Marcolina is too worried for her daughter's sake to consider Cecilia's need for love important, Cecilia's love for Nicoletto is such that she is willing to go without wages. For four months Todero has not paid her and she has not protested because he has promised to arrange a marriage for her and she has assumed that it is Nicoletto who Todero will pick out as a husband for her. In looking after her own needs, the servant girl, in this comedy as in other Goldoni comedies, helps the young lovers to realize their marriage, but nowhere are the interests of the servant girl so directly advantageous to the young lovers as they are here.

In both plays there are suggestions that trickery is not an honest activity. Its association with Dorine in Tartuffe reaffirms the comic tradition that it is social inferiors who resort to it. Elmire reinforces the idea that trickery is inimical to a well-born woman by apologizing to Tartuffe after having deceived him: "C'est contre mon humeur que j'ai fait tout ceci:/Mais on m'a mise au point de vous traiter ainsi" (vv. 1551-2). In Sior Todero brontolon, Marcolina suggests to Meneghietto, since he is not in immediate need of Zanetta's dowry, that he marry Zanetta without Todero's knowledge, "più presto che femo, se cavemo fora da ogni pericolo, da ogni batticuor. Mio mario xe contento; mi son contenta; la putta più che più. Co 'l pare e la mare ghe la dà, co elo la vol, se trova do testimoni, e se fa tutto quel che s'ha da far" (p. 872). To this, Fortunata gives her whole-hearted approval. But Meneghietto, although he agrees that Zanetta's parents are in their right to oppose
Todero's plan to give his granddaughter "a una persona indegna che non la merita, e che ghe pol far disonor" (p. 873), he objects to Marcolina's method, "ma gnanca per questo, la me perdonna, no i l'ha da maridar in scondon, no i ha da corregger un mal con un altro mal, no s'ha da perder el respetto a un pare e a un missier, che s'ha da compartir per matura, che s'ha da soffrir per legge, per convenienza e per onestà" (p. 873). And Marcolina concedes that he is right and feels ashamed of her previous thoughts. These indications in the plays that trickery is contrary to civilized behaviour and the fact that it is only women who suggest and resort to trickery could imply a certain misogyny on the part of Molière and Goldoni. However, at a closer look, it is obvious that both playwrights justify within the context of their plays the actions of the trickster woman.

In Tartuffe, as rhetorical means continue to fail in turning Orgon from his purpose, the need to resort to trickery becomes more and more apparent, a situation which is dramatized in the first scene of Act IV where Cléante futilely attempts to reason with Tartuffe, a scene which is immediately followed by the news that Orgon plans to conclude Mariane's and Tartuffe's marriage contract for that evening and Elmire's decision to deceive Tartuffe into exposing his true nature. In Sior Todero brontolon, while Meneghetto's speech about wanting to use solely honourable methods in winning Todero's approval shames Marcolina (only temporarily, however), it does not lessen her anxiety for her daughter. For Meneghetto makes it quite clear that if he were to fail in moving Todero by "mezzi forti e civili" (p. 873), he would not resort to trickery even if it were to mean losing Zanetta forever. "Tutto se fazza, tutto se tenta," he insists, "ma
che se salva el decoro, la giustizia, la convenienza, l'onor" (p. 875).
Like Fulgenzio in *Gli'innamorati*, Meneghetto subjects love to honour and
thus reveals a certain rigidity in his thinking which not even Zanetta's
tears can move. Zanetta objects to the conditions which he puts on love.
When Meneghetto asks her in II, 14, if she has heard "quanta premura che
gh' [ha] de aver la fortuna d'averla" (p. 874), Zanetta corrects him,
"Siora mare voleva, e elo no vol" (p. 875), and when he tries to reassure
her that he loves her, Zanetta answers, "Mi no ghe credo né bezzo, né
bagattin" (p. 875).

In opposing the dictates of the father figure, Elmire as well
as Marcolina is essentially fighting an intruder, and one who has been the
first to resort to deceptive means for both Tartuffe and Desiderio are
adept though villainous tricksters. The women are therefore playing the
game by the intruder's rules. As Toinette in *Le Malade imaginaire* and
Corallina in *La castalda* demonstrate, trickery can only be defeated by more
subtle trickery. There is also an important difference between the women's
ends and the intruders' in their use of trickery which serves to further
justify the women's actions. Tartuffe and Desiderio deceive in order to
further their personal interests at the cost of the happiness of others;
the women, on the other hand, resort to deceptive means out of altruism.
Elmire, unlike Béline in *Le Malade imaginaire*, has taken her role as wife
and stepmother seriously. It is essentially for Mariane's and Damis' sake
that she decides, at the price of her own honour, to deceive Tartuffe. In
the case of Marcolina, it is for her daughter's happiness that she is
prepared to oppose at all costs Todero's plan, even if it means deceiving him.
Marcolina's maternal instincts rise to a crescendo in a passionate out-
burst to Pellegrin:

ho sempre sopportà, e sopporto, e no digo gnente. . .
Perché son una donna discreta, perché son una donna
d'onor. . . Ma che nol me tocca la mia creatura. Soffrirò
tutto; ma no soffrirò mai che el me la marida a so
modo. . . La xe le mie viscere. No gh'ho altro ben a
sto mondo, no gh'ho altra consolazion che quelle care
ralse; e co penso che i me la vol tor, co penso che i
me la pol negar, che i me la pol sassinar, me sento
proprio che me schioppa el cuor. (pp. 860-1)

Marcolina believes that her motherhood is justification enough in resorting to trickery for her daughter's sake. When she says to herself, "Xe giusto che a una bona putta ghe abbia da toccar la grazia de un bon mario" (p. 852), she is voicing the claim of traditional comedy by which all tricksters who are dedicated to the cause of love are justified.

In both plays, the women's deception is successful. In Sior Todero brontolon, neither Desiderio nor Todero can undo what has been done. Realizing that he can no longer make Desdierio work for nothing, Todero dismisses him and agrees to let Meneghetto marry Zanetta since he is still willing to take her "senza dota." Elmire is successful with her deception in that Orgon finally sees the truth; unhappily, she does not know to what extent Orgon has confided in Tartuffe. Orgon agreed to go through with Elmire's plan because he was certain that nothing would come of it. It is indicative of his rigidity of mind that he does not stop to consider the consequences if by any chance Elmire and the others were right about Tartuffe: that is, he cannot interrupt Tartuffe's seduction of his wife without revealing to Tartuffe that he knows his true nature, and revealing this to Tartuffe, to whom he has handed over not only the ownership of his home but, more seriously, politically incriminating papers, would be one of the most foolish things that Orgon could do. But Orgon's foolishness
does not stop there: angered by Tartuffe's betrayal, he orders him out of his house. Needless to say, it is Orgon and his family who must leave. Tartuffe informs them that they must vacate by the next day and he returns with the king's exempt to take Orgon to prison. The play risks turning into a tragedy, hence, the need for a deus ex machina to ensure a happy ending. Molière is able to right the situation by having the king intervene. Unlike Orgon, the king reveals that he can differentiate between hypocrisy and sincerity and he restores to Orgon his property and forgives him his past disloyalty. It is interesting that Molière presents the king himself as an able trickster--a fact which helps to legitimize the use of trickery in certain situations--for everyone thinks the exempt has come to take Orgon away, but when Tartuffe tells him, "Deliverez-moi, Monsieur, de la criaillerie,/Et daignez accomplir votre order, je vous prie" (vv. 1897-8), the exempt has a surprise in store for him: it is not Orgon but Tartuffe who the king has sentenced to prison.

*   *   *

In these two plays, the three contests, youth-age, servant-master, women-men, are superimposed one on top of the other, or rather, with the exception of the young men, the eiron and alazon figures of the first two contests are subsumed by the woman versus man contest. In Goldoni's La locandiera, played for the first time in 1753 and probably his best known comedy, we find all three of the eiron figures present in these three different contests, incorporated in one character: Mirandolina. It is to the characterization of Mirandolina that the comedy owes its popularity. Mirandolina, as the title indicates, is an innkeeper. Her father has recently died and left her in charge of his inn. Mirandolina is also young.
and attractive for she wins the admiration and often the love of many of her guests. We learn this at the very beginning of the play, in the opening scene, when we encounter the Marchese di Forlipopli and the Conte d'Albafiorita, two of Mirandolina's guests, quarelling over their love for her. A few scenes later, Mirandolina herself informs us, "Quanti arrivano a questa locanda, tutti di me s'innamorano, tutti mi fanno i cascamenti; e tanti e tanti me esibiscono di sposarmi a dirittura." Unlike the average heroine in a traditional comedy, Mirandolina is not dependent on a father or guardian. However, her faithful employee, Fabrizio, seeks to control her freedom for he constantly criticizes the liberties she takes with her gentlemen guests. Moreover, he keeps reminding her of her father's last words which we are left to assume expressed his desire that Mirandolina marry Fabrizio. Thus, in more than one way, Fabrizio represents a father figure in the face of whom Mirandolina must continually reassert her freedom. "So quel che fo, non ho bisogno di correttori" (p. 351), she tells Fabrizio in response to his reproaches, "[e] quando mi vorrò maritare, me ricorderò di quel che ha detto mio padre" (p. 351).

As an innkeeper, Mirandolina is in a position similar to Corallina, the castalda. Mirandolina has servants under her management but at the same time she must cater to her guests, that is, serve them. At one point, she says to the Cavaliere di Ripafratta, "Dove possa servirla, mi comandi con autorità. . . sono almeno sicura che con lei posso trattare con libertà, senza sospetto che voglia fare cattivo uso delle mie attenzioni, e che mi tenga in qualità di serva" (p. 359). Her servant-like position is reinforced by the fact that many of her guests are aristocrats.
When she brings one of her personally prepared dishes to the Cavalier's table, he protests, "Questo non è offizio vostro" (p. 374), but she corrects him, "Oh signore, chi son io? Una qualche signora? Sono una serva di chi favorisce venire alla mia locanda" (p. 374). Mirandolina's remarks to the Cavaliere may be suspect—he is, in part, charmed by her "umiltà" (p. 374) and obliging ways—but she is well aware of her class situation and does not aspire to marry into the nobility. She herself admits in a monologue, "La nobiltà non fa per me" (p. 350). Although Mirandolina boasts, "Se avessi sposati tutti quello che hanno detto volermi, oh, avrei pure tanti mariti!" (p. 350), we never see any of the aristocrats who are in love with her propose marriage. Only once does the question of marriage arise with them and this is when the Marchese says to Mirandolina, "Se fossi un conte ridicolo come lui...vi sposerei" (p. 350). But the proposal does not bind the Marchese in any way for it is based on an impossible condition. The Conte and the Marchese make no secret of their intentions. They differ only in how they expect to win Mirandolina's favour; the Conte explains this difference to the Cavaliere, "Il marchese pretende corrispondenza, come un tributo all sua nobiltà. Io la spero, come una ricompensa alle mie attenzioni" (p. 344). When the Marchese visits the Cavaliere in his room with the intent to borrow money, the Cavaliere expresses his disapproval not just because the Marchese has succumb to a woman's charms but because that woman is only a locandiera. Through her artful ways, Mirandolina succeeds in making the Cavaliere fall passionately in love with her. But his intentions are even less honourable than the Marchese's and the Conte's. When Mirandolina, feigning ignorance, asks him, "Che cose vuole da me" (p. 403), he answers,
"Amore, compassione, pietà" (p. 403), and although he tells her, "Voi meritereste l'amore di un re" (p. 402), he never mentions marriage. To the Cavaliere's remark that she is worthy of a king's love, Mirandolina mockingly replies, "Del re di spade o del re di coppe" (p. 402), further revealing that she has no illusions about her position in society. The Cavaliere's passion for Mirandolina is such that he is prepared to force himself upon her and Mirandolina has reason to fear for her reputation and her life. Fabrizio confronts the Cavaliere with this ugly truth when he takes it upon himself to defend Mirandolina, "V.S. paga i suoi denari per essere servito nelle cose lecite e oneste: ma non ha poi da pretendere... che una donna onorata..." (p. 414). If it were not for Fabrizio, Mirandolina would be completely defenceless, for even the Conte and the Marchese turn their back on her. Believing that the Cavaliere has won Mirandolina's love, the Conte urges the Marchese to join him in seeking lodgings elsewhere, "Andiamo e vendichiamoci di questa femmina sconosciute" (p. 409), and later he adds, "Voglio rovinare la sua locanda. Ho fatto andar via anche quelle due commedianti" (p. 410). In order to save herself in the servant-master contest which she has activated, Mirandolina's only recourse is to marry Fabrizio. "Finalmente con un tal matrimonio," she reasons, "posso sperar di mettere al coperto il mio interesse e la mia reputazione, senza pregiudicare all mia libertà" (p. 411). Although Mirandolina hopes that she will not compromise her freedom in marrying Fabrizio, she is, as Petrini notes, "consapevole di dover fare un sacrificio."22 It is, however, "proprio nella sua scelta di Fabrizio"23 that Mirandolina demonstrates her freedom for with her decision to marry Fabrizio, "è stato smascherato e superato..."
vecchio giuoco di compromessi ambigui di nobili vagabondi e di locandiere più o meno compiacenti." In making public her promise of marriage to Fabrizio, she also appeases the Conte and the Marchese who do not consider Fabrizio a serious rival, but more important, she forces the Cavaliere, driven by jealousy, to reveal to the others that despite his prior claims of being the enemy of women he has fallen in love with Mirandolina. As Mirandolina explains, it is not enough that "il di lui cuore [sia] in fuoco, in fiamma, in cenere. ...Per compiere la mia vittoria, [bisogna] che si renda pubblico il mio trionfo, a scorno degli uomini presuntuosi, e ad onore del nostro sesso" (p. 395). It may very well be true, as Petrini maintains, that never before this play had the theatre shown "una locandiera competere, vincitrice, con dei nobili," but if Mirandolina resorts to deception and dissimulation in order to triumph over the Cavaliere it is not because he is her social superior but because he is a man who denigrates women. At first, when she was insulted and angered by the Cavaliere's rude behaviour towards her, Mirandolina intended only to send him away. His avowed hatred for all women, however, fuels her anger and Mirandolina decides to vindicate herself as well as her sex: "voglio usar tutta l'arte per vincere, abbattere e conquassare quei cuori barbari e duri che son nemici di noi, che siamo la miglior cosa che abbia prodotto al mondo la bella madre natura" (p. 351). That she is both a woman and a popolana, and therefore in a double subordinate position only reinforces the comic reversal. Although both the youth-age and servant-master dialectics are present in La locandiera, it is the contest of woman versus man which predominates.
Analyzed from this perspective, La locandiera is very similar to Molière's Le Misanthrope where it is no longer a question of young people and servants resisting authority figures but of a woman struggling for independence in a man's world. If not Molière's most popular play, Le Misanthrope, written in 1666, is perhaps his masterpiece. Molière himself believed that "il ne ferait jamais mieux." Aside their class difference, Célimène and Mirandolina have much in common and react in similar ways. In both comedies, the heroine enjoys an unaccustomed amount of freedom. Célimène is a young widow and widowhood was a privileged position for women in seventeenth century France, for "only as a widow... did a woman achieve legal independence of both father and husband." Moreover, because all of the characters are young aristocrats and therefore of the same class and age, Le Misanthrope presents a contest purely between women and men. By managing her father's inn, Mirandolina is able to support herself and maintain her independence. This is an important point in the play for Goldoni makes it very clear throughout that Mirandolina is a competent innkeeper. When she is irritated by the Cavaliere's rude behaviour and considers telling him to leave her premises, the Marchese says that he will make the Cavaliere go and the Conte assures her that he will cover any money losses that the Cavaliere's departure will bring her. But Mirandolina does not need any help from them. "Grazie, signori miei," she tells them, "Ho tanto spirito che basta, per dire ad un forestiere ch'io non lo voglio, e circa all'utile, la mia locanda non ha mai camere in ozio" (p. 348). When the Cavaliere, beginning to feel the effect of Mirandolina's charm, decides to leave and asks Fabrizio for the bill, he is surprised to learn that Mirandolina takes care
of all the accounts and has always done so even when her father was alive for as Fabrizio explains, "Scrive e sa far di conto meglio di qualche giovane di negozio" (p. 392).

Both women are happy in their present state and neither of them is anxious to marry for it would mean the loss of her freedom. Mirandolina could very well be speaking for Célimène when she thinks to herself, "A maritarmi non ci penso nemmeno; non ho bisogno di nessuno; vivo onestamente, e godo la mia libertà. Tratto con tutti, ma non m'innamoro mai di nessuno" (p. 350). These two comedies are unique in that there is only one eiron, one, moreover, who confronts unaided a group of alazons. Célimène and Mirandolina know quite well that they live "in a world of aggressive and predatory males" and that, "though legally free, the unattached woman [is] vulnerable and [needs] protection." Thus, Célimène as well as Mirandolina tries "to preserve her freedom by seeking the protection of many men rather than a single one--by manipulating, in sum, the desires of men to suit her own interests." They hope to maintain their independence by avoiding committing themselves to one man. If, without making any definite promises, Célimène and Mirandolina can lead each of their suitors to believe he is the favoured one, they can expect to be served and protected indefinitely. Thus, in Célimène's salon "tout l'univers est hien reçu" (v. 496) because, as she explains to Alceste, there are people who "ont gagné dans la cour de parler hautement... [et] ils peuvent [nous] nuire" (vv. 544-6). She tells Alceste that Clitandre can help her to win her lawsuit, and although we can question Célimène's sincerity in her treatment of Alceste, Alceste does lose his case because, unlike Célimène, he refuses to plead or "solicite" for his cause. With
regard to Mirandolina, Fabrizio agrees to remain in her employment only because he believes that she will eventually marry him. Mirandolina is agreeable and charming to her gentlemen guests because it is good business sense. But she is attentive to all her guests as her treatment of Dejanira and Ortensia, even when she discovers that they are actresses, reveals. She knows that if she keeps her guests happy, they will not only return but also advertise her business by speaking well of her. It is, after all, by making her guests leave that the Conte tries to harm Mirandolina. Moreover, it must be noted that Mirandolina is at a disadvantage for the popular consensus was that a woman could not manage an inn alone. On this subject the Conte says, "Sola una giovane alla testa di una locanda si troverà imbrogliata" (p. 342), and Fabrizio reproaches her when she finds herself with an impassioned Cavaliere on her hands, "Vedete: questo vuol dire perché siete una giovane sola, senza padre, senza madre, senza nessuno. Se foste maritata, non andrebbe così" (p. 412). If Mirandolina resents the Cavaliere's rude treatment of her, it is in part because he is prejudicing the reputation of her inn.

The marquis, Acaste and Clitandre in *Le Misanthrope* and their parallel figures, the Conte and the Marchese in *La locandiera* are, in true alazon fashion, equally pretentious, self-centered, literal-minded and totally lacking in self-knowledge. Because of the alazons' inability to perceive double meanings, in both comedies the eiron is able "to multiply the signs of her good intentions without making any firm commitments," her art therefore lies in being ambiguous. Her strategy is very simple: she lets her suitors, who are restricted by their egoism, hear what they want to hear and think what they want to think. Clitandre and
Acaste reveal their meanness and dullness in their enjoyment of Célimène's witty but annihilating portraits of people they know. Lacking Célimène's wit and spirit, they cannot satirize others with such brilliance and must therefore incite her to create more of the same kind. A sort of symbiotic relationship results between the marquis and Célimène: Célimène's "humeur satirique" (v. 661) thrives on their flattery and their sense of worth is nourished by her satirical portraits. Since they have not received, as they admit to each other at the beginning of Act III, any positive proof from Célimène that she favours either of them, Acaste's as well as Clitandre's hope that he is the preferred one is strengthened by hearing Célimène criticize others. They are, however, "delighting in Célimène's expert humiliating of their doubles." Although phrases from her descriptions such as "La stérilité de son expression" (v. 607), "l'orgueil extrême" (v. 617), "gonflé de l'amour de soi-même" (v. 618), "il veut avoir trop d'esprit" (v. 634) are all equally applicable to Acaste and Clitandre, they never see themselves reflected in Célimène's portraits. In vying for Mirandolina's love, the Conte as well as the Marchese seeks to highlight himself and humiliate the other. Mirandolina, however, knows that she has only to accept the Conte's gifts and he will believe that she must love him. If she humours the Marchese's claim to aristocratic superiority, he is convinced that she favours him. Thus, she is able to make both of them happy without antagonizing either one, and they make her happy by prolonging their stay at her inn.

Although they enjoy being desired—Mirandolina's words, "Tutto il mio piacere consiste in vedermi servita, vagheggiata, adorata" (p. 350), would not be out of character if spoken by Célimène—Célimène and
Mirandolina are well aware of their suitors' ridiculousness. In her asides and in her description of them to the Cavaliere, Mirandolina reveals that she considers the Conte and the Marchese "caricature affettate" "con pretensioni ridicole" (p. 359). In her letter to Acaste, Célimène tells him that Clitandre "est extravagant" (p. 86) and to Clitandre she writes what she really thinks of Acaste, "il n'y a rien de si mince que toute sa personne; et ce sont de ses merites qui n'ont que la cape et l'épée" (p. 85). In fact, both heroines over-estimates their suitors' presumptuousness: Célimène never considers that Acaste and Clitandre will show each other their respective letters; in paying too close attention to the Cavaliere, Mirandolina does not foresee that she will unleash jealously in the Conte, the Marchese, and Fabrizio. In each case, however, something of this nature was bound to happen sooner or later for neither Célimène nor Mirandolina could expect to keep their suitors in a state of uncertainty forever.

In deceiving their suitors, Célimène and Mirandolina are not only prolonging their independence but also entertaining themselves, as all tricksters usually do. It is obvious that Célimène, in dazzling with her wit and spirit those she scorns, is enjoying herself, for she resents Alceste's interruption and wants to end the discussion that he has started. In a monologue at the beginning of La locandiera, Mirandolina says, "Voglio burlarmi di tante caricature di amanti spasimati" (pp. 350-1), and once again, her words could have been spoken by Célimène. Throughout the play, Mirandolina demonstrates that she has a sense of fun. Although she sees through Ortensia's and Dejanira's attempt to pass themselves off as noble ladies, Mirandolina does not expose their deception but introduces
them to the Marchese and to the Conte as dame. Dejanira, who is happily surprised, comments to herself, "La locandiera vuol seguitare a far la commedia" (p. 365).

Unlike Mirandolina, however, Célimène is an aristocrat and has time on her hands. In his article, "The Art of Melancholy in The Misanthrope," Gossman describes this Molière play as being set against the background of the Counter-reformation state of which "the monarchy of Molière's patron, Louis XIV...with its powerful administrative bureaucracy, its national religious and military policies, and its elaborate system of academies and pensions in the arts and sciences was the supreme and most successful embodiment." In order to ensure its "uniform and hegemonic structure" "every independent center of action, whether intellectual or poetic...religious...or social and political" was considered dissident and could not be tolerated. If in 1659, a few years before the première of Le Misanthrope, La Rochefoucauld can write of his melancholy and identify its causes, in Gossman's words, "as the enforced idleness and political obscurity imposed by the regime on men of independent character and ambition," we can imagine how much greater must have been the melancholy of women of similar character and ambition who were further restricted by their sex. Célimène's coquetterie is thus not only a way of maintaining her independence but also a way of "fighting boredom and melancholy."

Alceste and the Cavaliere are immediately recognizable as alazons by their hatred, for hatred, unlike love, is not a liberalizing force but a restricting one. Both Alceste and the Cavaliere hate insincerity but whereas Alceste rails against all mankind for playing false and being self-
seeking, the Cavaliere limits his condemnation to women alone. In their horror of insincerity, however, both Alceste and the Cavaliere are not honest with themselves.

If Alceste wants "qu'on soit sincère, et qu'en homme d'honneur,/On ne lâche aucun mot qui ne parte du cœur" (vv. 35-6), it is not for any genuine love of virtue but out of self-love. He denounces "la vaste complaisance" (v. 61) which he encounters constantly in his aristocratic world because "elle ne faut de merite aucune différence" (v. 62), and Alceste wants to be distinguished. "C'est n'estimer rien qu'estimer tout le monde" (v. 58), insists Alceste; he therefore considers himself superior to others. It is because he thinks so highly of himself that he expects to win his case on merit alone. But a seventeenth century French gentleman who refuses to solicit anyone's help with regard to his lawsuit is being as foolish as someone today refusing to hire the best lawyer that he can afford. Alceste is denying the very reason for the existence of law courts: that there are always two sides to every controversy.

There is an imbalance between Alceste's anger and the object of his criticisms for in essence what Alceste attacks with such vehemence is only the superficiality of his fellows; nowhere does he even touch upon the gross injustices of his society. Whether or not Molière was aware of what he was doing, these superficial criticisms which Alceste directs solely at his class reveal the vacuity of the ancien régime aristocracy. Certainly, because of our modern day sensibilities, the discrepancy between what Alceste reacts to and the nature of his reaction is apparent to us and we can only perceive it as ridiculous. Le Misanthrope was therefore potentially subversive in that it could "function...as a mirror revealing
the audience to itself" in the same way that Célimène's portraits of Timante, Damis, or Géralde are doubles of Clitandre and Acaste, a fact which could explain the mixed reaction to the play in Molière's time. Coming after Tartuffe, which Roger Planchon describes as "la première pièce bourgeoise," and Dom Juan, where an aristocrat is not portrayed in a positive light, it is not implausible that in Le Misanthrope Molière specifically intended to make certain statements about the aristocracy. In any case, there are other indirect criticisms of the aristocracy in the play. Gossman makes an interesting distinction between Alceste and Philinte: "Philinte takes a positive view of commerce and the circulation of words, goods, and services:

Lorsqu'un homme vous vient embrasser avec joie,
Il faut bien le payer de la même monnaie,
Répondre, comme on peut, à ses emprunts,
Et rendre offre pour offre, et serments pour serments. (vv. 37-40)

Alceste, in contrast speaks indignantly of 'commerce honteux' and 'estime ainsi prostituee.' Philinte's mercantile manner of expression was inimical to an ancien régime aristocrat for in seventeenth century France, "the merchant was despised by the nobleman and...[the merchant] in his turn showed an equal contempt for his own class; his own desire was to rise out of it into the aristocracy." Although we cannot safely assume that Philinte is a spokesman for Molière, his portrayal is a positive one. He is certainly not a blocking figure. Molière even has Philinte mention L'Ecole des maris and compare himself to Ariste and Alceste to Sganarelle. It is moreover the characteristic of blocking figures to be "preoccupied with conservation and retention, dead set against novelty, mobility, change, and exchange, the circulation of goods and of money, the free
circulation of women and of signs—everything that might unsettle the established order of things,"\textsuperscript{42} which is in exact opposition to Philinte's view. Moreover, unlike Alceste or Sganarelle, Philinte gets the girl in the end; and he is, in a sense, the hero of the play. Hubert puts us on the same track when he writes that in \textit{Le Sicilien} "Molière insists on the fact that Adraste, unlike most of his aristocratic compatriots, knows how to use his hands and has become quite an accomplished artist."\textsuperscript{43} Although she uses words and not paint, Célimène also creates portraits. Like Clitandre, Acaste, and Alceste, Célimène "lead[s] a life of luxurious futility,"\textsuperscript{44} but unlike them, she fulfills a function, and in a sense, earns her keep, by entertaining. With a "magical artistry"\textsuperscript{45} akin to a painter's, "she transmutes... emptiness into brilliant images, breathing life, as it were, into inert corporeal substance."\textsuperscript{46}

Alceste's opinion that one should be honest at all costs is so hard set that he is prepared to sacrifice sensitivity to sincerity. He thus reveals the selfish nature of his crusade against hypocrisy. Not only would he tell "la veille Emilie/Qu'à son age il sied mal de faire la jolie,/Et que le blanc qu'elle a scandalise chacun" (vv. 81-3), but he also repeatedly insults his friend, Philinte, the one person who stands by him to the very end. The play's last line is spoken by Philinte who asks Eliante to join him in discouraging Alceste from "le dessein que son coeur se propose" (v. 1808). In describing Alceste and his commitment to sincerity, Frye says that he may be in a strong position morally, "but the audience soon realizes that his friend Philinte, who is ready to lie in order to enable people to preserve their self-respect, is the more genuinely sincere of the two."\textsuperscript{47} The extent of Alceste's insensitivity,
however, is revealed in his treatment of Eliante. Though he knows that Eliante "a du penchant pour lui" (v. 215), he proposes marriage to her openly admitting that he only wishes to marry her in order to seek revenge on Célimène. We wonder too how true Alceste can be in his promise of bringing Eliante "un coeur tout dégagé des trompeurs attrait[es de Célimène]" (v. 1276).

As a wealthy aristocrat and an intelligent and attractive man—we have it from Philinte that there are several women who have their eye on Alceste—it suits Alceste's self-interest to rail against "lâche flatterie, injustice, intérêt, trahison, fourberie" (vv. 93-4) because they subvert the status quo. Célimène, however, because of her sex, is, like the young people and the servants that we met in previous comedies, in a subordinate position; like them, she has no reason for accepting things as they are. How much more readily we sympathize with Célimène than with the self-righteous prude, Arsinoé, who, in contrast to Célimène, has chosen the "role of active collaboration with the oppressor, identification with the male order, as the only effective means available to her of manipulating it." 48

In La locandiera, the Cavaliere is unjust in considering only women as creatures of deception. In the scene where he sees the Conte and the Marchese interact with Mirandolina, the Cavaliere describes her behaviour as "arte, arte sopraffina" (p. 345), but he never perceives the Conte and the Marchese as being insincere. He criticizes them for wasting their energy and not for being pretentious and affected. The Cavaliere thus reveals his double standard. When the Marchese asks Mirandolina to his room and Mirandolina responds to his impudent insinuation by telling
him politely and firmly that if he needs a service done in his room, "verrà il camerier a servirla" (p. 346), the Cavaliere accuses her of "temerità e impertinenze" (p. 346). In making a public show of giving Mirandolina a pair of diamond earrings, the Conte seeks to demonstrate his superiority over the Marchese more than to win Mirandolina's favour. Yet, when she accepts his gift, the Cavaliere comments on her greed and astuteness and overlooks not only the Conte's vanity but also the fact that the Conte has set up the situation in such a way that Mirandolina risks offending her guest if she does not accept. In any case, there is no excuse for the Cavaliere's rudeness towards Mirandolina whose only fault in his regard is to have been a gracious hostess when, on the other hand, he treats the Conte and the Marchese, who deserve to be ridiculed, with respect and politeness even when the latter comes to milk for him for money. In II, 6, the Marchese reveals the extent of his miserliness and egoism by offering Mirandolina and the Cavaliere a thimbleful of his Cyprus wine which he exalts to the highest degree. The Cavaliere, after confiding in Mirandolina that it is porcheria, praises the wine. And Mirandolina exposes to the Cavaliere his own lack of sincerity by saying, "Per me, signore, non posso dissimulare; non mi piace, lo trovo cattivo, e non posso dir che sia buono. Lodo chi sa fingere" (p. 381). Although Mirandolina's comment is part of her technique to win the Cavaliere's love by highlighting her honesty, her words operate at another level as well. They catch the Cavaliere in a moment of blindness: he accepts the Marchese's affectation and condones it with false praise when he would have decried the very same behaviour in women. Mirandolina's comment has an effect on the Cavaliere for he muses to himself, "Costei mi dà un
rimprovero; non capisco il perché" (p. 381), but he does not see through Mirandolina's words and if they trouble him, it is because they stir in him feelings of love for her.

The Cavaliere accuses all women of being "finte, bugiarde, lusinghiere" (p. 372), but he errs greatly in this generalization for all the characters in La locandiera play false, with this exception: Mirandolina is the only one for whom "la finzione...non è lo strumento per apparire diversi e migliori di quella che si è." Instead, for Mirandolina, deception is "il solo codice di vita possibile, perché l'unico che le permetta di ribadire la propria primazia su individui altrimenti qualificati a collocarsi gerarchicamente sopra di lei." Because the Cavaliere is both a class snob and a misogynist, he never considers that Mirandolina's survival may depend on her ability to use guile. Mirandolina herself admits with the Cavaliere that she is purposely gracious with her guests because it is in her interest to do so, "per tenerli a bottega" (p. 357). However, with regard to the Cavaliere, it is not for personal gain that she attempts to deceive him but out of principle—she is defending women's honour—a point that she herself underlines, "siccome quel che ho fatto con lui, non l'ho fatto per interesse, voglio ch'ei confessi la forza delle donne, senza poter dire che sono interessate e venali" (p. 398). It is unfortunate that the scenes with the two actresses are often omitted in modern productions of La locandiera with the excuse that they slow down the play. They are, however, important in that they allow us to contrast Mirandolina's art with that of the actresses. Like Mirandolina, the actresses seek to deceive men, but unlike Mirandolina, Dejanira and Ortensia attempt to deceive Mirandolina's guests
"per micheggia[11]" (p. 367). What results foremost in the comparison between Mirandolina and the actresses is that Mirandolina is the better actress. Dejanira and Ortensia, "fuori di scena," "non sanno fingere" (p. 364)—an interesting twist to the play-within-the-play dynamics. The scenes with the actresses also reveal the Conte's and the Marchese's gullibility and fickleness for they immediately wish to attend these false noblewomen as soon as they meet them.

Mirandolina wants to make the Cavaliere fall in love with her in order to revenge womankind. Since Alceste is already in love with her, Célimène's concern is of another nature: she wants to keep him interested in her in order to prolong her independence. Although the eiron's objective vis-à-vis the main alazon figure in Le Misanthrope is different from the one in La locandiera, the women in both plays use similar tactics. It is in the way they handle Alceste and the Cavaliere that Célimène and Mirandolina show their true merit as tricksters. In order to deceive their other suitors, they had only to tell them what they wanted to hear, which is the usual technique of eirons, given the rigid mentality of alazons. But Célimène and Mirandolina cannot expect to deceive Alceste and the Cavaliere who are on their guard against insincerity by openly flattering them. Instead, they resort to a type of reverse psychology; that is, they are sincere. By not conforming to their expectations, Célimène and Mirandolina are able to take Alceste and the Cavaliere by surprise and throw their preconceived notions into disarray. In this way, Alceste as well as the Cavaliere is completely disarmed and falls directly into the eiron's trap. Because Alceste suspects the intention of every discourse except his own to be self-seeking,
Célimène is able to exert her power over him by speaking the truth. Her treatment of Alceste is therefore the opposite of how she deals with Arsinoé. When Arsinoé comes to visit, Célimène tells her "the truth by way of fiction—[by] clothing an insult in the garb of politesse;" a technique, however, which Arsinoé initiates. Although he makes it quite clear that he questions her sincerity, Alceste expects Célimène to deny his accusations of infidelity. But Célimène turns the tables on him by admitting her guilt. Whether or not Célimène truly loves Alceste does not take away from the fact that she knows how to manipulate him and to keep his love for her alive, for in the two scenes where she essentially acknowledges her unfaithfulness (II.1, IV.3), not only does Alceste not take her seriously, but he also reasserts his love for her. At the beginning of Act II, Alceste questions Célimène's avowal of love for him, "Vous n'en disiez peut-être aux autres tout autant?" (v. 508). But Célimène, instead of assuring Alceste that he has no need to doubt her, answers, "He bien! pour vous ôter d'un semblable souci,/De tout ce que j'ai dit je me dédis ici,/Et rien ne saurait plus vous tromper que vous-même" (vv. 511-3). Alceste's response is curious. He does not pursue his previous question but essentially changes the subject by confession that despite all his attempts to leave Célimène, he cannot help loving her. Since Alceste had told Philinte that he could not love a coquette such as Célimène if he were not sure of her feelings for him, Alceste obviously does not accept Célimène's remark at face value. The play, however, will bear out that Alceste's suspicions were justified, for she gives each of her suitors reasons to hope that he is the favoured one. It is in the very instances where Célimène is pleading guilty that she is being
sincere, and it is indicative of Alceste's lack of self-knowledge that for all of his love for sincerity, he never sees through her game. When Alceste later confronts Célimène with the love letter which she allegedly wrote to Oronte, she initially tries to get out of this compromising situation by telling Alceste that the letter was addressed to a woman. Alceste refuses to accept this explanation, "Osez-vous recourir à ces ruses grossières?. . .Voyons. . .comment vous pourrez tourner pour une femme/Tous les mots d'un billet qui montre tant de flamme?" (vv. 1349-54). Célimène obviously cannot and her only other recourse is to admit the truth; she knows, however, from previous experience that Alceste will not believe her. (Although we cannot be certain if this letter was addressed to Oronte or to another admirer, we do know that Célimène must have given Oronte some kind of assurance for he too believes that her affections lie with him). Alceste's reaction is again curious. Whereas a few lines earlier, he was lucidly analyzing her letter, at her surprise confession, Alceste prefers to think that she is not being serious. "Ciel! rien de plus cruel peut-il être inventé?" (v. 1371) he exclaims, and he tells her, "Cessez d'affecter d'être envers moi coupable" (v. 1386). He is even prepared to go against his principles for he begs her, "Efforcez-vous ici de paraître fidèle" (v. 1389), and Célimène's answer underlines the irony of the situation: "Je voudrais bien savoir qui pourrait me contraindre/A descendre pour vous aux bassesses de feindre?" (vv. 1393-4). She nullifies what she has just said, however, by reiterating that Alceste has no right to suspect her when she has assured him of her love, thereby reinforcing Alceste's belief that when Célimène admits to unfaithfulness, she is only pretending.
Célimène's game of keeping her suitors in a constant state of suspense is exposed in the last scene of the play when all the alazons, "in common possession of [her] letters," and therefore of her true feelings for them, gather in her salon to vent their anger and to spurn her. When Acaste, Clitandre, and Oronte have left, Célimène tells Alceste that whereas she has "Des autres ici méprisé le courroux" (v. 1741), she is sorry to have mistreated him. Whether or not she is being sincere this time depends on whether or not she has any real affection for Alceste. But it does not really matter for even though she may love Alceste, her foremost interest heretofore has been to keep all her suitors at bay for as long as possible in order to prolong her independence while enjoying their protection. But Célimène could not hope to manipulate their desires forever. Thus, when her cover is exposed, Célimène agrees to marry Alceste, whether or not she preferred him to the others, because she now has to marry. As an unattached women in "a world of aggressive and predatory males," she cannot survive without the protection of a man. In La locandiera, Mirandolina marries Fabrizio for exactly the same reason. But Alceste's demand that she follow him into his desert is unbearable for Célimène, "une âme de vingt ans" (v. 1774) who has just begun to savour her freedom. Rather than marry Alceste on his conditions, she prefers to face an unfriendly world alone. The fact that Célimène does make this choice, however, would seem to indicate that her situation is not all that bleak; at least not as bleak as a life of solitude. Given her wit and brilliance and the fatuity of her ex-suitors, we cannot believe that it would take Célimène very long to acquire another circle of admirers.
In *La locandiera*, because of monologues and asides (which are significantly absent in *Le Misanthrope*), there is no ambiguity regarding Mirandolina's feelings for the Cavaliere. She neither loves him nor has the intention to marry him. Although Célimène enjoys the admiration she receives from her suitors, she does not boast of her art like Mirandolina does. When she asks Alceste, "Puîs-je empêcher les gens de me trouver aimable?" (v. 462), it is as far as Célimène goes in praising herself. Mirandolina, however, says that she is going to use all of her art to win the Cavaliere's love and she is sure of her success for there is no man "che possa resistere ad una donna, quando le dà tempo di poter far uso dell'arte sua" (p. 370). Initially, Mirandolina attempts to flatter the Cavaliere for she brings him her best linen and tells him that it is suitable "per un cavaliere della sua qualità" (p. 356), but he does not take this bait. It is not until she confesses what she really thinks of the Conte and the Marchese that his interest is sparked; "Bravai!" he admits, "Mi piace la vostra sincerità" (p. 357). We know that in this instance, Mirandolina has been perfectly frank with him. Whether or not she takes her cue from his praise or whether she had already figured out the strategy of highlighting her frankness, she proceeds in this vein. Mirandolina's next step is to concede that he is right in hating all women. "Bravissimo," she says to him when he tells her that he wants nothing to do with women, "Si conservi sempre così. Le donne, signore... Basta, a me non tocca a dirne male" (p. 357). It is interesting that Mirandolina never actually speaks badly of her sex. "A me non tocca a dirne male," and "noi altre locandiere vediamo e sentiamo delle cose assai; e in verità compatisco quelli uomini che hanno paura del nostro
sesso" (p. 357) are rather ambiguous remarks and on their own are not necessarily damaging to women. Mirandolina knows, however, that a misogynist such as the Cavaliere will interpret her words as conforming to and confirming his ideas on women. Indeed, he tells her, "Voi siete per altro la prima donna, ch'io senta parlare così" (p. 357). By letting him think that she agrees with him, Mirandolina is essentially appealing to his ego. Everyone, and especially those who are close-minded, like to be told that they are right. By agreeing with him, Mirandolina singles him out as different from other men and herself, from the rest of womankind. In this way, she presents the Cavaliere with an image of themselves as kindred spirits, superior to everyone else. Hereafter, it is only natural for the Cavaliere to associate himself with Mirandolina and it is not surprising that he falls in love with her. Mirandolina continuously lures the Cavaliere with her frankness. She gives a truthful description of herself, "Ho qualche annetto; non son bella, ma ho avute delle buone occasioni; eppure non ho mai voluto maritarmi, perché stimo infinitamente la mia libertà" (p. 357). She tells him that she likes him because he is not "[uno] di quelli che s'innamorano" (p. 359), which is the very reason why she is attempting to make him fall in love with her. When she falsely confesses, "Anch'io mi sento un non so che di dentro, che non ho più sentito" (p. 377), she quickly denies this feeling by admitting truthfully, "ma non voglio impazzire per uomini, e molto meno per uno che ha in odio le donne" (p. 377), and insists that they are just good friends. Whatever feigning Mirandolina does, it is always of an ambiguous nature so that she cannot ever be pinned down. She purposely gives the Cavaliere special attention but she always assures him that she
only does so because of their mutual antipathy for "le donne che corrono dietro agli uomini" (p. 357), and because she knows that she can deal with him "con libertà, senza sospetto" (p. 359) and he will not misinterpret her actions. She is therefore essentially warning him not to fall in love with her, although she is very well aware of the converse effect of such warnings. It is only her tears and fainting spell which are pure pretense. But they are only final touches; by the time Mirandolina resorts to them, the Cavaliere has already fallen in love. In any case, crying and fainting spells alone would never have subdued a man such as the Cavaliere who is forewarned against such feminine arms. For her victory over the Cavaliere to be complete, Mirandolina wants the Cavaliere to admit publicly that he has fallen in love with her. Once again, Mirandolina is sincere. She tricks him into revealing his love for her in front of the others by telling the truth: that she purposely sought to enamour him and that she has decided to marry Fabrizio. Like Célimène, she uses truth as a means to an end, or as Baratto says, Mirandolina "trova nella 'verita' lo strumento di una più raffinata 'finzione'".54

In the comedies discussed up to now, the eirons, no matter if there were different eiron-alazon contests present, were ultimately distinguished by their dedication to the cause of love. Although both Célimène and Mirandolina do not pursue marriage and appear to be more dedicated to the cause of liberty than to love—it must, however, be remembered that even in the other comedies love and liberty are very closely associated—they do not underestimate the power of love; they are in fact aware that their trickery can be effective only insofar as it awakens love.
Molière's *Les Femmes savantes* and Goldoni's *La famiglia dell'antiquario* are notable exceptions. In his book, *Molière: An Archetypal Approach*, Knutson gives an excellent analysis of *Les Femmes savantes* as a 'sister' play to *Tartuffe*, where Orgon becomes Philaminte. The rigidity of the two women, the aristocratic mother-in-law and bourgeois daughter, in *La famiglia dell'antiquario* represents not so much a conflict between generations as the opposition between classes. We see in this play how Pantalone, the prototype of positive bourgeois values and the voice of common sense in Goldoni's early plays, "può salvare ciò che è opera e possibilità dell'individuo ma non può mutare caratteristiche essenziali degli altri personaggi, quando esse sono il risultato di più vasti conflitti sociali" (Mario Baratto, *Tre saggi sul teatro [Ruzante/Aretino/Goldoni]* [Venezia: Neri Pozza, 1971], p. 192).

1Bonino, Introduction, *Commedie*, p. XLV.


6tabarin: sopravveste di taffetà, quasi sempre impreziosita da oro or argento (Gastone Geron, *Carlo Goldoni cronista mondano: costumi e moda nel settecento a Venezia* [Venezia: Filippi, 1972], p. 184).

7scuffie: bonnets.

8cerchi: guardinfanti, that is, hoop-skirts.

9toppe: cìuffo di capelli naturali rinforzato da capelli finti (Geron, p. 185).

10cartoline sul fronte: strips of paper or ribbons which served as curlers (Geron, p. 177).

11andrie: abito femminile con strascio (Geron, p. 175).

12cascate: lace sleeves (Geron, p. 177).

7Bonino, Introduction, *Commedie*, p. XXV.

8Molière, Preface to *Tartuffe*, in *Oeuvres Complètes*, p. 263.

9Gozzi, p. 76.

10Gozzi, p. 77.
11 Bergson, p. 56.
12 Knutson, p. 20.
14 Bonino, Introduction, Commedia, p. XLV.
15 Loc. cit.
16 Bonino, Introduction, Commedia, p. XLVI.
17 Loc. cit.
19 Bergson, p. 56.
20 Hubert, p. 98.
24 Petrini, p. 84.
25 Loc. cit.
26 Mongrédién, Notice, Le Misanthrope, p. 18.
27 Gossman, 330-1.
28 Gossman, 331.
29 Loc. cit.
30 Loc. cit.
31 Loc. cit.

32 Gossman, 338.

33 Gossman, 333.

34 Loc. cit.

35 Loc. cit.

36 Gossman, 334.

37 Gossman, 337.

38 Gossman, 339.


40 Gossman, 328. Gossman refers to the Wilbur translation.

41 Lough, p. 40.

42 Gossman, 328.

43 Hubert, p. 159.

44 Hubert, p. 143.

45 Gossman, 337.

46 Loc. cit.

47 Frye, p. 167.

48 Gossman, 331.

49 Bonino, Introduction, Commedie, p. XXXIII.

50 Loc. cit.
51 Jules Brody, "Don Juan and Le Misanthrope, or the Esthetics of Individualism in Molière," PMLA, 84 (1969), 572.

52 Gossman, 331.

53 Loc. cit.

54 Baratto, p. 203.
CONCLUSION

In the preceding comedies, we have seen three kinds of eiron-
alazon contests: youth-age, servant-master, and wife-husband, all of which conform to the traditional comic plot. With *Le Misanthrope* and *La locandiera*, we encounter the most interesting variation of this contest, that of woman versus man, for both these plays question the traditional ending of comedies where the young people marry and live happily ever after. The point that both *Le Misanthrope* and *La locandiera* contend with, however, is not that contemporary young people were not free to marry who they pleased but that contemporary women married for protection. These plays thus raise a feminist issue: for as long as women can consider entering the married state for protection, marriage can never be the happy arrangement that comedy promises. But neither play advocates free love or seeks to undermine the institution of marriage. In *Le Misanthrope*, we have a positive image of marriage as presented by Philinte and Eliante who respect each other as equals and mutually consent to marry. And it is clear that Mirandolina intended to marry Fabrizio all along although she would have preferred to keep him waiting a little longer. She is, moreover, certain to be happier with him than with any of the noblemen
for she disdains "il modo di intendere l'amore di questi nobili." As in the other comedies, the alazons here are also recognizable by being antagonistic to the cause of love and to marriage as a union between equals. In *La locandiera*, the Conte expects to buy Mirandolina's love and the Marchese thinks he has a right to it; in *Le Misanthrope*, the marquis vie for Célimène's love only because of the prestige marriage with her would bring them, for when they find out what she really thinks of them, it is their vanity which is insulted and not their feelings which are hurt. In being anti-women, the Cavaliere is at the same time anti-love. Throughout the play he never ceases to denigrate women and he falls in love with Mirandolina only because he considers her an exception to the rest of womankind. His love for Mirandolina is therefore no different from Arnolphe's for Agnès in *L'Ecole des femmes*. Moreover, the Cavaliere's love is conditional. Not only does he never suggest marriage but he also seeks to keep his love for Mirandolina a secret from the others. Although Alceste boasts that "rien n'est comparable a [son] amour extrême [pour Célimène]" (v. 1422), he does not love "comme il faut que l'on aime" (v. 1421). His is "un amour... grondeur" (v. 528), for contrary to lovers everywhere who, as Eliante points out, "dans l'objet aimé tout leur devient aimable" (v. 714) "[et] n'y voit rien de blâmable," (v. 713), Alceste believes that "Plus on aime quelqu'un, moins il faut qu'on le flatte,/[et que] à ne rien pardonner le pur amour éclate" (v. 702). What is even worse, Alceste seeks to possess Célimène; he wants her all to himself. In order to demonstrate to Célimène the strength of his love for her, he says,
Je voudrais qu'aucun ne vous trouvât aimable,
Que vous fussiez réduite en un sort misérable,
Que le Ciel, en naissant, ne vous eût donné rien,
Que vous n'eussiez ni rang, ni naissance, ni bien,
Afin que de mon coeur l'éclatant sacrifice
Vous pût d'un pareil sort réparer l'injustice,
Et que j'eusse la joie et la gloire, en ce jour,
De vous voir tenir tout des mains de mon amour.

(vv. 1425-32)

Thus, like the Cavaliere, although for a different reason, Alceste also reminds us of Arnolphe, who says to Chrysalde, "Je veux... / Choisir une moitié qui tienne tout de moi,/Et de qui la soumise et pleine dépendence/N'ait à me reprocher aucun bien ni naissance" (vv. 124-8). Gossman says of Molière's melancholics that they want to have "absolute control over the distribution of the economic goods of society, its women, and its language, and are engaged in desperate combat with the forces that escape their control--free sexual desire, especially that of women; free signs that signify 'nothing,' as they see it, such as the signs of fashion or courtly flattery; gratuitous and wasteful expenditures; words and gestures that are ambiguous and open to interpretation."² We can equate Gossman's term melancholic with that of alazon for common forms of melancholia, as it was understood in Molière's own time were hypochondria, avarice, superstition, impiety, and jealousy.³ This description applies particularly to Alceste and the Cavaliere in two ways: both of them seek to have absolute control over women as well as over meaning. Whereas the other suitors in Le Misanthrope and La locandiera and the other alazons in the previous comedies are too fatuous to perceive ambiguity in language, both Alceste and the Cavaliere want meaning to be fixed. Their condemnation of insincerity is really an attack on ambiguity of meaning. The Cavaliere hates women because he thinks they are false. But it is not so
much women that the Cavaliere hates as ambiguity for he mistrusts his own ability to interpret. Like Arnolphe and all misogynist alazons, he condemns women because he fears being deceived and being made a fool of. Since all the misogynists that we have studied thus far fall in love at one point or another, their misogyny reveals not so much a hatred of women as a fear of them. Alceste says that he hates flattery because it does not speak from the heart. But it is the ambiguous nature of flattery which he objects to for it obscures true merit and Alceste does not want his own merit to be diminished in any way. He thus underestimates the interpretative ability of others. In insisting on a one-to-one correspondence between signifier and signified, Alceste and the Cavaliere would deny the possibility for great literature as well as for deception. If it were impossible to deceive, Alceste and the Cavaliere would have total control over those who are weaker than they or who are their social inferiors. But even more important, the end of deception would also mean the end of theatre, for theatre is the ultimate deceit.
NOTES

1 Petrini, p. 83.

2 Gossman, 328.

3 Gossman, 327.
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