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FAMILY STRUCTURE IN MOLIÈRE'S THEATER

by

DAVID MERRILL UBER

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Thesis Director's Signature:

madeleine Alpay

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INTRODUCTION
"Society is the sum of all the families in it."

F. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

In the early days of "regular" French comedy, Pierre Corneille stands out as the first dramatist of the seventeenth century to have written successful comedies that were free of much of the violence and grotesque features characteristic of the melodrama or *tragi-comédie* of the period. Octave Nadal has clearly demonstrated the influence of *L'Astrée* and the pastorale on Corneille's theater;¹ the atmosphere of nobility and grace is felt in both d'Urfé's prose and Corneille's early comedies. The chief characters or lovers are taken from the aristocracy and masquerade under fashionable names of the time—Tircis, Cloris, Philiste, Daphnis, Dorante—aliases that enhance the myth of leisure nobility submitting to the intricate code of *La Carte de Tendre*. Indeed, in many occasions character development is sacrificed to the lovers' intrigues.

In such comedies, the concept of family and household was almost totally nonexistent. True, in *L'Illusion Comique* the confrontation of paternal despot and rebellious daughter is masterfully presented in the third act; one is reminded of Isabelle's righteous objection, "Eh! de grâce, Monsieur, traitez mieux votre fille!" (III, i, 662). Additionally, there are parent figures in *Mélite*, *La Veuve*, *La Suivante*, and later in *Le Menteur*; yet, the structures are underdeveloped and in some cases there is no conflict at all between parent and child. However, most significantly, the inclusion of a father or mother—never both of them—
does not succeed in giving the spectator a sense of household, of family cohesion, or solidarity. Moreover, the very titles La Galerie du Palais and La Place Royale allude to exterior actions, to the games of lovers and not to family matters. The young nobles seem to be independent of their parents and thus the need for a domestic "hearth" diminishes.

A quarter of a century later, the scope of popular comedy changed with the advent of Molière. Although he would continue to write situation comedy, Molière also perfected his technique of displaying "bizarre" characters on stage for humorous effects. He also departed from Cornelian comedy by shifting his focus from the aristocracy to the bourgeois; in as many as twenty comedies, the bourgeois household forces the young people to be more dependent on their parents than in Corneille's early plays. Thirdly, Molière initiated a concept of household that grew stronger during his theatrical career.

This present study grew out of the confrontation of three indubitable facts:

1. The great majority of Molière's plays are "family" comedies.

2. Most of the family comedies take place within a bourgeois household.

3. Most of the family comedies take place in Paris.

"Bourgeois," "family" and "Paris." What constitutes the power relationships between husband-wife and parent-child in this environment? By examining family structures in the twenty applicable plays, one can see traces of an evolution not only toward a stronger concept of household, but also toward a greater diversity in women's roles, and toward a larger, more complex family. What we propose to do in this study is to
look at both power and advisory relationships within Molière's domestic comedies and to trace the evolution of women, family, and household. We will also determine the significance of the family unit to plot and character development. In this way, the discussion of group or pair relationships will not duplicate the many useful individual studies that have been written on Molière's characters.

Particularly useful has been Philippe Ariès' thesis on the development of the family under the ancien régime. Additionally, demographic data, literary memoirs, and marriage legislation have contributed to the recreation of seventeenth century power structures that constitutes the second part of this Introduction.

In the first chapter, David Leslett's analysis of domestic structures will be applied to each one of the twenty plays in order to determine "household type." Such matters as will, dowries, and primo-geniture--the economic disposition of the family--will also be discussed. In the chapters that follow--the body of the thesis--we will see that the development or transition in family relations hinges chiefly on the woman's role. There are three major periods:

1. 1655-1659. Up to Les Précieuses Ridicules woman's role is played down. Emphasis is on masculine roles: the patriarchs of L'Etourdi, the enormous number of Mascarille's lines. Women have very little to say.

2. 1659. Les Précieuses Ridicules. For the first time, women are the principal characters and put the father in the background. Even though the play mocks the excesses of a woman's liberation, it marks the departure from masculine concepts expressed in earlier plays.

3. 1661-1662. The two Ecoles. Both plays are bombshells in that they attack the stronghold of male supremacy, the patriarchal system. Here, the
author chose the "non-family" household, co-resident guardian and ward, to imply both father-daughter and amorous old man-young girl structures.

The above three stages set forth the development of the woman within the household. As the woman's character and power increase, the father's authority becomes more and more dubious. Thus, in both man-wife and father-child structures, the growth of the woman is achieved to the detriment of the man's absolute authority. Agnès' independence of Arnolphe is followed by revolts by Mariane, Lucinde, Isidore and Harpagon's children. Maidservants are quite significant in this revolt as Dorine, Lucinde (L'Amour Médecin) and Toinette demonstrate.

The development of the woman from a shallow, submissive creature to an intelligent and assertive character strongly affects power relationships within the family. In chapters two and three we will look at power relationships between couples: parent-child, husband-wife. Chapter four will examine non-power or advisory roles within the family: "big brother" and "big sister." Finally, the last chapter will analyze the combined effects of the above relationships on the total household structure and will see evidence of a fragmented family consisting in both "male" and "female" segments symbolizing blindness and enlightenment. During this analysis, we will take into consideration the presence and impact of outside influences on the family, notably Ariès' "sociability." The concept of household will be reevaluated in the light of both internal and external threats to the family with conclusions drawn as to the preservation of family identity through crises. Finally, we will see that Molière's world is entirely his own and yet combines elements of both the seventeenth and eighteenth century families.
Power Structures Within the Bourgeois Family
Of Seventeenth Century France

Taking a trip back to the bourgeois family of Molière's day one is overcome by the diversity of municipal laws governing marriage and the family in France. Was the nuclear family rife in both the northern and southern regions of the country? What about the rural versus the urban family? Were there many forced marriages based on the father's will rather than the free consent of the partners? Marriage legislation implemented by the French Parlement between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries reveals a steady increase in the state's attempt to strengthen paternal authority in the family. Since the family is considered the fundamental unit of society, it is understandable that many scholars have drawn a parallel between the French kings' tightening grasp over their country and their growing insistence on the father as the authoritative head of the family; children subject to absolute control in the family would become perfect little subjects of the monarchy.

The traveler to the world of Louis XIV would also be confused by the complex social stratification that had taken hold of the nation. Roland Mousnier in Fureurs Paysannes (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1967) conveys a clear image of the hierarchy by summarizing Le Traité des Ordres et Simples Dignitez, a 1610 classification of the whole population of France. Pierre Loyseau, who was the author and a perceptive lawyer of the period, identified three estates: clergy, nobility and the people. Each estate was further divided into subordinate orders. Although the advocate placed the bourgeois in the third estate along with artisans and laborers, he delineated "honorable" professions from those of little or no distinction. The five orders of "honorable" professions were:
1. Men of letters: doctors, magistrates, other learned professions.

2. Lawyers.


5. Merchants and shopkeepers.

The fifth order, the last "honorable" one, closed the list and was classified as bourgeois de ville. It included apothecaries, goldsmiths, jewelers, cloth merchants and all those who engaged in commerce rather than manual work.

Leaving the bourgeois orders, Loyseau continued his descent down the social ladder. The following people's work was deemed mechanical and did not require decision making:

1. Laboureurs or tenant farmers.

2. Craftsmen.

3. Unskilled laborers.

4. Beggars and the jobless.

The bourgeois was thus a "middle-class" citizen slotted between menial labors and noble callings such as the military, priesthood and land baronage. Unlike the artisan, he sold products not made by his own hands. An urban dweller, only the bourgeois could engage in profit-making activities.

Mousnier sees the bourgeois of the nineteenth century as having had but one desire—to accumulate wealth from production—whereas the seventeenth century businessman was motivated by a social prerogative, not a financial one. This social ideal fostered by the nobility spread
to the lower strata of French society emulating the aristocratic graces of *politesse, gloire, and honneur*. Although this theory sounds enticing, it is perhaps too exclusive; one must keep in mind the growing importance of the *bourgeois* in the power structure of seventeenth century France. M. Mongrédien insists on this new *bourgeois* presence and attitude in his statement—"money replaced birth"—as exemplified by the growing number of marriages between impoverished noblemen and the daughters of wealthy financiers. Each offered what the other desired: rank or wealth.

The *bourgeois* of Molière's day acted both out of the wish to enrich himself and the desire to improve his social standing. He certainly was in the most advantageous position to accomplish these ends; his was the most mobile of all life styles, for only he could engage in moneymaking activities—aristocrats were excluded from such ventures under the threat of loss of nobility or *dérogeance*.

Such was the paradoxical position of the solid *bourgeois* of the seventeenth century. Although he was a firm adherent of the *status quo*, he was in the most fluid of estates. His belief in the accumulation and preservation of wealth suggests the importance of seeking strong family alliances through which the survival of the patrimony could be assured. He could and did marry his daughters to sons of noble families, just as he could buy titles and noble lands from the monarchy. If the *bourgeois* was quite wealthy, he might officially enter the *noblesse de robe* by purchasing a royal office. For one hundred and fifty years, the *noblesse de robe* held a special attraction for the affluent and vain *bourgeois* who sought a noble rank that had been created for him by Henri IV.

Social mobility underlines the importance of the family to the *bourgeois*. Only through well made family alliances could wealth be
preserved and augmented. The bourgeois family through birth, marriage, and death constituted the basic means for social climbing and transferring wealth. Like the aristocratic father, the bourgeois patriarch yearned to beget male offspring to carry on his "dynasty." Again, like her aristocratic counterpart, the bourgeoisie had the imperative function of providing those male heirs. Male and female roles in the families of Molière's comedies may very well take on new meaning in their portrayal of an evolving society; it is, after all, in the core of the family where the first signs of change may be found.

Social relationships and structures were, then, more complex than Loyseau and his pyramid had suggested; the bourgeois, for one, is difficult to define specifically. However, three characteristics of the bourgeois that will apply to an analysis of Molière's plays are: social mobility, the availability of leisure time for sociability, and the pursuit of income in an urban power structure.

**Nuclear Families and MHS**

Heading the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Studies, Peter Laslett undertook a vast survey of households in pre-Industrial England and obtained the standard of 4.75 members per household as the mean household size or MHS.\textsuperscript{11} His results prompted him to conclude that contrary to Darwinian and other family evolutionists such as Le Play, England did not witness a transition from the extended or multigenerational family to the nuclear family. Laslett shows that the "biological family" of husband-wife-children was already in full vigor in the pre-industrial social order of England.\textsuperscript{12}
This anti-evolutionary perspective is not shared by certain French demographers who maintain that extended families of grandfather, parents and children did exist in France during the ancien régime. In an article entitled "Famille Nucléaire et Famille Élargie en Haute Provence du XVIIIe Siècle," Alain Collomp attests through empirical data the presence of extended families in a small community in southern France. By studying the terms of marriage contracts over a thirty year period, he discovered that 47% of the married couples went on to live with the parents, thus perpetuating an extended family structure.\(^{13}\)

Collomp concludes that there might have been more differences between England and Provence than merely fog and sunshine: "Au XVIIIème siècle encore, la famille nucléaire en Haute Provence du moins était peut être plus rare que la famille élargie groupant parents et enfants mariés."\(^{14}\)

Extended families were common in the bourgeoisie; eight out of twelve contracts signed by bourgeois families stipulated the coresidence of parents and married children.\(^{15}\)

The results of the above study preclude the demographer from seeing the bourgeois household uniquely as a nuclear family in seventeenth century France. It has also been shown that due to the high death rate, there were many more orphans adopted by families, which were often related to the foundlings. In this manner, step-children, nephews, cousins, and even younger siblings were taken in by families in the event of the parents' death. According to an estimate, one-fourth of the families in seventeenth century France could have belonged to this hybrid type of extended family.\(^{16}\) Professor Mousnier seems to be in agreement with the above findings and tactfully sums up his position on nuclear versus extended families:
D'autre part, nous trouvons un ménage qui a tendance, seulement tendance, à passer du type élargi au type noyau. J'insiste sur le fait que, comme en Angleterre, il s'agit d'une simple tendance et à la différence de l'Angleterre, le mouvement semble moins accentué.\textsuperscript{17}

The central problem in any attempt to determine family size and type of household is that, as of yet, no one study has been made to encompass all the urban or bourgeois centers of seventeenth century France. Pierre Goubert in \textit{Beauvais et Les Beauvaisais} (Paris: SEVPEN, 1960, p. 252) has determined the MHS in Beauvais in the year 1686. Of 2,906 households or \textit{feux}, 1,536 had no children; presumably these were elderly couples, bachelors or spinsters living alone and counting as one \textit{feu}. There remain 1,370 \textit{feux} of 5,114 children or 3.76 children per family. Assuming both parents to be alive, one reaches a total of 5.76 people in the average Beauvaisais family, apparently therefore a nuclear unit.

Several qualifying remarks must be made concerning the above mean household size. First of all, 5.76 does not include domestics. Some households might have had as many as forty servants, a figure that would not be reflected in M. Goubert's estimate. Moreover, a household with forty servants could still be nuclear--having two parents and four children. Secondly, despite a high fertility rate, the high infant mortality percentage limited family size. The mortality was 25% up to one year old and 25% between one and twenty. In families averaging four births, only two children survived; 40% to 60% of all children did not live beyond the age of twenty.\textsuperscript{18} Finally, the Beauvais MHS is not necessarily the same in Paris, in Lyon or in Bordeaux where multi-generational families may have existed. In Paris and other large cities families did tend to be smaller than in less urban areas.
The Paris average was four to five children per household. Yet, in Lyon, the butchers who were exceptionally well-fed and healthy often had enormous families numbering from twelve to twenty children. Bourgeois families in the seventeenth century, then, defy categorization; they could be nuclear or extended, large or small.

Woman's Legal Say

In the bourgeois family of Molière's time the relationships between man and wife and father and child can be gleaned from domestic laws of the ancien régime, correspondence and literature, and demographic evidence. Family matters such as the legal rights of women, inequality among siblings, and the child's freedom to choose his marriage partner also merit a close look as they are ever present in Molière's world.

Family historians and sociologists today insist on two basic differences between the nuclear and the patriarchal family. For one, the patriarchal family is an institution of the past—the oldest man possessing the powers of life and death over every member and servant of the family. Secondly, the children never outgrow their subordination to the will of the patriarch, whereas in the nuclear family the ties of obedience to the father dissolve when the children reach adulthood and get married. The Roman family is an excellent example of the patriarchal domain: the father was not only judge over every being in the household but he had the authority to refuse and even kill children born unto him. In the seventeenth century the father did not have such life and death powers; however, children and wife were clearly subject to his command.
Marital and paternal authority underwent different influences and separate evolutions during the *ancien régime*. The wife's civil rights were usurped by the husband with the court's approbation over a four hundred year period, from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. Paternal control of children, on the other hand, gained most of its momentum and strength from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, largely through the instigation of the state, the Parlement and its series of ordinances. In both cases, the patriarch succeeded in dominating the power relationship.

In the tenth century, woman's lot in marriage was an extraordinarily fortunate one when compared with the sequence of events that was to follow. Husband and wife managed his or her own property without being able to interfere with each other; however, this procedure was not long to last. The eleventh and twelfth centuries changed this observance when the practice of joint possession of goods was adopted.\(^{22}\) This system, of course, tightened the bonds and strengthened the identity of the couple to the detriment or loss of identity of the individual spouse. The feudal practice of primogeniture replaced joint ownership in the thirteenth century and can be seen as a step toward male domination in the family. This practice granted the father and his oldest son unfair economic and social advantages over the rest of the family. It is in the thirteenth century where woman's rights began to suffer. With the advent of the fourteenth century, the historian Petot sees woman's power in the family as steadily diminishing. She was divested of the legal right to draw up contracts in the event of her husband's absence. It also became incumbent upon the husband to keep watch over his wife—"*Le mari est bail de sa femme.*"\(^{24}\)
The gradual reduction of woman's legal say reached its nadir in the sixteenth century with the prevailing judicial opinion of woman as the *imbecillitus sexus*—incapable of possessing any legal rights. She had the right to a separation of wealth, especially to the safeguarding of her dowry in the event that the husband's conduct jeopardized her interests. Aside from the separation of property, physical separation (*séparation de corps*) was possible where a continued coexistence was insupportable or where the husband used undue violence against the wife.

During all this period divorce was unheard of—marriage being held to be indissoluble by the church so that where separation took place, the "sacred union" held. There were, however, rulings in the canon of Cambrai that granted separation for life or, in 80% of the cases, for three years; two thirds of the cases were in favor of the woman.\(^\text{25}\) Despite the above ecclesiastical rulings, adulterous husbands were rarely in the wrong, but the accused wife could be sent to a convent at her husband's command with the forfeit of her dowry. Pothier, a legal authority of the eighteenth century, exemplifies the blatant sexism that ironically appeared more in civil than in ecclesiastical courtrooms over matters of adultery: "Ajouter qu'il n'appartient à la femme qui est une inférieure d'avoir inspection sur la conduite de son mari qui est son supérieur. Elle doit prêsumer qu'il est fidèle."\(^\text{26}\)

Woman's status in the family was limited by her incapacity before the law. The husband could dispose of property without consulting the wife. He often left all to his children and virtually nothing to their mother in the will. Ourliac, a prominent legal specialist, has remarked, "Il est très rare que le contrat du mariage laisse à la femme le droit d'administrer ses biens."\(^\text{27}\)
Although David Hunt cites unfavorable views towards women expressed by such literary figures as Pasquier and Charron, he is quick to add: "The fact that wives were described in such deprecatory terms does not necessarily tell us anything about their status in actual family situations." This statement then takes heed of both misogynistic attitudes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and more sophisticated thinking as might be found in Les Six Livres de La République. Published in 1576 by the political philosopher Jean Bodin, this work contains a small but important chapter on the family where the author declares that he would have the state return to the Roman coutume of a father's absolute power over the family—of a tribunal in every household.

Absolute power of the husband never returned, although women did lose their rights to "participate in municipal affairs, to sit on certain courts or to testify before them, to substitute for husbands who were absent or who had been insane..." In the bourgeois household, the wife's incapacity before the administration of the testament or property was significant where the transfer of property was crucial. No matter how favorable courts might have been toward women, the power structure was too firmly rooted in the belief of the wife and children being dominated by the father in seventeenth century France. The bourgeois was all the more adamant in seeing that the patriarch would alone be able to flex the economic muscle of the family.

Like Father, Like Son

The behavior of each member of the bourgeois family was governed by three important events: birth (baptism), marriage and death.
three social events were associated with economic transactions: the preparation of the will, especially at the birth of the eldest son; dowry transfers during the marriage of daughters, and testamentary allocations after the father's death. Paternal authority was therefore bolstered by the "family bank" notion; the father had the power to give rewards for complying with his decisions and to withhold gifts as a punishment for refusing to do so. This economic power coupled with the state's legislation promoting the domestic monarchy--where the children were taught the politics of submissiveness--gave tremendous authority to the household head. Wife and children vied for the father's favor: the daughters wanting a well-padded dowry; younger sons wishing to get their fair share of the patrimony; the eldest son trying to hold onto his unequally large share. Even the wife, thinking about herself and her children's interests, had to play the game. In the seventeenth century bourgeois family, wife and children thus lived in a climate that was far from domestic bliss.

Primogeniture, the attempt to keep feudal lands intact through transfer of the whole to the eldest child, did not die out in the seventeenth century bourgeois family--especially in Southern France where the father once again saw the advantage of donating most of the patrimony to the first-born son. The psychological implications of such a division between the oldest son and younger siblings are apparent: a special father-oldest son link would certainly breed jealousy and resentment. The oldest son, a type of Dauphin, often enjoyed his special compensation and became a junior replica of the father; tight on money, sober and suspicious of the activities of his younger brothers and sisters, he even treated his mother with contempt. He was trained
in the running of the family business and the household by a father whose primary concerns were the preservation of the patrimony and the perpetuation of his "dynasty" of wealth. The younger children, realizing the unfair advantage of their older brother, nevertheless tried to repress their anger and remain close to the wealthy father in the hope that they would eventually obtain property. Should they dare ask for an advance on their inheritance, they risked being chased from the household. 33

A wise father would sometimes avoid squabbles by giving small stipends to younger children, by paying apprenticeship expenses and by borrowing money for daughters' dowries. But, often enough, fathers ignored the lamentable state of the younger ones' fortunes; the neglected children went off to seek adventure in the military or to settle with poor paying jobs. 34 Daughters, knowing that their dowry might not be abundant, were often encouraged to abstain from marriage and to join a nunnery in order to trim down household expenses. This attitude reflects similar concerns in feudal days for the preservation of the estate, "On se marie peu dans la noblesse." 35

At the father's death, the testament for a family of four sons allocated two-thirds of the estate in Languedoc to the eldest son while the three younger brothers would collectively receive the remaining one-third; the first son would effectively get six times more than his brothers. This unjust division of the patrimony is all the more evident in the mother's meager allotment—remember the gift of 1,500 pounds that would hardly cover family subsistence. As for the daughters, hopefully dowries had been provided for them; if not, there was always the convent. Thus, the father's authority affected the family even after his death.
It is important to underline the economic or testamentary disposition of the bourgeois family structure in Molière's day. If the father is the family despot, the first aspect of his power lies in his control of the household pursestrings.

In seventeenth century literature, writers were little disposed to speak of domesticity. Indeed, as Ariès maintains, sociability was the rule of the day; children were to be neither seen nor heard and were most often placed with governesses and nannies. Boys often served at table and were shuttled off to school during the day. Girls received very little scholastic training; they were virtually illiterate and were sent to convents for religious instruction. This "convent fixation" is apparent in Molière's domestic comedies and will be examined in the following chapter.

Parent-child relations, suffering through the intermediary of the governess and tutors, were often cold and passive:

D'une façon générale, les enfants sont soumis dans la maison familiale à une obéissance passive, surtout à l'égard de leur père. Parlant ou écrivant à leurs parents, ils emploient les termes d'une respectueuse et froide politesse. Ils ne les tutoient pas et n'en sont pas tutoyés.

Indeed, one does not receive the impression of a close-knit and loving family.

Professor Duchêne clearly illustrates the infrequent appearances of children in literature of the day by pointing out that in over 3,000 pages of correspondence, Mme. de Sévigné relates only one conversation of her daughter as a child and never once discusses the chatter of her grandchildren. There are two "royal" conversations between the Dauphin
Louis XV and the Prince of Conti, but these are excusable since royal matters, even out of the mouths of babes, were subjects for gossip. In a world much imbued with decorum, grace and the pursuit of conversation, there was little room for talk of children.

Marriage Legislation

However, children soon became of marrying age, the age to leave the family. All along, the father has exercised his economic prerogatives. At this point he exercises the right conferred upon him by state legislation to have the final say in the marriage of his children and ultimately to determine their happiness or discontent through the whole of their adult life. How did the state come to favor such control?

Historically, family law enjoyed an immunity from the Kings of France: "Nul domaine n'est mieux préservé de toute atteinte de l'Etat que le droit familial." With the advent of the thirteenth century, there developed the idea of the King as the keeper of the common good. Nevertheless, up to the 1550's, each town had its own laws and customs. Marriage was of course considered solely as a sacrament and lay in the exclusive domain of the Church. To consecrate the act, a simple statement of mutual consent was required, the paroles de futur. Indeed, as Hunt remarks: "If a man and woman were living together on what appeared to be a permanent basis, they were 'married,' and no civil or religious authority could question the union." Due to the lack of witnesses or of official registry, "divorce" and "remarriage" did easily occur; one spouse need simply drop the other and enter into another, bigamous marriage. Such clandestine marriages were not uncommon in the Middle Ages; also many marriages were made without parental consent.
In the sixteenth century, the increase of aristocratic pressure on Henri II caused him to promulgate the Edict of 1556 which gave parents the power to disinherit children marrying without their consent:

Le mariage sans le consentement du père et de la mère est une transgression de la loi et des commandements de Dieu et une offense contre le droit, l'honneur et la publique inséparable d'avec l'utilité. 42

A new "majority" age with respect to marriage was established: 25 for women and 30 for men. Rich and powerful families or lignes had become disgusted with the church's laxness in controlling marriages. The growing anti-clerical feeling was part of the Reformation and was reflected in the protestant demands for the restoration of a patriarchy where the father would have a firmer hand on his children. In 1563 the Council of Trent made a counter-reform attempt to clarify church rules on marriage by insisting on the presence of two witnesses, the publication of bans three times before the marriage and the keeping of a parish record—in order that marriages be valid. It deplored all those marriages made without parental consent, but put an anathema on any person who would uphold nullification of these unions. Hence, clandestine marriages took on the meaning of all those carried out secretly, without respect to prescribed church forms such as bans and witnesses.

However, the French royalty wanted more stringent measures. Parlement, still unsatisfied by the council's statement, decided to pass a series of legislation which made marriage a province of the State rather than of the Church and that declared marriage to be a contract as well as a sacrament: the Ordonnance of Blois (1579), the Code Michau (1626), and the Declarations of 1639 and 1697. The contractual notion
of marriage pleased the aristo-bourgeois family who above all sought "business" marriages or alliances with other powerful houses. Marriage would not so much seal the souls of the two spouses as it would the estates of the two families. Moreover, the father needed absolute authority over the choice of the marriage partner; his children must respect his choice if the bourgeois imperative of increasing power and wealth were to be honored. Thus, a conciliation was effected between heads of household and state. The former were assured power over transfer of wealth through marriage whereas the state had the satisfaction of seeing children acclimatize themselves to total submission to the central figure both at family and higher levels.

The Ordinance of Blois outstaged the Trente decision by voiding all marriages performed without parental consent. It contained a new definition of the crime rapt (kidnapping): "Sont considérés comme raptz tous les mariages sans le consentement des parents ou des tuteurs et curateurs." The ecclesiastical council had previously denounced marriage carried out by rapt or forceful seizure but still honored unions made with the consent of both partners. The French state in 1579 insidiously interpreted the rapt clause to include all marriages performed without permission of the parents, regardless of both partners' consent, and thereby extended the definition to much more than the council had intended. The effects of such jurisprudence were that all clandestine marriages were considered crimes of forceful seizure and were immediately nullified. Moreover, the crime was punishable by death. The father legally became a domestic monarch. Indeed, from both Parliament's legislation and judicial review, one can deduce that the family constituted the basic authoritative cell within the monarchy,
and that the father's authority strengthened with the increase in royal power—reaching its apex in Molière's time under Louis XIV.

The following preamble to the royal declaration of 1639 leaves no doubt as to the state's interest in the family as the microcosm of the power structure:

Les mariages sont le séminaire des états, la source et l'origine de la société civile, et le fondement des familles, qui composent les républiques, qui servent de principe à former leurs polices, et dans lesquelles la naturelle révérence des enfants envers leurs parents est le lien de la légitime obéissance des sujets envers leur souverain.\(^4^5\)

The above ordinance was used to block the king's favorite, Cinq Mars from marrying the courtisan Marion de Lorme.

Three major points can be gleaned from this vast amount of marriage legislation drawn up by the Parlement between 1550 and 1789. The first idea is the state's secularization of marriage, its realization that marriage was too vital an institution to be left entirely in the hands of powerless church officials. The increase in legislation lead to more jurisprudence and ultimately to civil trying of marriage suits. Secondly, the state, pressed by wealthy and powerful families, restored to a large measure paternal control over children—especially as to the choice of the wedding partner. The father's authority grew out of economic and political imperatives, the desire to achieve strong family alliances through marriages. The signing of the marriage contract resembled the merger of two corporate interests rather than the simple joining of two hearts. Where so much money and interest were at stake, compliance was necessary and forced marriages certainly did occur. The father, given royal backing had by law immense control over his
children. If they married against his will, the marriage was nullified by the Blois Ordonnance and by later royal decrees—the children even risked prosecution for their crimes. For the unfortunate young people who refused a marriage of interest, there awaited the convent or even prison, recourses available to the angry father wielding a lettre de cachet. The third issue arising from all the legislation is the reason behind their promulgation: why did so many laws need to be passed at so many different intervals in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? "46 Undoubtedly, because there were many abuses of paternal authority, many clandestine marriages, and quite a few unions based on love. The persisting issuance of marriage legislation could well suggest continued violations and challenges of parental powers. David Hunt concludes:

In spite of opposition of parents and legists, "love" played a considerable part in the formation of marriage bonds in the seventeenth century. Couples continued to marry out of inclination in spite of parental attempts to discipline them."47

This outright statement needs clarification in the light of social strata, specifically in reference to the wealthy bourgeois household. It seems evident that where economic factors were quite powerful, children of bourgeois families would have less freedom in choosing their marriage partners than in more humble households and that marriages based on interest would inevitably result. Wealthy households fostered paternal authority as a protective device. In Molière's plays, the student can certainly witness this interdependence of money and authority in the bourgeois family where the former breeds the latter.

A demographer reiterates the notion that the choice of the marriage partner was contingent on the economic status of the family:
"Lorsqu'il n'y avait pas, ou peu d'héritage à conserver ou arrondir, la liberté (des futurs époux) pouvait être très large; elle l'était donc plus encore pour les filles qui n'héritaient pas que pour les garçons."\textsuperscript{48} Bertin, basing his comments on Saint Simon's memoirs, contends that many wedding matches were founded on interest and not on love. \textsuperscript{49}

**Marriages: Exogamous, Authoritative and Economic Structures**

Interesting indeed were those exogamous unions made between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie where a wealthy merchant's daughter married into a bankrupt noble line. Such "inter-estate" marriages were permitted due to the widespread belief that the male seed carried all the genes and that consequently the male alone transmitted nobility. Obviously, the wedlock of a bourgeois lad and an aristocratic lady would provoke a scandal. It is both ironic and tragic to consider how much stock the nobility put in the perpetuation of blue blood alliances; little did they know of the creeping invasion of bourgeois genes into their dynasties.

It is difficult to believe that coerced marriages did not occur among wealthy seventeenth century families despite condemnation from the Church. Several histories illustrate this point. In 1677, the family counsel obliged Catherine Guerrier to marry Pierre Hervi, a relative, because, "On voulait disposer d'elle et forcément la marier par l'autorité de quelque personne qualifiée."\textsuperscript{50} Still another match was made through the correspondence of two mothers who both agreed that it was not necessary for the two young people to know each other prior to the contract signing. One mother wrote, "Mademoiselle de Thiboutot n'a
pas d'autre volonté que celle de son père." A third case of a forced marriage is that of a young widow who had been obliged to marry an eighty year old grabataire; the aged groom survived the wedding by eight days.

Reason and interest being on the father's side are reflected in the words of La Bruyère: "Faire une fille et se marier par Amourette, c'est épouser Mélite qui a moins de bien qu'Aégine qu'on vous propose." The contrast of "on" and "vous" with its implications of sage counsel could not be more underlined. The father's word is the divine will to which the children must be subservient. The above aphorism shows the hopeless position of seventeenth century children often bereft of a strong will or independent mind and brought up in an authoritative and uncreative environment. Their submissiveness at the bottom of the pyramid quickly stifled creativity. Frequent in Molière's comedies are the "flat" sons and daughters whose very wills have been crushed by domineering parents and by the power structure in which they grew up.

Conclusion

Between 1650 and 1730, Europe showed the strictest control of sexual instinct: chastity, premarital abstinence and a late marrying age between 25 and 27. Goussé has shown that in Basse Normandie the marrying age was 25-27 for girls and later for boys. Yet, precocious marriages were common in the aristo-bourgeois households. Mazarin's niece Marie-Anne Mancini, thirteen years, married the Duke of Bouillon, six. Marie-Renée Jacqueline de La Luzerne, promised since birth to Hervé Le Berseur de Fontenay, was four years old at the signing of the marriage contract and married in 1672 at the age of 12.
A most interesting financial arrangement was the marriage between the families of the Marquis d'Oyse (33) and Mademoiselle Gandrée, two years old. A dowry of 100,000 écus was to be paid on the spot, with annual installments of 20,000 écus up to the wedding date upon which would be delivered several millions. At that time the Marquis would be 43, his bride, 12. The legal age for marriage was 12 for girls and 14 for boys.

One can conclude that due to social and economic pressures children of bourgeois families had less freedom of choice than those coming from poorer backgrounds and often submitted to excellent matches conjured up by power greedy parents. Secondly, the father's authority lay more in threats of reprisal than in direct executive action; the considerable number of clandestine marriages were left undisturbed. However, in the great majority of bourgeois marriages true love gave way to sound business dealings—marriages of convenience. A rather serious board meeting atmosphere reigned over the contract signing which became more important than the wedding itself:

En ces solemnités, vieux et jeunes, clercs et laïcs, robins et négociants, toutes disputes cessantes, se ressemblaient pour signer un acte religieux ou un contrat notarié. Un usage bourgeois prenait, chez les plus riches, les proportions d'un festin pré-nuptial; le repas de contrat. Le notaire avait préparé l'acte en présence des principaux intéressés; le soir ou le lendemain, parents et amis se réunissaient chez la jeune fille, et chacun apposait sa signature sur la minute.

Such a solemn union took place on October 11, 1648 in Beauvais between Jean Borel, 30 years old and Marguerite Pocquelin, 18. Its description is most welcome as it is a worthy attestation to the control
of a provincial town by the haute bourgeoisie, to the seeking of profitable mergers or alliances through marriage, and to the presence and role of various family members at this important event.

Twelve people were present at the signing of the contract. Young Jean was represented first by Sire Pierre Borel, his father, cloth merchant and mayor of Beauvais. Besides Sire Borel, there were four uncles; two judges, the director of a salt factory and the owner of the same. Goubert states: "Ainsi, la marchandise, la robe et la mairie s'étaient unis pour ratifier les dons faits aux futurs époux par son père: 16,000 livres dont 6,860 comptant, en 'espèces d'or et d'argent.'"\(^58\)

Since Marguérîte's father was deceased, the paternal authority passed into the hands of her uncle, Pierre Gavois, a wealthy Beauvais merchant. Two more uncles presided; Guy Pocquelin, a Parisian businessman soon to be in financial dealings with Colbert, and Eustache Flouret, the cathedral canon. The last representatives of the bride's entourage were Flouret's brother, a soldier in the Queen's guard, and of course the bride's mother who donated an ample dowry of 14,000 pounds.

Goubert has pointed out that, prior to the marriage, the Borels and the Pocquelinins had enjoyed a long history of mutual business transactions; he has seen in their ensuing alliance the means of uniting their property and their houses.\(^59\) When such power and wealth were at stake, there would be of course no time for last minute hesitation or levity on the children's part. It is much to Molière's credit that he desacrilizes the bourgeois marriage venture in such scenes as the one of Chrysale and Philaminte before the notary in Les Femmes Savantes (V, iii).
Numerous in Molière's plays are uncles, aunts, siblings and parents-in-law who are not members of the nuclear family. Laslett's abundant demographic evidence denying the existence of extended multiple households in preindustrial England states categorically that other relatives did not sleep under the same roof with the nuclear family. In seventeenth century France, the nuclear family as well as the extended household existed. Extended families are not numerous in Molière's domestic comedies, and households are kept small. The reason is probably quite simple, a question of economy of means and theatrical necessity; the writer did not need to put a large family on stage to arrive at good situation and character comedy.

Nevertheless, close relations such as uncles and aunts often played roles of god parents at baptisms and were ever present with other family members at the two other periods of transmission of wealth: marriage and death. Their counsel at such periods was often sought and obtained; brothers and cousins, of course, play similar roles in Molière's theater.

Servants, too, had considerable importance in the bourgeois household. Often ignorant and poor, they filtered into Paris from the provinces and were placed in bourgeois and noble households by special agencies. As the family became richer, it took on more servants. Audiger's La Maison Réglée instructed Madame on the organization and division of labor within a household: the duties of secretaries, stable boys, maîtres d'hôtel, cooks, coachmen and a host of valets and chambermaids. A lady of quality should have sixteen servants; thirty or more servants were not unheard of. Servants would sometimes be on quite friendly terms with the younger children and would be involved in escapades together.
From numerical evidence, literary reminiscences, and family legislation, we have sketched the two power relationships within the *bourgeois* family of seventeenth France: husband-wife and father-child. In this family, the male enjoyed the dual sovereign role of husband and father. His authority was very much developed and was better guaranteed by law in France than in England. The family, underneath the binding force of the father, was torn internally by jealousy and fear for the future of their own economic and social status. The father's power rested precisely on the financial threat of disinheriting the others, whereas the state, all through the century, sought to extend the father's legitimate authority over his wife and children so as to foster an authoritative family cell at the base of the power hierarchy. Such was the state of the family when Molière began writing.

The shortcomings of the French *bourgeois* family were proper meat to Molière who, choosing the institution for his own literary use, fused it into his own comic universe. It will be shown that Molière has created family structures and relationships which are not always in line with their 17th century counterparts.

The concept of family living in a house or household as we know it today may have been less clear-cut in 17th century France and was probably blurred by the extra-household doings (Ariès' sociability) of the *ancien régime* parents. In the following chapters, we will also see that in Molière's theater, the notion and identity of the household rests inviolate despite exterior influences and internal family revolt against a most odious and ridiculous fatherhead.
CHAPTER I

THE BOURGEOIS COMEDIES
Nuclear and Extended Families

All but one of Molière's thirty-three comedies contain at least two characters who are related through either blood or marriage. But sometimes the relationship is of so little importance to the play's plot and meaning that the comedy can not be said to be "domestic" and lacks evidence of a family structure.¹ Le Misanthrope and La Critique de L'Ecole des Femmes, although entertaining and informative, do not illustrate the nuclear family like Tartuffe and Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.

The study encompasses nuclear and extended families of bourgeois origins as well as the term "household." The household includes parents and children—the nuclear family—and all those who live with them under the same roof. In most cases, a household comprises the nuclear family or conjugal family unit (CFU) and servants. A few plays show an extended family unit containing a sister or a niece. Note, in addition, that the word "household" implies both physically and psychologically the presence of a family. It is difficult, if not impossible, to feel "household presence" in Corneille's comedies whose personnages are from the nobility. In Molière's universe, the bourgeois' preoccupation with material goods creates a need for the physical presence of a family living quarters. How could M. Jourdain dance, Harpagon count his money, or Argan indulge himself in his illnesses if there were no sort of shelter? The house, the symbol of the wealthy bourgeois, also reinforces the concept of family and togetherness. Much of the play's intrigue takes place "within,"² creating a type of breathing household mechanism that shelters the family from the outside world while serving as a membrane through which society

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can filter and influence the family. Ariès' "sociability" is well illustrated in Molière's bourgeois comedies and has a decided and necessary effect on family relationships.3

The conjugal family unit consists in one of three basic structures: parent-child, husband-wife or father-mother-child(ren). In Molière's theater, there are seventeen plays whose bourgeois households demonstrate one of the above three relationships, usually based on authoritatively.4 Curiously enough, the "aristocratic" comedies suffer a lack of family relationships. Whereas Dom Juan and Le Misanthrope are certainly noted for their character portrayal and social insight, it is Le Tartuffe and Les Femmes Savantes that show an appreciation of the "inner household" and the impact of society on inner family structures.

Having chosen to discard the "aristocratic" comedies, I came upon two "problem plays." Both L'Ecole des Maris and L'Ecole des Femmes do not illustrate conjugal family units. The first play involves two blood family structures--brother-brother and sister-sister--whereby each brother is a guardian to one of the young ladies and each guardian-ward couple lives in its own residence. The situation then concerns two female siblings each of whom is paired off with one male sibling. In L'Ecole des Femmes, the structure is simpler, one guardian-ward couple. Once again though, there are no conjugal or blood relationships living under the same roof. Yet, the power structure of "authoritative father-submissive daughter" is present. Additionally, the spectator receives the distinct impression of a household when Arnolphe's sanctity is invaded by Horace. Thirdly, the forced marriage issue, the notary's presence, and the use of subterfuge against the father figure parallel structures in other domestic comedies and underlie the distinctly bourgeois concern for contract
marriages as well as the conflict between stubborn father and enlightened family. Both plays, moreover, occupy an important spot in the evolution of father-daughter relationships and therefore can not be neglected in this study.

Paternal authority and power relationships encountered in the bourgeois comedies have also lead to the inclusion of another renegade play that offers a deeper appreciation of conflicts, conspiracies and harmony within Molière's dramatic households. Le Sicilien ou L'Amour Peintre, a hodgepodge of international characters—a Greek, a French nobleman, and a Sicilian Don—takes place in an aristocratic household and strengthens one's understanding of Molierésque patresfamilias who sometimes become a type of "father-husband." The relationship between Dom Père and Isidore is nothing less than master-slave and may be a discrete revelation of woman's servile status in the family power structure of the ancien régime, a theme initiated in L'Ecole des Femmes. Impersonation, ruse and counteroffensive—culminating in an elopement in Le Sicilien—show the extent to which filial submissiveness can be transformed into open revolt against a contemptible fatherhead.

A Breakdown of Plays by Household Type

From La Jalousie du Barbouillé to Le Malade Imaginaire, twenty plays illustrate the bourgeois nuclear family explicitly or implicitly. The comedies show a variety of structures—widower-child, parents-children, man-wife—whose frequency and importance can be demonstrated statistically. The following chart, classifying household types, is from Peter Laslett's demographic publication on "Household and Family in Past Time."
Structure of Households:

Categories and Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Solitaries</td>
<td>(a) Widowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Single, or of unknown marital Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No family</td>
<td>(a) Coresident siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Coresident relatives of other kinds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Persons not evidently related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Simple family households</td>
<td>(a) Married couples alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Married couples with child(ren)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Widowers with child(ren)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(d) Widows with child(ren)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Extended family households</td>
<td>(a) Extended upwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Extended downwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Extended laterally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(d) Combinations of 4a-4c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Multiple family households</td>
<td>(a) Secondary unit(s) UP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Secondary unit(s) DOWN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Units all on one level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(d) Frères</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e) Other multiple families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Laslett goes on to explain his methodology:

The expression "simple family" is used to cover what is variously described as the "nuclear family," the "elementary family," or (not very logically, since spouses are not physiologically connected) the "Biological family." It consists of a married couple, or a married couple with offspring, or of a widowed person with offspring. The concept is of the conjugal link as the structural principle, and conjugal linkage is nearly always patent in the lists of persons which we are using. For a simple family to appear then, it is necessary for at least two individuals connected by that link or arising from that link to be coresident: "conjugal family unit" (CFU) is a preciser term employed to describe all possible groups so structured.
No solitary can form a conjugal family unit and for such a group to subsist it is necessary for at least two immediate partners (spouses and/or offspring) to be present. More remotely connected persons, whose existence implies more than one conjugal link, do not constitute a conjugal family unit if they reside together with no one else except servants. Nor do brothers and sisters. Hence a widow with a child forms a conjugal family unit, but a widow with a grandchild does not, nor does an aunt with a nephew. Whenever a conjugal family unit is found on its own, it is always taken to be a household, just as solitaries are, and such a coresident domestic group is called a "simple family household". . . . It will be shown that simple family households with or without households are the commonest form of coresident domestic groups in practically all the communities referred to in this study. . . .

An extended family household in our nomenclature consists in a conjugal family unit with the addition of one or more relatives other than offspring. . . . If the resident relative is of a generation earlier than that of the head, say a married head's father, or a spouse's mother, or a widowed head's aunt, then the extension is said to be upwards.

Similarly the presence of a grandchild (without either parent) or a nephew or niece creates downward extension, and that of a brother, sister or cousin of the head or of his spouse, implies sideways or lateral extension.

The first category, "Solitaries," is not pertinent to this study of coresident group structures. Similarly, multiple family households, two or more conjugal family units related by blood or marriage ties and living under the same roof, do not exist in Molière's world. (Neither do affrairements or extended filial linkages that one occasionally finds in the Guillaume d'Orange cycle of the Chansons de Geste.) Hence only categories 2-4 are relevant to the examination of family structure in the domestic comedies.
A breakdown of the plays by domestic structure can be best illustrated through the use of ideograms:

\[ \Delta \text{ Male} \quad \circ \text{ Female} \quad \Delta \quad \text{ Lodgers} \]

\[ \Delta \quad \circ \text{ Married Couple} \quad \Delta \quad \circ \text{ Brother and Sister} \]

\[ \Delta \quad \circ \text{ Servant (all types)} \]

\[ \Delta \quad \circ \text{ Widower} \quad \circ \text{ Widow} \]

\[ \Delta \quad \circ \text{ Married Couple With Children} \quad \Delta \quad \circ \text{ Widower With Children} \]

\[ \Rightarrow \text{ Inferred Link with regard to male household head (in extended families and guardian-ward units)} \]

Supplied with nomenclature and ideograms, one is prepared to break down the twenty *bourgeois* comedies by household structure. Remember that each ideogram represents a distinctly separate household and that only households are noted, not mere relations.
TYPES OF HOUSEHOLDS IN MOLIERE'S THEATER

DOMESTIC GROUP STRUCTURES

CATEGORY 1: Solitaries: None

CATEGORY 2: No family

Class C: Persons not evidently related

L'Ecole des Mariés

L'Ecole des Femmes

* Δ → ○

Le Sicilien

Δ → ○

CATEGORY 3: Simple Family Households

Class A: Married Couples Alone

La Jalousie du Barbuillé

Sganarelle ou Le Cocu Imaginaire

Le Médecin Malgré Lui

Sganarelle Wife

Sganarelle Martine

Lucas Jacqueline
George Dandin

* Dandin

Angelique

Mme. de Sotenville

M. de Sotenville

Class B: Married Couples with Child(ren)

Le Tartuffe

(stepmother)

L'Avare

Anselme (never seen)

Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme

Le Malade Imaginaire (Stepmother)
Class C: Widowers with Child(ren)

L'Etourdi

Pandolfe

Trufaldin

Anselme

Le Dépit Amoureux

Sganarelle ou Le Cocu Imaginaire
Le Mariage Forcé

Le Médecin Malgré Lui

L'Avare

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac

Les Fourberies de Scapin
Le Malade Imaginaire

CATEGORY 4: Extended family households

Class B: Extended Downwards

Le Médecin Volant

Les Précieuses Ridicules

L'Amour Médecin

"n" = niece
Class C: Extended Laterally

Les Femmes Savantes

*Primary Households

If the reader has had the patience to bear with the diagrams, he will have noticed that several plays contain two or more households. In no one of the cases are the families coresident; each family lives apart from the other in its own dwelling. Asterisks have been used to denote primary households. In George Dandin, the primary household belongs to the wealthy farmer and not to the in-laws, whereas Géronte's household is surely the principal one in Le Médecin Malgré Lui. However, there are indeed times when both households command equal or little attention as in Les Fourberies de Scapin, Le Dépît Amoureux and L'Etourdil.

80% of Molière's bourgeois households are conjugal family units; 20% claim extended family structures. The households are, then, similar in composition to today's nuclear family with the exception of the coresidence of servants. The structural variety of the households—childless couples, parents and children, widower and children, extended family households, both downward and laterally—indicates a large number of possible relationships and enhances the value of this study.

It is important to keep in mind that the above schematic breakdown analyzes domestic group structure and not mere relations. Even though Ariste-Chrysale and Cléante-Orgon are brothers in Les Femmes
Savantes and Tartuffe, Ariste and Cléante do not reside in the primary households. Like M. Jourdain's music master and Argan's medical advisors, both brothers must cross the family threshold to gain access to the patriarch. Tartuffe, on the other hand, has entered the house and has established himself as a lodger. He is no less a member of the household than Dorine or Damis.

The household has been considered as a small authoritative cell or a paradigm in miniature of the monarchy, ruled by the paterfamilias—autonomous and apart from other cells. In this way the relationships mentioned above will be treated especially as challenges of or submission to a central authority. The schematic diagrams demonstrate that every household has a fatherhead, the authoritarian voice within the family. Aside from exercising traditional paternal authority, Molièresque fathers walled in their bourgeois status of money manager and could threaten disobedient sons and daughters with economic sanctions. The father's credibility and the ways in which his power could be circumvented kept Molière busy for many a play and exemplify a family structure and behavior not always in line with seventeenth century norms.

There are two major similarities in structure between 17th century families and those of Molière's creative world. For one, the nuclear family is in full vigor in the plays with husband-wife teams as well as parent-child(ren) and parents-child(ren) situations. Secondly, extended families are modest with the usual addition of a niece; there is never a multigenerational patriarch.

The number of plays in which each primary household structure figures is as follows;
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRUCTURES</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PLAYS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent-child(ren)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple-child(ren)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childless couples</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>No family</td>
<td>3</td>
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All structures but the last one exemplify some form of the nuclear or extended family. The eleven parent-child(ren) patterns are more specifically father-child. Aside from an occasional mention of Mariane's mother in *L'Avaré*, there are no mother-daughter households in Molière's *bourgeois* comedies. Indeed, mothers appear on stage in only four plays: *Tartuffe, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, Les Femmes Savantes*, and *Le Malade Imaginaire*. Of these four plays, we know that the father had once been a widower and has remarried in *Tartuffe* and *Le Malade Imaginaire*; thus Elmire and Béline are stepmothers. The father himself often refers to his being a widower. In *L'Amour Médecin*, Sganarelle reveals quite simply, "Je n'avoir qu'une seule femme, qui est morte" (I, i). Harpagon is of course a widower—an amorous father. Orgon and Argan, having lost their wives, have seen fit to remarry as is the case with Géronte of *Les Fourberies de Scapin*. One may then try to account for the prevalence of widower-daughter couples in Molière's theater. One explanation is the short tenure of 17th century married life, yet it is not known whether Molière cared about presenting such demographic accuracies. It might be argued with greater success that in the early plays the writer had no need for mother types and that he did not wish to detract from the actual tensions between father and daughter over the marriage question. This latter reason arising out of dramatic
necessity is more likely. As Molière's talents developed, he could bring in more complicated situations and structures—husband and wife, parents and children, even a third generation. Perhaps in the days of L'Ecole des Femmes, Molière was not yet ready for the added feature of maternal affection. 16

Patent in the study of family structure is the pinpointing of the "family's age." Obviously, a young family's task is the producing and rearing of children to such an age where the youths are no longer dependent on the household. This age of solvency for sons and daughters corresponds to the marrying age. In Molière's domestic comedies, the time period is precisely situated. Whereas aging widowers suggest a family advanced in years, the young people are now young men and women who are all on the verge of getting married. Consequently, small children very rarely appear on Molière's stage since there is no dramatic justification for their addition to the dramatis personae. 17 Little people would indeed be of little importance to the conflicts between master and servants and parents and children of marrying age. So consistent, then, is the family age factor that the family in Molière's bourgeois comedies exists as a "typed" unit, ageless and yet old, perpetually teetering on that fulcrum of family relationships, the marriage decision.

The marriage issue thus defines and situates the family's age and disposition. It also sets and stereotypes a skeletal plot that would be lackluster were it not for the character portrayals, farce and situation comedy that enrich the bourgeois comedies. The following format applies to many of the domestic comedies and owes much to the traditional plots of New Latin Comedy. 18
Situation: Father wishes to marry daughter to suitor A. Daughter, repelled by A, is in love with B who has her family's backing.

"A"—Wealthy, good family, sometimes old and ridiculous, exerts influence on father.

"B"—Young handsome, well intentioned but often clumsy and lacking in guile, B occasionally needs the help of others (servants). Generally of a good family, but less wealthy that A.

Question: Will daughter be forced to marry A?

Intrigue: Ways and means to circumvent father's will and authority so as to ensure daughter's marriage with B.

Outcome: Marriage of consenting partners with or without father's benediction.

The marriage crisis clearly influences family relationships, especially power structures between father and daughter, husband and wife. Whereas Monsieur Jourdain's sociability, Orgon's gross credulity, and Harpagon's niggardliness are universal elements of satire in time and space, they are also detrimental to family cohesiveness and harmony. Eccentric paternal behaviour, particularly in the explosive realm of marriage decisions, sets off a chain reaction of counteroffensive operations by other family members, who often unite to block the forced marriage. At this point, structures change; the father's authority is severely undermined by rebellious household elements and outside help in the person of relations and servants. This concept of a divided or fragmented family can be found in Le Tartuffe and later plays and will be developed in the last chapter.

The Economic Imperative: Notaries, Contracts and Wills

Molière's domestic comedies often portray wealthy bourgeois who have accumulated money from both hard work and from fortunate
alliances and inheritances. References to the father's wealth are rife. In *Le Médecin Volant*, the niece alludes to "L'Avarice de mon vilain oncle (scène i). The business meeting atmosphere which pervades the opening scene of *L'Amour Médecin* attests to the bourgeois community of Sganarelle and other wealthy merchants—reminiscent of P. Goubert's establishment weddings of seventeenth century Beauvais. 19 Albert is said to be "puissant et de biens et d'amis" in *Le Dépit Amoureux* (III, iv), whereas M. Jourdain's spendthrift nature is as well known as Harpagon's exorbitant lending rates. The fathers are once again wealthy in *Les Fourberies de Scapin* where Scapin extorts money from both of them. Arnolphe's riches prompt Horace to borrow from him, and when Orgon's house and Chrysale's resources seem to have been irretrievably lost, the spectator feels the full weight of the family's material possessions. One final indication of family wealth is found in the number of outside "servants"—doctors, dance masters, and pharmacists—with whom Argan and Monsieur Jourdain pamper themselves.

The bourgeois obsession with accumulating and preserving wealth brings into focus the economic power of the father who, like his real life seventeenth century counterpart, sought strong business marriages—marriages of convenience that united two powerful and affluent houses. It also stresses the generation gap in many of Molière's family comedies where the pursuit of riches is less important to the young than to the old. Mariane would rather bear losing her fortune than face marriage with Tartuffe, and implores her father to change his mind:

Vos tendresses pour lui ne me font point de peine;  
Faites-les éclater, donnez-lui votre bien,  
Et, si ce n'est assez, joignez-y tout le mien:  
J'y consens de bon cœur, et je vous l'abandonne;  
(Tartuffe IV, iii, 1294-97)
In a similar way, brother and sister consider forsaking both *foyer* and inheritances so that they may escape Harpagon's tyranny (*L'Avare*, I, ii).

The older generation of *l'ancienne honnêteté* prefers a well endowed suitor, usually on in years, to a younger rival of lesser means. Gorgibus goes back on his promise to marry his daughter to her true love maintaining that there is nothing "Qui ne doive céder au soin d'avoir du bien" (*Sganarelle*, scène I, 48). In *Le Médecin Volant*, young Valère is accepted as *gendre* since his marriage to Gorgibus' daughter is "un parti sortable pour elle, tant pour la naissance que pour les biens" (scène XV). Jacqueline's peasant jargon does not fail to indict parental attitudes toward the suitability of future in-laws, "Les bères et les mères ant cette maudit couteume de demander toujours: 'Qu'a-t-il?' et 'Qu'a-t'elle?'" (*Le Médecin Malgré Lui*, II, i).

*Bourgeois* materialism is again expressed in Valère's ironic commentary reflecting Harpagon's sheer delight over the chance of getting something for nothing--of bypassing the dowry obligation:

> Oui, l'argent est plus précieux que toutes les choses du monde, et vous devez rendre grâces au Ciel de l'honnête homme de père qu'il vous a donné. Il sait ce que c'est que de vivre. Lorsqu'on s'offre de prendre une fille sans dot, on ne doit pas regarder plus avant. Tout est renfermé là dedans, et sans dot tient lieu de beauté, de jeunesse, de naissance, d'honneur, de sagesse, et probité.  

(*L'Avare*, I, v)

"Honor," "beauty," "wisdom," and "birth," aristocratic values, have lost their impact in this milieu and are replaced by materialistic ones--a well padded larder. Molière's *bourgeois* patriarchs, consumed by greed and interest, place the scramble for wealth or social recognition over
the concern for their family's welfare and happiness. A daughter's or son's marriage is to be weighed in terms of the money and social advancement it can bring to the family, or more exactly to the father; no consideration of the young person's happiness is called for. Thus, in Molière's highly developed bourgeois society, the family pursestrings hold an overpowering and pervasive influence on marriage.

Basing his statement on studies of primitive tribes, not yet disturbed by industrialization, the sociologist Malinowski has maintained that marriage is defined primarily by parenthood rather than by economic partnership or sexual appropriation. In Molière's civilized world, however, one sees the importance of the economic imperative. Valère is the father's choice for his daughter because he is both wealthy and of good birth. Célie in L'Etourdi is to be married to a wealthy old man. Likewise, Argan's reasons for marrying Angélique to Thomas Diafoirus are not exclusively medical but include the fact that young Diafoirus stands to inherit everything from his rich uncle, "Et Monsieur Purgon est un homme qui a huit mille bonnes livres de rente" (Le Malade Imaginaire, I, v).

The close rapport between economic imperatives, family, and marriage is further demonstrated in Molière's comedies through the occasional appearance of the notary required to draw up the marriage contract. It has been shown that the French Parlement had from the sixteenth century onward succeeded in strengthening parental say over their children's marriages by making marriage a province of the state. In Molière's theater, the notary often symbolizes parental power. Early reference to a notary occurs in Le Dépit Amoureux, first performed
in Béziers in 1655. During a heated argument between Mascarille and Albert, the wily servant attempts in vain to prove the existence of a clandestine marriage between Albert's daughter and Valère. At wit's end, Mascarille names two witnesses at the wedding, a tailor and a certain Ormin, "ce gros notaire habile." Beside the obvious farcical effects of such an encounter—Albert's suggestive " Connais tu bien Grimpant, le bourreau de la ville?" (III, x, 1106)—the engaging répliques inform the spectator about the clandestine union that took place between Valère and Ascagne, much to Mascarille's and Valere's ignorance.\textsuperscript{21} It is ironic that one of the witnesses is a crafty notary. Moreover, in the eyes of the Church, the marriage is only semi-legal since Valère is not exactly a consenting partner. Of course, the lack of parental consent made this union a state crime and punishable at the father's option.

As the conflict between father-figure and child became more and more involved in later plays, a notary's presence was indispensable. Both \textit{L'Ecole des Maris} et \textit{L'Ecole des Femmes} make use of these legal weasels to write up and flourish the contract before the conjoints; they also fill the air quite humorously with legal terminology and advice. Near the end of \textit{L'Ecole des Maris}, the notary and a show of force have been convoked by Sganarelle to stand in front of Valère's house. The affair concerns a marriage contract that Valère has signed. Whereas the bride's name has not yet been filled in, the young man has given his word that he will marry the girl who is in the house. The deliberate vagueness is to "set Sganarelle up" and to entice him to sign the contract assuring the marriage of the two lovers, much to the old man's misunderstanding and chagrin. The superintendent of police instructs the guardians:
Four people will consent to the marriage: the two guardinas, Isabelle of the mysterious "blank name," and Valère, her lover. Signed and witnessed by all, the single contract marriage will soon be followed by another one between Ariste and Lénor, this time with no hocus-pocus.

Contracts and notaries go hand in hand throughout the rest of Molière's theater. In L'Amour Médecin, Sganarelle is lead to believe that he is signing a bogus contract before a make-believe lawyer as a form of therapy for his "ailing" daughter. As matters turn out, both contract and notary are the "real McCoy" as is the marriage between the lovers who are 20,000 écus the richer. The doctor's role has been the only impersonation before a selfish father wishing to keep both property and daughter to himself. In Le Tartuffe, Orgon flashes a contract before a horrified family attempting to dissuade the father from carrying out the detestable marriage. Argante, in Les Fourberies de Scapin, hurries off to a notary to break a "forced marriage" rather than to arrange one; he has been convinced by the clever Scapin that his son's clandestine marriage was carried out at a shotgun's length.

A third brief reference to a lawyer occurs in the last line of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac in which Oronte has been made to swallow an incredible tale impugning Pourceaugnac's virtue. After Eraste "rescues" the young lady from Pourceaugnac's thieving clutches, the grateful father offers him Julie's hand in marriage. The following exchange of compliments echoes the prevailing ancien régime concept of father-son-in-law rapprochement through marriage:
Eraste: Ne croyez pas que ce soit pour l'amour de vous que je vous donne la main: ce n'est que Monsieur votre père dont je suis amoureux, et c'est lui que j'épouse.

Oronte: Je vous suis beaucoup obligé, et j'augmente de dix mille écus le mariage de ma fille. Allons, qu'on fasse venir le Notaire pour dresser le contrat.

(Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, III, vii)

Here, the marriage contract has been used by the young people to deceive the father into believing that Eraste is a more reputable economic partner for his daughter than Pourceaugnac. The father's appreciation is expressed through the dowry increase--an appropriate symbol of his economic control over the family.

In Molière's universe, contracts and notaries are often the crowning touch to the resolution of family conflicts. The most amusing example of a notary's involvement with the bourgeois household is in Act V of Les Femmes Savantes. Previous plays had illustrated a well established patriarchy; Orgon, Monsieur Jourdain, even George Dandin are the "masters" of their households. But in Les Femmes Savantes, Molière has created a working matriarchy composed of mother, aunt and daughter. Divorced from such practical matters as Martine's culinary expertise, Philaminte and her cronies insist on rejecting the old sexist adage "la poule ne doit pas chanter devant le coq." Chrysale--the husband and father of two daughters and the only male member of the household aside from two valets--takes up his daughter's defense in a rather shaky fashion during the comedy's veritable showdown in Act V. The notary is indeed in a quandary when, from either side of the room, mother and father each propose a different name for son-in-law. He can not help but expostulate, "Deux époux! / C'est trop pour la coutume" (V, iii; 1623-24).
The notary's presence in the above scene shows that the marriage conflict has gone as far as it can go. This sequence is not without resemblance to the contract episode of *L'Ecole des Mariés*, once again with a name duality: will it be Léonore or Isabelle, Trissotin or Clitandre? Note also that the conflict's resolution, achieved by the contract signing, is done in the presence of the entire household. Contract approval is only obtained after a ruse—Ariste's feigned news of the family's financial ruin that expels a phoney from the household while reuniting the family. A similar incident takes place in *Le Tartuffe* when the whole family unites against the common menace, the Impostor threatening to throw them all onto the streets. The marriage contract is then used as a device by the author not only to demonstrate the horror or absurdity of paternal despotism but also the resources and guile of desperate family members. A rapport has been suggested between the signing of the contract, conflict resolution, and, in some instances, the reintegration of the family. Contract signing may well indeed have a ritual significance in settling family conflicts as do ceremonies in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and *Le Malade Imaginaire*.

Brief reference has already been made to dowries in *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, *L'Amour Médecin* and the famous *sans dot* of Harpagon. In the first two instances, dowries were not rejected by the young people. Yet, in other plays, Jacqueline's indignation over the parents' materialism is shared by young adults who, in a pinch, would marry without economic consideration. Jacqueline herself hints that Léandre would accept Lucinde without dowry (*Le Médecin Malgré Lui*, II, i). Cléante assures Harpagon that he is not after the old man's wealth even though he is possibly in the enviable position of eldest son.
(L'Avare, IV, v). Certainly, in Le Tartuffe, the only character in pursuit of material possessions is the spiritual healer himself. Dowries can then illustrate the duality between forced and free consent marriages—two polar opposites each having its own share of proponents in Molière's theater.

The Introduction identified three crucial periods in the bourgeois household's existence: birth, marriage and death. All three mark a modification in the family's structure as well as redistribution of wealth. The first period connotes the continuation of the family; however, small children are uncommon on Molière's stage. The family consists rather of older parents and grown-up children in which instance the latter two crucial dates take on greater significance. The second period, "marriage," is relevant to Molière's domestic comedies not in the ceremony itself but rather in the preparation. This preparation period raises economic issues: the financial health of the bride's family, the groom's economic posture and the dowry. It also contains the web of clashes between father-daughter, husband-wife and other family members. Similarly, preparation for death is significant in many of the domestic comedies. A will assures that the wealth is distributed in line with the patriarch's wishes. Thus, the preparation is an economic one. Concepts such as primogeniture, the eldest son's privilege, and acts such as the drawing up of wills and disinheritance affect parent-child and man-wife structures in both positive and adverse ways.

The inheritance question is significant in seven diverse comedies: Le Dépit Amoureux, Le Tartuffe, L'Amour Médecin, Le Médecin Malgré Lui, L'Avare, Scapin, and Le Malade Imaginaire. The complicated
intrigue of *Le Dépit Amoureux* is due primarily to the inheritance issue which is the motive behind Ascagne's incognito. Without getting too deeply immersed in the intricacies of the plot, one can isolate several factors pertinent to family inheritance. 22

1. **Terms of Testament:** In the event of there being no male heir in Albert's family (which there was not) estate will be transferred to Polydore's family.

2. **FRAUD:** There is no authentic male heir in Albert's family. His strategem is to install a phoney heir in the person of Ascagne in his household, thereby keeping testament to himself.

3. **DOUBLE INCognito:** Ascagne, secretly a girl, plays the double role of both heir and young man.

4. **CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE:** Ascagne secretly marries Valère (before the play).

5. **TRICK ENDING:** Albert and Ascagne find out they are father and daughter.

The above threads of evidence have to be combined before any sense can be made out of them; one must especially understand the importance of factors 1, 3 and 4. Ascagne's marriage to Valère (#4) transfers in a sense the estate to Polydore's family where it rightfully belongs according to the terms of the testament (#1). Proceeding one step further, one can infer that even before the play began, the two houses, Polydore's and Albert's, had been united through a freakish "alliance." The testament had been rightfully transferred to Polydore's family and both sides would be happy. Only they are not, due to a carefully constructed web of levels of cognizance, blended with a clandestine marriage (#4), an incognito (#3) and a trick ending (#5). The play makes use of primogeniture and a special link between birth, estate and marriage. Ascagne's surprise marriage to unsuspecting Valère
only succeeds because of the trick ending. She finds out that Albert is her father and that she would most likely have a dowry. Before the discovery of her good fortune, she naturally believes herself to be an orphan with neither wealth nor birth. Ascagne is afraid that when Valère finds out who she really is, he will not accept her as his wife, "Voudra-t-il avouer pour épouse une fille / Qu'il verra sans appui de biens et de famille?" (Le Dépité Amoureux, IV, i, 1153-4).

The father-heir link is explored in greater depth in Le Tartuffe and L'Avaré and has an ironic twist in Les Fourberies de Scapin. In Le Tartuffe and L'Avaré, the two sons are successively renounced, expatriated, disinherited and cursed. Although Cléante's rivalry with his father for Mariane is the motive for disinherition, even more ridiculous and omen-bearing is Orgon's defense of Tartuffe and refusal to believe Damis' imprudent accusations. Subsequent to Damis' disgrace, the father informs the audience of his next deadly move during an enlightened declaration to the play's flim-flam man:

Je ne veux point avoir d'autre héritier que vous,
Et je vais de ce pas, en fort bonne manière,
Vous faire de mon bien donation entière.
Un bon et franc ami, que pour gendre je prends,
M'est bien plus cher que fils, que femme, et que parents.
N'accepterez-vous pas ce que je vous propose?
(Le Tartuffe, III, vii, 1176-81)

Once again, marriage and the testament show an affinity for each other. Tartuffe, as son in law, will get the bride and the estate all to himself, leaving the rest of the family with nothing.

Disinherition is once more the issue in Les Fourberies de Scapin, a play containing a trick ending and hidden family structures as in Le Dépit Amoureux, L'Ecole des Femmes, etc. Two dictatorial
fathers have only recently returned home from a business trip and try to shake down their sons into revealing their antics during the past few months. Octave's revealed marriage fetches vows of disinherition from the irate father who has previously arranged a match between his son and his best friend's daughter. There follows a parallel sequence between the other father-son team with equal threats of expulsion from the foyer. Whereas the second quarrel merely concerns some shenanagins that the father has been unable to fathom, the prior conflict is more specific and involves the relationship between marriages and wills. Unless the son breaks the clandestine marriage and submits to the father's choice, he will lose the patrimony. Both threats suppose a potential redistribution of wealth and an altered family structure—the destruction of the parent-eldest child link.

Another more serious form of will tampering is witnessed in Le Malade Imaginaire which together with the opening scene of L'Amour Médécin best exemplify testamental rivalry and conniving to change the clauses of the will—and thereby incapacitate the submissive part of the family. Béline is evil; her insidious and hypocritical obsequiousness place her, like Tartuffe, in the heart of the household, closest to the master and to his pursestrings. Manipulating the father's sentiments, the cunning wife calls in a notary, not to draw up a wedding contract but to alter the will so that the wife rather than the children will derive benefits from the estate. Argan's devotion to his second wife excludes any thought for his children's welfare. He asks the notary: "Comment puis-je faire, si'il vous plaît pour lui donner mon bien, et en frustrer mes enfants?" (Le Malade Imaginaire, I, vii). The notary advises him how to glide by the coutume that upholds the children's right to a huge chunk of the estate.
There is not always rivalry among family members. The competition among the interest groups in the opening scene of L'Amour Médécin, and the niece's suggestion that her cousin be sent to a convent—making her the universal heiress—are strangely opposed by the entente among Elmire, Dorine and Cléante to marry Mariane to her true love. Elmire's generosity towards her stepdaughter is worlds away from Béline's treacherous treatment of Angélique. In the following soliloquy Argante laments having only a son and no daughter:

Ah! pourquoi faut-il qu'il soit fils unique!
et que n'ai-je à cette heure la fille que le Ciel m'a ôtée, pour la faire mon héritière!
(Les Fourberies de Scapin, I, iv)

Argante favors his daughter as an heiress because he apparently feels that she would be more mature and responsible than his son who married without his consent.

In Le Médecin Malgré Lui, Léandre's "great expectations" to inherit from a rich uncle do not impress Sganarelle who is a steady advocate of the "bird in the hand" adage. The old man chirps:

Tous ces biens à venir me semblent autant de chansons. Il n'est rien tel que ce qu'on tient; et l'on court risque de s'abuser, lorsque l'on compte sur le bien qu'un autre vous garde. La mort n'a pas toujours les oreilles ouvertes aux voeux et aux prières de Messieurs les héritiers; et l'on a le temps d'avoir les dents longues, lorsqu'on attend, pour vivre, le trépas de quelqu'un.
(Le Médecin Malgré Lui, II, i)

Géronte is an excellent visionary and captures to the quick the image of poor relations eagerly awaiting their beloved's demise. He knows that Léandre is not good enough for his daughter since there is another
suior, Horace, who is wealthier. Dressed up as an apothecary, Léandre infiltrates the paternal domain and runs off with the daughter. The escapade would have led to a clandestine marriage had not Léandre's uncle expired and bequeathed him the promised riches. Now, the picture has entirely changed--the economic imperative has been satisfied. Géronte gives away his daughter to Léandre in a flash, "Monsieur, votre vertu est tout à fait considérable, et je vous donne ma fille avec la plus grande joie du monde" (III, xi). Never since Le Dépit Amoureux has marriage depended so much on a rich uncle and on a trick ending.

Preparation for death, then, is to a large extent dependent on preparation for marriage. In Les Fourberies de Scapin and L'Avare, marriage conflicts between father and son result in either the act or the threat of disinheritance. In Tartuffe, the imposter's marriage and inheritance of Orgon's property would put him at the very center of power in the household; the family would be stripped of its rights to succession. A tally of the twenty domestic comedies indicates that at least one marriage arrangement is made in each of seventeen plays. Le Barbouillé and George Dandin already exhibit young ménages whereas Les Précieuses Ridicules is the exception with no pending marriage at all. How can one characterize the marriages that are going to take place? There are few differences between the marriage partners. In most cases, the marriage will be between young people--of the same background, age and temperament. Once more, all of the marriages but two are based on the free consent of both partners. Angélique puts her finger on the very crux of the issue during a most revealing husband-wife battle:
George Dandin: C'est ainsi que vous satisfaitez aux engagements de la foi que vous m'avez donnée publiquement?

Angélique: Moi? Je ne vous l'ai point donnée de bon coeur, et vous me l'avez arrachée. M'avez-vous, avant le mariage, demandé mon consentement, et si je voulais bien de vous? Vous n'avez consulté, pour cela, que mon père et ma mère; ce sont eux proprement qui vous ont épousé. . . . Pour moi, qui ne vous ai point dit de vous marier avec moi, et que vous avez prise sans consulter mes sentiments, je prétends n'être point obligée a me soumettre en esclave a vos volontés;

(George Dandin, II, ii)

The point is that "rightful" marriages are those based on free consent; forced ones are the true mésalliances. The above marriage is one of convenience—a deal between Dandin and the parents-in-law. Each gave to the other what he desired, money for name.

There is one more "forced marriage," an ironic one, in the play bearing the same title, Le Mariage Forcé. The future son-in-law is an old man, 52 years by his own reckoning, who is compelled by his future in-laws to wed their only daughter. The bride to be is hardly appalled by this state of events and will use the marriage as a springboard to costly parties and amusements and as a release from her own father's stinginess. Dorimène even soothes her boy friend's feelings by hinting that her new husband is on his last legs and that she will soon be an heiress, "C'est un homme qui mourra avant qu'il soit peu, et qui n'a tout au plus que six mois dans le ventre" (Le Mariage Forcé, scène viii). Dorimène is the only young lady in Molière's world who contemplates marriage out of purely selfish, economic motives. This is not to say, however that the other young lovers never equate marriage with social or economic status.
The Molière Imperative

The chart below suggests that marriage entails three imperatives based on essentially two points of view.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point of View</th>
<th>Consideration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Traditional</td>
<td>1. Economic</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Progressive</td>
<td>2. Social</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Consent of both partners</td>
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The first two considerations are most readily attributed to the parental or traditional view: solid marriages are alliances between two wealthy houses of unimpeachable social standing. Such marriages, the "good" ones, are based on interest rather than on love. The third condition can be called the "Molière imperative" since it marks the difference between the playwright's world and the bourgeois society of the seventeenth century. Whereas the first two considerations are sometimes relevant to the younger generation, "free consent" or marriage based on "true love" is a concept rejected by the traditionalists. To the progressives, only marriages based on free consent are decent marriages.  

Economic motives lie behind many of the fathers' marriage decisions: Harpagon's "sans dot," the suitors' wealth and even the fathers' decision in L'Amour Médecin to marry his daughter to no one. Sometimes, social and economic reasons overlap in Argan's choice of Diafoirus, and in the relationship of the two fathers of Les Fourberies de Scapin. Then again the parents may base their marriage decision on social consideration. Trissotin's eligibility is founded on something else than wealth and Monsieur Jourdain's search for a marquis as his
son-in-law is a graphic illustration of the bourgeois father's concern for sociability and status. Jourdain seems to care not a whit about controlling the family budget; he thus breaks away from the mold of parsimonious fathers. Orgon's obsession is not money but rather his soul's salvation. In most plays, there is some sort of compromise between parent and child so that at play's end conflict is minimal or no longer existent. Whether there is compromise or not, the "Molière imperative" insures that the children's choice will be honored. Where there is no compromise—no paternal benediction—the couple may bring about the marriage by tricking the father at the contract table or by a clandestine union.

Compromise brings into play economic and social advantages for both old and young. For instance, in Le Médecin Malgré Lui, the "surprise" inheritance causes Léandre to satisfy condition #1, wealth. Since imperative #3 (free consent) already exists, there is no longer any barrier to the marriage—both generations are satisfied. Because Monsieur Jourdain has no objection to Lucile's marrying the son of the "Grand Turk," all three conditions are satisfied: money, social standing and free consent. Both in Les Femmes Savantes and in Le Tartuffe, Clitandre and Valère offer to help two financially depleted families, acts which quickly fetch the parents' admiration.

Léandre, Lélie, Clitandre, Valère—names that offer little contrast and even smaller deviance from the bourgeois essence of solid sons from merchants' families. Many marriages in Molière's domestic families will be endogamous in which the bride and groom come from the same economic and social strata. Thus, Gorgibus prefers Horace to
Léandre because he is merely wealthier. Clitandre and Valère are certainly the right partners in that they are not below their fiancées' families. Monsieur Jourdain would have his daughter marry a marquis and assures his wife that Lucile will have an ample dowry, to which Madame Jourdain replies: "Il faut à votre fille un mari qui lui soit propre, et il vaut mieux pour elle un honnête homme riche et bien fait, qu'un gentilhomme gueux et mal bâti" (Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, III, xii). Madame Jourdain is as class conscious as her husband; however, he believes in the advantages and social advancement of an aristocratic alliance whereas she can see nothing but awkwardness and inequality of family relations resulting from such a venture:

Les alliances avec plus grand que soi sont sujettes toujours à de fâcheux inconvénients. Je ne veux point qu'un gendre puisse à ma fille reprocher ses parents, et qu'elle ait des enfants qui aient honte de m'appeler leur grand-maman. . . . Je ne veux point tous ces caquets, et je veux un homme, en un mot, qui m'ait obligation de ma fille, et à qui je puisse dire: "Mettez-vous là, mon gendre, et dinez avec moi. (III,xii)

Indeed, conditions one and two, economic and social, are important to the young people themselves who recognize the need for security. Henriette, far from sharing her mother's and sister's spiritual views, shows her disapproval of marriages based on tight budgets and hints that without money, marriages can sour:

Rien n'use tant l'ardeur de ce noeud qui nous lie,  
Que les fâcheux besoins des choses de la vie; .  
Et l'on en vient souvent à s'accuser tous deux  
De tous les noirs chagrins qui suivent de tels feux.  
(Les Femmes Savantes, V, scène dernière, 1751-1754)

Tensions between children and parents have been heightened by the parent's blindness to his or her own condition and to the ironic fact
that the marriage choice of the rest of the family (free consent) lies well within the economic and social parameters of the *bourgeois* household. Henriette, Mariane, and the other young ladies have chosen their men from their own economic and social milieu. Family conflict is essential, though, to the plot; from conflict arises deception, *quid pro quo*, humorous characterizations, and of course the inevitable wedding plans at the play's end.

**Convents and Clandestine Marriages**

Although both parents and children had various weapons at their disposal for their mêlée over the marriage problem, the father undoubtedly had a more imposing arsenal. In addition to threatening economic sanctions such as disinheritance and no dowry at all, he possessed powers invested in him by the State, identifying all marriages contracted without his consent to be clandestine, illegal and void. The State acknowledged the father as sovereign of his nuclear cell. Thus, he not only could use psychological authority but physical force as well. In several plays, the girl complains of being closeted by a most wary Dad. In *Le Sicilien* and *L'Etourdi*, the young ladies are literally slaves. Moreover, clandestine marriages could be dissolved if the father so desired (*Les Fourberies de Scapin, Sganarelle*). Finally, fathers could always send rebellious daughters to a convent. In *Les Précieuses Ridicules, L'Ecole des Femmes*, and *Le Malade Imaginaire*, the father presents the dire choice of imprisonment through marriage or the veil.

Children, on the other hand, had the resources of the family, the crafty minds of servants, the comforting arms of an uncle and the
determined efforts of the lover. Through duplicity, they could sometimes bring the father to his senses or, if need be, trick him into consenting to the marriage. Daughters, too, threatened to retire to the convent; Julie and Mariane would rather marry the church than Monsieur de Pourceaugnac and Tartuffe. Lucinde in Le Médecin Malgré Lui (III, vi) and Lucile in Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme (V, v) are equally adamant in going to the furthest extremities to avoid marrying a man whom they do not love. Then, if all else failed, the clandestine marriage could take place in several ways: 1) an unannounced marriage in Le Dépôt Amoureux and Les Fourberies de Scapin; 2) an abduction plan in L'Étourdi (III, vii); 3) an elopement in Le Médecin Malgré Lui and Le Sicilien. Oddly enough, the marriages in Le Dépôt Amoureux and Les Fourberies de Scapin were not done out of necessity and were both concluded before the play's beginning; only in Le Sicilien was the elopement crucial.

References to clandestine marriages far outnumber actual occurrences. Thus, in Le Médecin Volant and in L'Avare, the young people should resort to them if things turn for the worse. In Le Médecin Malgré Lui, lovers run off but return to receive the benediction only because of Valère's last minute inheritance. Sganarelle of L'Ecole des Maris and Oronte of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac are induced to believe stories about abductions whereas Agnès' abortive effort to run off with Horace puts her once again in Arnolphe's clutches. Still another variation on the clandestine marriage theme is in Sganarelle ou Le Cocu Imaginaire where a secret union involving Villebrequin's son breaks the previous marriage agreement, resolves the conflict and allows Célie to marry Lélie. Villebrequin is careful to add that had
his son's parents-in-law failed to satisfy conditions #1 and #2, wealth and birth, he would have seen fit to break the alliance (Sganarelle, scène dernièrè, 642-2).

Conclusion

Throughout his career as a playwright Molière experimented with a diversity of nuclear and extended family units. Although the conjugal family unit of parent(s) and child(ren) constitutes the vast majority of households in Molière's bourgeois comedies, it is by no means exclusive; thus the author's world reflects the variety of domestic group structures in seventeenth century France. The preponderance of widower-child households in the early plays can be seen as the dramatist's successful attempts to create conflict around the marriage decision with a minimal power relationship--male/female. As his talents in composing comedies increased, Molière was able to create a larger family on stage with a web of interlocking power and advisory structures--where not all family members lived in the same household. Changes in power relationships included bolder and more assertive roles for women; hence, the composition of the family itself underwent modifications in plays like Le Tartuffe and Les Femmes Savantes. To a large degree the marriage issue defines and situates the family's age and disposition; children are perpetually on the verge of getting married and often need family help to defeat the father's disagreeable choice of the marriage partner. Parents and children spend a considerable amount of time preparing for marriage and death--events that call for notaries, dowries, marriage contracts and wills. The notary is more often than not an extension of parental power--and
strives to insure that marriages meet economic and social guidelines established by the paterfamilias. Finally, preparation for marriage and death entails a redistribution of wealth and transformation in family structure and affects both the economic and physical well-being of every member of the household.

Behind traditional (parental) and progressive (family) viewpoints on marriage lie three arguments of reason: economic, social and the "Molière Condition" of free consent. Indeed, one wonders how seventeenth century audiences reacted to free consent marriages on stage? Did the playwright intend them to be as ridiculous and odd as the fatherheads? To many Frenchmen tied into the authoritative hierarchy of Louis XIV these romantic notions must have appeared foolish. Yet, as one recent critic has remarked, Molière is also consistent in his attacks against masculine power: "Mais l'authoritarisme masculin, comme l'absolutisme des parents, est condamné surtout parce qu'il est l'ennemi juré de l'amour." So consistent is Molière's criticism of authority—parental sanctions, notaries, will tampering—that "reasonable" marriages are the ones advocated by the submissive or enlightened part of the family and turn out to be based on love rather than on interest and suppression.
CHAPTER II

THE CONTESTED PATRIARCHY:

PARENT–CHILD STRUCTURES
"Une femme qu'on garde est gagnée à demi"  

_L'Ecole des Maris_  

"L'Esprit du père et celui du fils sont des choses si opposées. . . ."  

_L'Avare_  

The Evolution of Women's Roles in Molière's Theater  

Father-daughter confrontations are almost totally nonexistent in Molière's early comedies; moreover, until the short farce, _Les Précieuses Ridicules_, one does not receive the distinct impression of a household. Also noteworthy is the rare appearance of sons (male heirs) and consequently of parent-son structures in the early plays. Although there is a brief encounter in _Le Dépit Amoureux_ between Polydore and Valère (father-son), it will be shown that the dramatist has preferred to focus his attention on the escapades of son and servant in two earlier five act plays, _Le Dépit Amoureux_ and _L'Etourdi_.  

Parent-son relationships are much less numerous than father-daughter structures; the latter are used more effectively by the playwright to illustrate power plays and authority-submissiveness. Indeed, only in _Le Tartuffe_ and _L'Avare_ does one witness any substantial development of parent-son relationships.  

As Molière's talent in writing and staging theater increased, family relationships within the plays also underwent transformations. Evolution in women's roles of both daughter and wife is noticeable. The change in woman's status, and the increase in her number of lines and appearances from the early plays to _L'Ecole des Femmes_ and _Le Tartuffe_, drastically affect the traditional structure of authoritative father and
complacent child. Three periods characterized by three "landmark" plays suggest the evolution of woman's role and family relationships in Molière's domestic comedies:

1. Early plays to 1659—_L'Etourdi_
2. 1659—_Les Précieuses Ridicules_
3. 1662—_L'Ecole des Femmes_

The first phase is characterized by the paucity of female roles and lines and by the survival of the patriarchal system. It is best exemplified in _L'Etourdi_ by: (a) the three old patriarchs, Anselme, Trufaldin and Pandolfe; (b) the humorous masculine duo of Mascarille the schemer and Lélie the bungler; and (c) the rare appearances of females—Célie and Hippolyte appear in all of three scenes.

In the second stage, Molière did a complete _volte-face_ from the previous male-oriented plays. _Les Précieuses Ridicules_ does not suggest a "reasonable" participation in the play's intrigue by female players but rather an usurpation of many lines by the _pecques provinciales_. That _Les Précieuses Ridicules_ is a ridiculous and exaggerated consideration of the behavior that some women were adopting in seventeenth century Paris is not to be contested; the audience cannot help but laugh at Magdelon and Cathos getting what they deserved. However, from his twentieth century position, the critic can perhaps see even in this play the search for a personal identity by frustrated women and their attempts to emancipate themselves from savage husbands. _Les Précieuses Ridicules_ is then an excessively oriented "female play" just as its predecessors exaggerated male relationships.

In _L'Ecole des Femmes_ and to some extent in _L'Ecole des Maris_, Molière sets the pace for measured relationships between man and wife
and parent and daughter—measured from the technical point of view of giving women more lines on stage. The greatest development of women characters as mothers, wives and servants occurs in this third phase.

The Tireless Patriarchy

The first play that could have a father-daughter confrontation does not have any. In *Le Médecin Volant*, the father expects no filial resistance; this pattern is also visible in *Le Dépit Amoureux* and *L'Etourdi*. Lucile's total of two lines in *Le Médecin Volant*—a repetition of "Oui, Monsieur"—is lost in the maze of Sganarelle's doings and undoings before a credulous host, Gorgibus, who at the farce's end gives in to the marriage plans of the two lovers. The play is characterized by the absence of conflict, the minimization of dialogue between parent and child, and the virtual non-existence of the daughter's role.

If indeed possible, Célia's role in *L'Etourdi* is played down even more. Célia is slave to an old man desirous of selling her. She is little more than chattel to be transferred from one owner to another or from master to husband. It is significant that her change of status from slave to daughter does not alter the power structure since her newly identified father, Trufaldin, does not hesitate to dispose of her in marriage. "Mais en te recouvrant que diras-tu de moi/Si je songe aussitôt de me priver de toi?" (V, x, 2041–2042), the patriarch asks Célia who can hardly object to a marriage that she desires. Minimal conflict between parent and child is once again the keynote in *L'Etourdi*, where a father's rule is never questioned.
Trufaldin's desire to keep Célie withdrawn from the world suggests a master-servant relationship and foreshadows the "werewolf" mentality of Sganarelle and Arnolphe in the two Écoles. The unpleasantness of his character is evident in the following words directed to Célie: "Que faites-vous dehors? Et quel soin vous talonne/Vous à qui je défends de parler à personne?" (1, iv, 128-129).

Each one of the three father-child couples in L'Étourdi is lackluster and characterized by a listless and crotchety patriarch and by an uncreative child:

```
   Trufaldin    Anselme    Pandolphe
   △             △           △
   .             .           .
   Célie         Hippolyte  Lélie
```

Although the above structures exist, Molière was careful to see that confrontations were infrequent; there are for example no dialogues between Anselme-Hippolyte and Pandolphe-Lélie. Mediations are performed by the tireless servant Mascarille who manipulates all six and who is the only dynamic character available to liven up the three widower-child relationships. In a sense, Mascarille has more freedom that the children. Whereas his subservience gives him latitude to maneuver, the children's will and character seem to have been eroded by the authoritarianism of their parents.

Professor Lancaster has remarked that Le Dépit Amoureux had shown progress in its importance given to women. Although Lucinde's boldness before her father and Ascagne's interview with her confidente
indicate the author's desire to show the psychological and emotional complexities of women, the play is lacking in direct parent-child meetings or power conflicts. Neither of the two sisters ever gets the occasion to speak with her father alone; Ascagne's conflicts are revealed in secret to her confidante.

Albert, like later Molièresque fathers, worries about his daughter's health more for reasons of self-interest than for anything else. The distance between father and daughter is reinforced by Albert's indirect communication—for example, his questioning Ascagne's tutor about his daughter. In the ensuing conversation, the father reveals his desire to marry Ascagne to a suitable family—a meaningless notion due to his ignorance of two facts:

1. Ascagne, disguised as a male heir, is in reality a woman.

2. Ascagne is already married to Valère.

Ascagne's plight is all the more pitiful because she believes that she is an orphan and consequently has neither money nor condition to protect her and to warrant her marriage with Valère. Although she believes herself to be alienated from any family help, she also escapes family turmoil over the marriage issue. Her resourcefulness in marrying the man of her choice is to be admired; however, once she is brought into the family and is recognized by both her new "fathers" at the denouement, she adopts the traditional female subservience in assuring her father-in-law, "Vous obéir sera mon premier compliment" (V, v, 1632).

Le Dépit Amoureux together with Les Femmes Savantes and Le Malade Imaginaire are the only plays in Molière's theater with two
sisters residing in the same household. Ascagne's disguise as a male reveals two interesting differences between brother and sister roles during the seventeenth century. First of all, Ascagne's encounter with her sister is on a brother-sister basis which gives her the advantage of giving "brotherly" advice to Lucrèce on the order of pursuing Eraste and not Valère. Secondly, Ascagne has the privilege of having a tutor. Once her identity had been revealed, then the tutor would have been dispensed with; education was a sexist concept reserved for boys, whereas girls in general remained ignorant of scholastic material in the ancien régime. Molière was thus at an early period in his career experimenting with different family relationships--brother-sister, sister-sister, daughter-confidente--while still monitoring father-daughter dialogues at a nearly non-existent level. At play's end, the notion of patriarchy is underlined when both fathers are present to deliver their paternal benediction and consent to the uniting of the two families through marriage. In other plays, Molière includes the fathers in the denouement although the patriarch's wishes--be they blessing or anathema--vary with each comedy and depend on whether the proper economic and social imperatives have been satisfied either through compromise or duplicity.

**Females in the Foreground:**
*Les Précieuses Ridicules*

Up until 1659 the Molièresque family existed in name only; it was not tight-knit--daughters were rarely seen and heard whereas the patriarch and master-servant teams commanded the majority of lines. This
traditionally submissive and authoritative system went unchallenged until the appearance of *Les Précieuses Ridicules*—Molière's first great success.

In this remarkable play the household is extended—father, daughter and niece:

![Family Tree](image)

The playwright had briefly experimented with an extended family in *Le Médecin Volant*, however Sabine's role is greatly limited by her short stage appearance and is less developed than Cathos'. There are several other "firsts" in *Les Précieuses Ridicules*—Gorgibus is the first example of an indignant father mortified by the conduct of his niece and daughter. Like Alcantor in *Le Mariage Forcé*, he is anxious to marry off the young ones as soon as possible: "Je me lasse de vous avoir sur les bras, et la garde de deux filles est une charge un peu trop pesante pour un homme de mon âge" (scène iv). Both Alcantor and Gorgibus are doubtless thinking of reductions in the family budget that can be made after the marriages.

More so than any previous father figure, Gorgibus has several explosive encounters with his charges. During these episodes, the conflict develops between old and new concepts, between the "marriage or the convent" ultimatum and between two mentalities—a hard-hitting bourgeois temperament and a flighty romanesque mind. Thus, for the
first time, paternal authority is put to the test and mocked. The father's vocabulary abounds with authoritative words and phrases: "commander," "dites - leur qu'elles descendent," "maître absolu" and "je veux que"—utterances that are out of place in the rose-colored world of Cathos and Magdelon. Magdelon finds it hard to believe that she can be of the same blood as Gorgibus and hopes for an adventure that will somehow reveal her for her "une naissance plus illustre."

In a sense, Cathos and Magdelon are as ridiculous as Gorgibus, yet they are to be pitied for they are his victims. Destined to be the wives of the two young men at the play's outset, they question the father's right to marry them at such an early date, "Mon père, voilà ma cousine qui vous dira, aussi bien que moi, que le mariage ne doit jamais arriver qu'après les autres aventures" (scène iv).

The seriousness of their wish can be appreciated in today's more liberal atmosphere whether or not "aventures" implies merely episodes out of the domains of La Carte de Tendre or more down to earth attempts by them to realize their full capacities. One can envisage préciosité as a protest against the humble position carved out for women in society.5 Realizing the farcical implication of their exaggerated préciosité, the modern reader can still empathize with Cathos' and Magdelon's desire to be something more than their husband's appendage in a world where the authority of the day would little encourage a wife's attempt to cultivate her mind.6 Magdelon's aspiration for adventure is not unlike Agnès' search for release from ignorance or even the première's graceful aspirations in Giraudoux' Intermezzo.

The great number of lines allotted to Cathos and Magdelon testify to the fact that women were put in the limelight for the first
time in Molière's theater, whereas the father is a secondary figure. The exaggeration in women's participation in Les Précieuses Ridicules reverses the curious trend of the patriarchy—suppressing—women roles of L'Étourdi and Le Dépit Amoureux. Later on, this technique of overstatement or overkill—common to early male—oriented and female—oriented plays already studied—is offset by the balance between male and female roles in the two Ecoles. Here, Molière's moral outrage against the father's desire to keep his daughter ignorant and cloistered as well as his respect for the rights/intelligence of women are vented by Isabelle and Agnès in the third and final phase of family relations—the augmentation of female power to a more equitable relationship between male and female family members. However, the two Ecoles were not the first plays to expose parent—child conflicts on stage. In the shorter farce, Sganarelle ou Le Cocu Imaginaire, the plot consists in the clearing up of a series of quid pro quos and mistaken identities occasioned by a portrait's falling into the wrong hands. The opening scene contains the principal father—daughter confrontation. Gorgibus is the perfect mask of the traditionally unreasonable old man and uses the conventional vocabulary accordingly: "pouvoir absolu," "raison paternelle," "ordonner," "je ne veux pas" and "droit absolu." The father's authority is defied by the daughter since he has reneged on his promise to marry Célie to Lélie. He is much less benevolent and open to reason than his counterpart in Le Médecin Volant—an earlier play that depicts little or no parent—child opposition.

After the initial interview, the play shifts to other characters and to the dépit amoureux that induces Célie to spite her true love by complying with her father's wishes; she says, "A suivre mon devoir je suis déterminée" (scène xviii, 478). Her submission, of course, is
not genuine and later on Célie will try to back out of the deal. Only a *deus ex machina*—news of the rival's secret marriage to another lady—will compel Gorgibus to return to his original promise and will put an end to the conflict centering around the choice of a marriage partner. Although Gorgibus' character is of little interest, Célie's courage in standing up to a headstrong father anticipates future confrontations between father and child in later plays.8

The Two Ecoles: Guardians and Wards

In both *L'Ecole des Mariés* and *L'Ecole des Femmes*, the power structure is not in a conjugal family unit but in a guardian-ward relationship. The effect of such a departure from the widower-child tradition of *Les Précieuses Ridicules* and *Le Cocu Imaginaire* is to centralize the conflict between two characters to the exclusion of other household members; thus, the Ariste-Léonore, Sganarelle-Isabelle, and Arnolphe-Agnès households have no co-resident relatives.

The marriage issue takes on a unique twist in *L'Ecole des Mariés* and *L'Ecole des Femmes*. Gutwirth remarks that the guardian incarnates the dual father and spouse archetypes;9 odious father-head and detestable spouse are one and the same man, with Sganarelle and Arnolphe pledged to marry the brides themselves. This invention eliminates the traditional patrilineal transfer of the daughter from father to husband and the need for another character, the *futur*. Its incestual overtones make the fused father-spouse figure every bit as frightening as the threat posed by such distinct entities as Orgon and Tartuffe.10

At their guardians' mercy, Isabelle and Agnès have no one in the household to help their cause. Sganarelle has no visible servants at all
whereas Arnolphe's domestics are less intelligent and intrepid than Dorine and Toinette; perhaps Arnolphe hired them because they were too simple to collude with or corrupt Agnès. Aided and sometimes limited by the resources of their lovers on the outside, the charges consequently must depend on their own wits and guile.

In *L'Ecole des Femmes*, Molière has seen fit to portray but one guardian-ward couple in a longer play. The comedy seems to benefit from the elimination of the "positive couple," for it has time to dwell on Agnès' gradual awareness of Arnolphe's repression and her possible choice of happiness with Horace in the world outside her sanctum.

In *L'Ecole des Maris*, the compatible guardian-ward couple, Ariste and Léonore, rarely speak to one another. Molière thus concentrates the intrigue on the warring faction—the relationship between the traditionally despotic "father" and his charge. Although Ariste's role as a liberal and liberated father-figure would not be recast in later plays, his function as "enlightened" brotherly advisor did manifest itself in the subsequent personage of Béralde and Cléante.11

The difference in parent-child relationships in the two plays can best be appreciated by studying the confrontations between guardian and ward. J. Hubert points out that the "audience must not learn or even care about the nature of Ariste's or Sganarelle's feelings toward their charges."12 Sganarelle is not jealous, because he feels that he has no cause to be. His belief is due to the careful attentions of his ward, Isabelle, who feigns before him dislike for Valère and who repeatedly asserts her devotion to her guardian. Her tempered assertion—"Je languis quand je suis un moment sans vous voir" (II, vii, 674)—strikes the right
chords in his ego; believing there to be a perfect entente between himself and his lady love, he coos back:

Va, pouponne, mon coeur, je reviendrai tout à l'heure. 
Est-il une personne et plus sage et meilleure?
(II, vii, 675-676)

The audience marvels at the innate resourcefulness of Isabelle who, subject to her guardian's selfishness, has not yet had the opportunity to observe the world. Her ruses are worthy of Scapin's best and certainly receive admiration from Ergaste who is Valère's servant: "De ces ruses d'amour la croirait-on capable?" (II, v, 527). However, Ergaste should know better because it is he who assures Valère that "l'amour rend inventif" (I, iv, 339).

Although Isabelle does not know Valère, she has seen him following her at a distance; perhaps their eyes have communicated. However, she must be sure of Valère's intentions, for she is determined not to marry Sganarelle. In order to communicate with her young man, she uses the most available messenger—her would-be husband. There are five confrontations between guardian and ward in the second and final acts.

The Gambit of L'Ecole des Maris

1. **Message:** Isabelle reveals that she is importuned by Valère.  
   **Action:** Sganarelle sent out to discourage Valère.  
   (II, i)

2. **Message:** Isabelle gives Sganarelle sealed letter.  
   **Action:** Guardian sets out to return "unwanted mail" to Valère.  
   (II, iii)
3. **Message:** Guardian relays to ward that lover has honorable intentions.
   **Action:** Sganarelle sent out again.
   **Result:** Sganarelle returns with Valère; lovers see one another and speak for first time.
   (II, ix)

4. **Message:** Sganarelle tells ward that he wishes to marry her on the next day.
   (II, x)

5. **Message:** Isabelle leads Sganarelle to believe that her sister is in the house.
   **Action:** Isabelle (disguised as her sister) runs away to Valère.
   (III, ii)

The first three "parent-child" encounters show Isabelle's mastery in conning Sganarelle. By means of the old guardian, the two young people communicate their love for each other and their honorable intentions; Sganarelle even provides an interview for them. Hubert's label of "shuttlecock" is most appropriate as Sganarelle is merely shuttled back and forth from lover to lover.\(^{14}\) This courting by proxy is suddenly checked during the fourth encounter when Sganarelle announces his intention to marry his ward on the next day. Isabelle is thus compelled to arrange a delightful ruse which enables her to escape to Valère and which gives Sganarelle an illusory and short-lived victory over his brother.

Before the gambit begins, Isabelle assures the audience of the purity of her intentions: "O Ciel, sois moi propice et seconde en ce jour / Le stratagème adroit d'une innocente amour" (II, i, 361-362). Her moves are strictly on the defensive whereas in later plays, notably *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, the daughter appears to take relish in duping the father.
L'Ecole des Maris thus differed from Molière's previous comedies in giving more lines and intelligence to the female role. Moreover, the power structure is reversed with Isabelle pulling the strings and Sganarelle running about like a helpless rabbit. Whereas Sganarelle's trust in his charge eliminates all thought of jealousy or even emotional outburst, Arnolphe is not on such an even emotional plane. For one, he is in love with Agnès and feels intense jealousy pangs when the naïve discloses to him her feelings for Horace. Secondly, Arnolphe is never in doubt as to the progress of the affair between the two lovers. Whereas Isabelle abuses Sganarelle's trust, Arnolphe both suffers and enjoys the omniscient rapport that he has with Horace. Finally, the outcome of Agnès' happiness depends on the discovery that Enrique is her father— in L'Ecole des Maris there is no contrived ending to aid or hinder Isabelle's success.

Arnolphe's absolute control over Agnès does not prevent the latter from communicating with the outside world. In fact, the mainline of the intrigue consists in two types of interviews, guardian/young man (Horace) and guardian/ward, where the intelligence gleaned from one complements information obtained from the other. As in L'Ecole des Maris, there are again five guardian/ward confrontations:

1. Return to Household. Submissive daughter (I, iii)
2. Investigation. "Je suis maître. Je parle, allez, obéissez" (II, v)
4. Escape and Apprehension. Father as lover scene (V, iv)
In each one, the father figure is attempting two things, both to obtain information as to what has happened (thus, the narratives) and to proselytize and to impose his ideas on his ward. However, with each subsequent interview the guardian becomes more frustrated and conscious of his failure. Whether it be through "command language" or awkward attempts at wooing Agnès, he fails to repress the growing awareness and desire of his ward to get out into the new world.

The five meetings between guardian and ward thus show the transition from authoritative father to distressed and defeated lover and consequently the deterioration of authority in the father-spouse figure. Despite the fact that Agnès is subjected to parental power in the first three encounters as exemplified in the parting line, "Je suis maître... obéissez," Monsieur de la Souche's power wanes while the lovers persist in meeting each other. In a very real sense, both sides of the patriarchal duo, the father in his cross-examination of Agnès and the husband in his moralizing implications of Les Maximes de Mariage, are united by a concerted effort to maintain Agnès in a state of subjection. Nor is Arnolphe successful in his fourth encounter with Agnès (V, iv)—the crucial indication of his failure being the loss of his authoritative self. Finding he is unable to resort to power to woo her, he gives vent to the emotions of a luckless lover, whereupon she either senses her temporary advantage or the equalization of roles and discovers the strength to refuse. Arnolphe leaves his vulnerable position and goes back into his tyrannical role; livid with rage, he threatens her with the "cul de convent" as the ultimate vengeance.

A final sign of Arnolphe's defeat is the "conquête de la parole" notion propounded by B. Magné, who after comparing the number and location
of guardian monologues and ward discourses throughout the play, concluded that "L'étendue de la parole d'Agnès et ses progrès sont inversement proportionnels à l'importance des monologues d'Arnolphe." Agnès' release from her guardian's clutches, symbolized by her access to speech, and at play's end her newly-gained verbal monopoly, is elicited in the response that he exits "tout transporté, et ne peuvent parler." Whereas domination is advanced through speech, on the other hand, to overcome lost verbal power is to attain freedom from bondage and censure.

Turning to a structural viewpoint to look at the household in *L'Ecole des Femmes*, one is impressed with the uniqueness of the duo relationships, the absence of sympathetic servants and the responsibility imposed upon Agnès to single-handedly shake off her guardian's yoke. It would seem inconceivable that Argan's Angélique or Orgon's Mariane would revolt without inner household help, for they are much more dependent than Agnès or Isabelle.

It follows that the exclusive nature of the father/child relationship in *L'Ecole des Femmes* and *L'Ecole des Maris* is more intense than like structures in later, more developed plays where both sociability and the inner connivings of servants and family members tend to diminish the importance of parent/child relationships. In *Tartuffe* for example, Dorine's relationships with Mariane and Orgon's confrérie with Tartuffe take the luster off the father's talks with Mariane.

Agnès and Isabelle remain two strong-willed daughters who undermine the father-head's authority. Whereas Isabelle has a natural inclination toward the dupe, Agnès' naïveté makes her much more helpless. Her determination to thwart Arnolphe's authority is shown most explicitly in Georgette's remark—"Elle veut à tous coups s'échapper, et peut-être /
Qu'elle se pourrait bien jeter par la fenêtre" (V, viii, 1708-1709),--and by her own wish to stay by Horace's side at play's end,--"Je veux rester ici" (V, ix, 1726).

The denouement invests Agnès, formerly believed to be an orphan, with a host of kin related by marriage as well as blood. In this way, the solitary ward's status differs greatly from the position of the two young women in L'Ecole des Maris who are bereft of blood relations. The simplified structure of guardian/ward is modified by the discovery of one fact and one prearrangement:

**Fact:** Since Agnès in Enrique's daughter, Arnolphe no longer has any power over her.

**Prearrangement:** Agnès is to marry Horace, son of Oronte. The marriage agreement has been prearranged by the two fathers before the play began.16

The two original households:

Oronte

\[ \triangle \]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\triangleright \\
\downarrow \\
\triangle \\
\horace
\end{array}
\]

Arnolphe $\Rightarrow$ Agnès

have been modified by the fortuitous change in status of Agnès:

Enrique

\[ \triangle \]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\triangleright \\
\downarrow \\
\triangle \\
\agnès
\end{array}
\]
She is no longer a paysanne but an heiress, daughter of the wealthy Enrique. One can now easily understand the motives behind which Horace's father prearranged the marriage and his readiness in demanding his son's obedience (V, vii, 1696-1697). The children's wishes magically coincide with the parent's will, a contrivance that has already been used in Le Dépit Amoureux and that will reappear in Les Fourberies de Scapin.

For a play that concerns the education of women, it seems ironic that the denouement of L'Ecole des Femmes should present five men—three father-figures, one brother and one bridegroom. 17 Agnès will be well provided for, since she will be under the direct responsibility of Horace and will have the benefits of close contact with male family counsel—a father, a father-in-law and an uncle. In the end, she has their benediction which continues a tradition of the earlier comedies and yet one cannot forget her warm and sympathetic personality symbolizing the victory of free choice and enlightenment over suppression and ignorance. Some readers see feminist overtones in Isabelle's and Agnès' triumphs over selfish guardians—a female heroine released from traditional male domination. S. Rossat-Mignod said of Molière's intention: "Il attaque les survivances de la morale féodale, c'est à dire une oppression séculaire qui pesait encore sur les jeunes filles, et dans une moindre mesure, sur les jeunes gens dans la 2ème moitié du XVIIe siècle." 18

Isabelle and Agnès as Archetypes

Spanning the first years of creativity (c. 1646) to L'Ecole des Femmes, seven early plays have been examined; of these two the two Ecoles represent the most important comedies exploiting parent-child relationships. 19 However, they are different from the ones to follow in two respects. First,
they contain guardians and wards which only suggest parent-child relationships and are thus successful probes by Molière to attain entertaining intrigue and comical effects through family conflict. Only two years later, in 1664, will Molière create *Le Tartuffe*, a masterpiece of family entanglements, quarrels and cabals that owes much to the authority-submissiveness angles of the two Ecoles. Secondly, due to the absence of engaged servants and responsible family members, Isabelle and Agnès have to fend for themselves and in later plays—*Le Tartuffe, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and *Les Fourberies de Scapin*—the children are less resourceful and more dependent on relatives and servants. Consequently, Molière has devoted more time to the characterization of these latter figures who intervene to aid the frustrated daughter. Moreover, relatives and servants deemphasize parent-child relationships and render children less independent than Agnès and Isabelle. This is not to say that there is no longer opposition and resentment between parents and children but rather there are fewer confrontations and dialogues between the two generations and that occasionally servants and relatives take up positions in the marriage issue. For example, Scapin effectively intercedes for the bewildered sons and is the veritable "hatchet man" for the fathers; Dorine and Toinette speak up for their mistresses since they are clearly the more sharp-witted.

Throughout Molière's theater, the head of household role remains static. The monomania may vary but the *pater familias* function of "what I say, goes" is fixed. If the male roles are rooted in tradition, then change in family structure and relations can only come about through the women, which is the case in Molière's domestic comedies. Women, be they maidservants, daughters, or wives, are flexible and can occasionally manipulate the family to produce the results most desired by the younger
generation and the audience. Frustrated by an unappealing marriage choice, they can team together with male servants both in and outside the household to dupe the unknowing father. Male servants, like children and mothers, are of course at the obedience end of the power spectrum; their activities can then be seen as a concerted effort with women to outwit the patriarchy.

It has already been shown that women's roles are played down in the comedies preceding the two Ecoles and that this trend of helplessness is reversed through the bold actions of Isabelle and Agnès. Thus, Isabelle and Agnès are archetypes of two feminine traits which will reappear not only in many Molièresque daughters but also in mothers and maidservants who will combat the characteristic male traits of selfishness and ignorance. However, especially in later plays, the daughters take on a colorless or flat personality and would be helpless were it not for family intervention. The three archetypes are:

1. **Isabelle archetype:** strong personality, la rusée.

2. **Agnès archetype:** enlightened and sensitive to her condition.

3. **Mariane archetype:** generally helpless and uninteresting, although sometimes adamant in her refusal to comply with parental authority.

The following list is a breakdown of the eleven remaining domestic comedies (parent/child) by female archetype:

**Category I—"Crafty":**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Female 1</th>
<th>Female 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Le Mariage Forcé</td>
<td>Dorimène</td>
<td>Alcantor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Médecin Malgré Lui</td>
<td>Lucinde</td>
<td>Géronte</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. de Pourceaugnac</td>
<td>Julie</td>
<td>Oronte</td>
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Category II—"Enlightened":

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Character 1</th>
<th>Character 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Le Sicilien</td>
<td>Isidore</td>
<td>Dom Pèdre</td>
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<tr>
<td>L'Avare</td>
<td>Elise</td>
<td>Harpagon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Les Fourberies de Scapin</td>
<td>Hyacinthe</td>
<td>Géronte</td>
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Category III—"Helpless":

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Character 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Le Tartuffe</td>
<td>Mariane</td>
<td>Orgon</td>
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<tr>
<td>L'Amour Médecin</td>
<td>Lucinde</td>
<td>Sganarelle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme</td>
<td>Lucile</td>
<td>Jourdain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Les Femmes Savantes</td>
<td>Henriette</td>
<td>Chrysale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Malade Imaginaire</td>
<td>Angélique</td>
<td>Argan</td>
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The child's adaptive or rebellious behavior towards his or her parents has been pointed out by S. Plummer in his novel study on game theory in Molière's comedies. Yet, so complex can the game become that a daughter may pretend to be complacent or rebellious in order to gratify the father's urge for exercising parental authority and thereby dupe him. Such a sham is certainly the case in M. de Pourceaugnac. Sham and subtlety call for artful dodgers, Scapins and Toinettes—servants who can afford to take risks that proper daughters could not consider. Thus, one must excuse the "Marianes" for their lack of imagination and wit, since their very incapacity creates a need for the intervention of colorful family members and servants.

A most interesting correspondence between archetypes and family structures occurs in the third group—"Helpless"—where large families tend to have complacent daughters and where household hullabaloo takes priority over parent-child interviews. Although Henriette and Angélique
are opposed to their mother's authority, they are placed in category III since they are still dependent on family members and servants for help. Their helplessness does not prevent them from expressing concern over their condition; however, the maidservant is usually more assertive and outspoken than her charge, and may exemplify the traits of the first two archetypes.

Crafty Daughter—The Isabelle Archetype

Le Mariage Forcé presents the first reincarnation of the crafty or Isabelle archetype—Dorimène, who in a humorous skit, is determined to marry the 52 year old Sganarelle. Dorimène's motives are obviously mercenary when she admits to her boyfriend, "C'est un homme que je n'épouse point par amour" (scène vii). She is a perfect bourgeoisie in that she is anxious to exploit her marriage to the limit; yet, she also sees in her marriage to Sganarelle a means of release from her father's physical and pecuniary constraints. The transfer from paternal to marital control, far from having a constricting effect, will give Dorimène freedom to spend as much money as she wants on amusements. When she confesses—"J'aime le jeu, les visites, les assemblées, les cadeaux et les promenades, en un mot, toutes les choses de plaisir" (scène ii)—her aspirations are perhaps not far from Célimène's desires, the wishes of the précieuses ridicules, or even those of Angélique Dandin; each woman in her own manner looks forward to life as something more than a composite of wifely duties. Ariste, perhaps the most liberated man in Molière's repertory, shows the most lucid understanding of woman's condition—"Leur sexe aime à jouir d'un peu de liberté" (L'Ecole des Maris, I, ii, 165). 22

Dorimène, far from opposing her father's views on marriage, is in collusion with her brother and father; the absence of conflict then
precludes a father-daughter dialogue in the play. Alcantor, the father, is only too happy to hand over a liability to the gullible Sganarelle and to join a doubtlessly impoverished noble line with a common but wealthy bourgeois family. He advises Sganarelle of his new marital responsibility, "M'en voilà déchargé, et c'est vous désormais qui regarde le soin de sa conduite" (scene x). Father and daughter have conveniently and amiably separated and look forward to his or her own form of emancipation. The exogamous nature of the marriage and the foreshadowing of adultery lead one to believe that Sganarelle and his new wife and in-laws will interact much like the Dandins and the Sotenvilles.

If it were not for her violent recovery of speech towards the end of Le Médecin Malgré Lui, Lucinde might join the ranks of helpless daughters in category III. Indeed, the first two acts of the play reaffirm the thesis that in plays written after 1663 the daughter receives increasingly greater aid from household members. Whereas Act I is devoted to Sganarelle's discovery and commission as a doctor, the second act contains a domestic squabble between master and wet nurse; Jacqueline assumes the role of big sister when she defends her mistress' right to happiness and freedom against paternal tyranny. The comic procedure is akin to Dorine's taking over Mariane's defense before Orgon in Le Tartuffe and underlies the principle that the servant has been gifted with a craftier mind than the daughter.

The final act shows a daughter who, supported by her lover, explodes into a fury of bold rhetoric before the stammering father. Phrases such as "il n'est puissance paternelle qui ne puisse oblier à me marier malgré moi" (III, vi) are straightforward and devoid of guile, although their loud delivery succeeds in sending the lovers into the garden and in securing
their escape. Once more, the brief encounter between parent and child warrants a technical explanation, for the artist obviously chose to concentrate the action on Sganarelle's activities while acquainting the audience with the dramatic functions of Léandre, Jacqueline, and the secondary household of Sganarelle/wife.²³

Small children on stage, a wily and independent daughter and allusions to bigamy earmark M. de Pourceaugnac as a unique and amusing farce, despite critics' reference to it as sinister. Some authorities have remarked the lack of moral judgment shown by the two lovers' decision to associate themselves with the lower elements, Sbrigani and Nérine.²⁴ Yet, the play has certain conditions which tend to mitigate this confrérie. For one, the father joins the ranks of ghoulish patriarchs who lock up their daughters; he has even gone back on his word to marry Eraste and Julie, behavior seen in Sganarelle ou Le Cocu Imaginaire and in Le Tartuffe. Secondly, M. de Pourceaugnac is presented as an outside, a country gentleman from the Midi with different manners and a lifestyle different from those whom he is now visiting. Julie, unlike Mme de Sevigné's daughter, is not resigned to leaving her region and family to settle down South. The preference toward endogamous marriages--toward marrying someone within one's class, sentiment and geographic location--is deeply sensed in Molière's theater. A third reason that might condone the young people's actions is the most simple of all--the Molière imperative of marriage based on free, not forced consent. "L'amour est sans pitié" is a maxim which justifies the offensive against Pourceaugnac and that of course provides good comic fare to the audience.

Parent-child relations are unique in M. de Pourceaugnac, because Julie does such a great amount of effective play acting. Julie is the
perfect embodiment of the Isabelle or crafty archetype since she can manage her father so well. There are two humorous father-daughter interviews, attended consecutively by Pourceaugnac and Eraste, the two rivals.

In the first encounter, Julie feigns the role of submissive daughter—content to follow her father's orders—so that there appears to be an entente or resolution of the Molière criterion. She further develops her role by humorously passing herself off as a flirt, madly in love with the Limousin. Prior to the first father/daughter/rival encounter, Pourceaugnac has been told stories about Julie's promiscuity, whereas Oronte has been led to believe incredible tales about his potential son-in-law. Thus, Oronte's meeting with Pourceaugnac starts out on less than friendly terms with the additional presence of Julie to stir up antagonism between the two already spiteful males and to complete the delightful triangle. She has been thoroughly groomed by Eraste and the two fourbes, Sbrigani and Nérine: "Madame, souvenez-vous de votre rôle" (I, ii). Like Toinette and Elmire she functions as a meneur de jeu and exerts a masterly control over both men as shown in the following exchange:

Julie: Quand est-ce donc que vous me marierez avec Monsieur?
Oronte: Jamais; et tu n'es pas pour lui.
Julie: Je le veux avoir, moi, puisque vous me l'avez promis.
Oronte: Si je te l'ai promis, je te le dépromets.
M. de Pourceaugnac: Elle voudrait me tenir.

(II, vi)

After such a flurry of invective, Oronte has no qualms about reneging a second time on his word, whereas the Limousin is repelled by the daughter's
feigned advances. Both father and husband-to-be characters are true to
t heir masques and fixed in their roles; the flexible one is clearly the
daughter who has reversed the power structure by cleverly giving the
impression that she is submitting herself to it. Both men, without
knowing, are being led around in circles. Julie's success in further
alienating the two men is followed by more mischievous antics, a whirl-
wind of mascarades: women claiming to be poor Pourceaugnac's wife and a
string of children calling him "Papa." Thus, the first father-daughter
confrontation, heightened by a rash of untrue but damning external
allegations has succeeded in severing the marriage agreement between Oronte
and Pourceaugnac.

Whereas the first interview—negating one marriage arrangement—
is essentially destructive in nature, Julie's second encounter with her
father is a successful and constructive attempt to promote her marriage
with Eraste. This time, of course, her true boy friend is there and the
roles duly change; Julie becomes the rebellious daughter who still tricks
Oronte into believing that she is desperately in love with the Limousin.
A trumped up story about Eraste's keeping Julie away from Pourceaugnac's
abductive clutches is sufficient grounds for the father to return the
"unwilling" Julie to the man with whom he had first drawn up a preliminary
wedding arrangement. It is much to Molière's credit that he hints at the
traditional camaraderie between father-in-law and heir/son-in-law by
allowing Eraste to play his role to the hilt. Eraste explains to his
future father-in-law that he accepts Julie's hand not out of love for her
but out of esteem for the father—"Ce n'est que M. votre père dont je suis
amoureux, et c'est lui que j'épouse" (III, vii)—whereas Julie, to the end,
rebels against the "forced marriage" to which she must submit. Both young
people succeed in flattering the father and lulling him into believing that sacred paternal authority has been upheld. In reality, the power structure has been reversed; like M. Jourdain, Julie's father is unknowingly stripped of authority and is free to pursue whatever channels of amusement he desires.

Parental authority, then, in Monsieur de Pourceaugnac has been used against itself to defeat its own purpose. Furthermore, whereas Oronte is fixed in his comic masks of sternness and gullibility, his daughter and her fourbes have the flexibility to scheme, to deceive and to undermine a static structure.

Enlightened Daughter--The Agnès Archetype

There are two differences in family composition and behavior between "enlightened daughter" and "crafty daughter" plays. First of all, the family structure in the former is widower-children or master-slave. The second relationship, master-slave, is akin to the guardian-ward couple in the two Ecoles. Secondly, Isidore of Le Sicilien and Hyacinte of Les Fourberies de Scapin are less independent and resourceful than the Isabelle archetype, since servants, lovers and happenstance intervene to help her cause. Isidore and Hyacinte are consequently remembered less for their actions than for their thoughts and for the lucid realization of their condition.

Charles Mauron has indicated that the Latin comedy element of young-man/stealing-girl/from/old man is certainly present in the Horace-Agnès-Arnolphe triangle. Indeed, the triad appears once again in Le Sicilien where master/father wishes to become master/husband. In an interview that alone gives importance to the short play, Dom Pèdre
resembles Arnolphe when he remarks possessively to Isidore, "Mon amour vous veut tout à moi" (scène vi). Isidore, rather than giving a standard "No, I refuse, I love another" type of answer, tries to use reason against her captor—an avenue of approach also taken by Angélique when confronted by Thomas Diafoirus. When the young lady fails to convince her selfish guardian that freedom is essential to both marriage partners, she crosses the narrow gap between slavery and marriage to a possessive husband in remonstrating that there is no difference between the two conditions and that the latter might be even more odious: "Quelle obligation vous ai-je, si vous changez mon esclavage en un autre beaucoup plus rude? Si vous ne me laissez jouir d'aucune liberté, et me fatiguez, comme on voit, d'une garde continuelle?" (Le Sicilien, scène vi).

Isidore's nature is introspective and sensitive; she understands her condition and doomed relationship with Dom Pèdre. It is indeed interesting to ponder whether Molière discreetly chose an exotic setting to show what he considered to be the true status of marriage; whatever his intentions were, he has succeeded in making the audience commiserate with Isidore's condition and in virtually justifying before the audience the elopement and the open defiance of a master's (father's) domestic authority.

L'Avare and Les Fourberies de Scapin each depict two widower—children families where the son and daughter of household A would marry the children of household B. These cross-marriages come about only after the revelation of hidden family relationships of a father and his two children in L'Avare (V, v) and after the disclosure of the secret identity of the two daughters in Les Fourberies de Scapin, (Hyacinte and father, II, ix; Zerbinette and father, III, xi).27
At the dénouement the revelation of hidden identities resolves, in part, the conflict since the marriage choice now comes from a desirable family.

In _Les Fourberies de Scapin_, hidden identities absolved Molière from depicting father-daughter confrontations and gave him free rein to develop the plotting and subterfuge of servants and lovers. Family relations are more in the open in _L'Avare_, the earlier of the two comedies, where in Act I, scene II the dramatist conveys the lack of faith between father and children that has caused the two generations to drift apart from one another. Harpagon whines, "Cela est étrange, que mes propres enfants me trahissent et deviennent mes ennemis!" (I, iv). His son and daughter share his uneasiness but for different reasons. For one, their love affairs have been suffering due to lack of funds. Also, prior to the long parent-children interview, Cléante has confided to his sister that Harpagon might be opposed to each other's choice of a marriage.
partner and that he is looking for money to finance an elopement should patriarchal opposition endure. Elise alludes to their mother's death which has further estranged father from children and which no doubt gave him freedom to pursue his miserly habits unchallenged: "Il est bien vrai que, tous les jours, il nous donne de plus en plus sujet de regretter la mort de notre mère" (I, ii).

Self-interest rather than concern for the family's happiness prompts Harpagon to arrange the threefold marriage proposal:

1. Harpagon-Mariane
2. Cléante-"certaine veuve"
3. Elise-Anselme

In the two Ecoles, the father figure proposes to marry his own ward. The situation is no less desperate in L'Avaré where the names of undesirable prospects are proposed to the young people while the father additionally announces his ambitions to marry Cléante's true love. The scene is a marvel in dramatic rhythm in that the announcement of each marriage choice allows two young people to react separately to each bombshell. The first marriage proposal causes a flabbergasted Cléante to storm off the stage and is followed by the traditional father-daughter confrontation during which Harpagon reveals choices #2 and #3 to the unbelieving Elise.

Courteous but adamant in her refusal, Elise displays a strength of character that does much to her credit since she is defending herself alone and without help. Her rejection of the traditional filial submission role considerably stirs up Harpagon. When she threatens to kill herself rather than comply, the miser exclaims: "Tu ne te tueras point, et tu l'épouseras. Mais voyez quelle audace! A-t-on jamais vu une fille
parler de la sorte à son père?" (I, iv). Elise's reply is but just retribution: "Mais a-t-on jamais vu un père marier sa fille de la sorte?" (I, iv). Later in the play, when the situation becomes more drastic, daughter will appear to the father on bended knees—a supplication not without appeal to reason: "Ne vous laissez point entraîner aux premiers mouvements de votre passion, et donnez-vous le temps de considérer ce que vous voulez faire." (V, iv)²⁸

Elise also shares Isidore's introspective gifts. At the play's outset, in a tête à tête with her lover, she reveals her fears of the moment:

L'emportement d'un père, les reproches d'une famille, les censure du monde; mais plus que tout, Valère, le changement de votre coeur, et cette froideur criminelle dont ceux de votre sexe payent le plus souvent les témoignages trop ardents d'une innocente amour. (I, i)

Valère's constancy is questioned by a young lady who well realizes that men's actions are sometimes different from their words. When Harpagon finds out that they have exchanged written marriage promises, he and Maître Jacques—the other vengeful male—exhort the convenient notary to write up a complaint against Valère, "larron, et... suborneur" (V, iii).²⁹

In Les Fourberies de Scapin, Molière has included a similar scene of a young woman conveying her anxieties to her lover. Hyacinte is not certain about the permanence of Octave's feelings for her, "Votre sexe aime moins longtemps que le nôtre" (I, iii). Sensing a cornelian love-duty conflict, she fears that paternal influence will compel Octave to break their clandestine marriage.
Whereas Scapin's timely interventions keep father-son confrontations on the wane, the hidden nature of the daughters' true identities explain the lack of father-daughter interviews. Throughout the play, Hyacinte and Zerbinette are no better than orphans. Hyacinte's mother is dead and her secret marriage with Octave appears precarious since her new father-in-law has someone else in mind for marrying Octave. Zerbinette, believed to be Egyptian, is also ignorant of her family. Yet, at play's end, a series of discoveries identifies the two young women and gives each one of them a brother and a father—support from a patriarchy that they both feared.

In addition to traditional male power figures, Molière alludes to the existence of maternal authority. Hyacinte's governess—inherit ing authority from the mother—gives permission to marry Hyacinte to Octave. Once again, in L'Avare, Marianne's mother arranges the Harpagon-Marianne match via Frosine. Yet the primary function of Marianne's mother becomes clear at the dénouement when she is revealed to be Anselme's living wife—barring of course the forced marriage of Elise/Anselme.

In many of the previous plays discussed, the machinations of servants and family members outweigh in number and in importance the interviews between father and daughter. The powerful father/helpless daughter combination heightens the comedy's tension and dramatizes the need for aid within and without the household. Help brings into play intrigue, subterfuge and comical effects. Thus, the paucity of parent-child confrontations is countered by the numerous plottings among frustrated lover, servants and other family members and by humorous relations between father and son-in-law figures—be they Arnolphe/Horace, Harpagon/ Valère or Orgon/Eraste in Monsieur de Pourceaugnac. The predisposition of
parent-child structures determines to a large extent the behavior of other household members and their contempt for a distasteful marriage proposed by a faltering fatherhead.

In the "big three" family plays involving large households—Le Tartuffe, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, and Le Malade Imaginaire—parent-child relationships are subservient to the activities of other household members and to the actions of outsiders. In Les Femmes Savantes, the daughters have more dealings with their parents, but sociability threatens to destroy family unity—a theme already expressed in Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme and Le Tartuffe. The additional structure of husband-wife in all four plays tends also to minimize the import of parent-child confrontations that are more important in L'Avare and the two Ecoles. Thus, Molière, reaching the end of his career, fitted his theater with a variety of household and non-household characters some of whose actions are beneficial to the frustrated daughter and others whose behavior is against her best interests. Once again, the diversity of his personages detracts from the force of the traditional father-child confrontation—a device that was showing its age. If the daughter were not infested with the latest fad, like Magdelon or Cathos, her submissive posture would have to be supplemented by the colorful antics of others.

Helpless Daughter—The Mariane Archetype

L'Amour Médecin and Le Tartuffe ushered in the era of colorless daughter, stupendous servant, and much sociability in the household. Both plays were written within one year of each other and demonstrate the interference of the resourceful maidservant who both defends her mistress and joins forces with the lover to bring matters to a happy conclusion.
Furthermore, the brief invasion of the business establishment in Sganarelle's household of L'Amour Médecin has elements in common with the later large household plays.

The Lucinde-Lisette (L'Amour Médecin) and the Mariane-Dorine (Le Tartuffe) duos share similar structures. Both daughters find themselves at a loss for words when confronted by the paternal decision. Sganarelle's anger is unleashed in a flurry of invective denouncing his daughter's ambitions to marry. Lucinde's répliques diminish steadily in length until she can emit nothing more than a "mais" before being interrupted by a volatile Sganarelle. The dominant-submissive pattern of such a scene is the reverse of the one encountered in Le Médecin Malgré Lui (III, vi) where the obstreperous machine gun reply of the daughter blots out the father's feeble attempts to put a word in edgewise. 30 He confesses, "Il n'y a moyen d'y résister" (III, vi).

When the maidservant of L'Amour Médecin discovers that Lucinde is not made of sterner stuff, she takes over her mistress' defense and tries to get her point across to a stubborn father, "C'est un mari qu'elle veut" (I, iii). The following segment reveals the faltering daughter--"Mais que veux-tu que je fasse contre l'autorité d'un père"--and assertive maidservant, "Allez, allez il ne faut pas se laisser mener comme un oison" (I, iv). 31

A similar triad of relationships is seen among Mariane, Orgon and Dorine:

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<th>Le Tartuffe</th>
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<td>1. Daughter's helplessness/loss of speech before father's announcement</td>
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It is clear that the sequence in one play has been patterned after the other where, failing to get the maidservant's help, the daughter would be unable to cope with the situation. Thus, like her model Dorine, Lisette sets about to please her mistress. It is doubtless she and not Lucinde who invents the malingering act perhaps spontaneously as she is telling the gullible Sganarelle of his daughter's "near touch with death." It is also she who secures Clitandre's entrance into the household disguised as a doctor. Davis points out that maidservants in the play show in addition to craftiness, affection and warmth for their mistresses.32 They thus become, in a fashion, a second daughter, a big sister to fill in the weakness of the first.

Mariane like the daughters of M. Jourdain and of Argan remains uninvolved in the machinations of others. When Mariane gets down on her knees to beg an obdurate father to call off the distasteful marriage, the spectator is moved by the pathos and sincerity of the request. All of the "helpless" daughters share this sincerity as their most appealing virtue; although they lack the cunning of Julie or the introspection of Elise, their very subjection to parental authority makes the father figure all the more grotesque and of course motivates the others to act.

In Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme the daughter's incapacity to defend herself is compensated for by the mother's authority. When Cléante's bid for Lucile's hand is turned down by the father, Mme. Jourdain reminds her
husband of his humble origins and of the practicality of endogamous marriages: "Je ne veux point tous ces caquets, et je veux un homme, en un mot, qui m'ait obligation de ma fille, et à qui je puisse dire: "Mettez-vous là, mon gendre, et dînez avec moi" (III, xii). Clearly marital conflict displaces the father-daughter controversy. From this play on, Molière will create wives and mothers who are assertive, dominant and in one case, insidious. Unfortunately, for the daughter, they will not always represent her best interest.

Lucile's sole interview with her father does however indicate a spark of revolt when she categorically states her refusal to marry the son of the Grand Turk. The conflict is short-lived when she quickly finds out the secret identities of the exotic guests and becomes part of the merry making. As in Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, the father's ego is gratified through making him believe that he is exercising his paternal prerogative and having his way when in reality he is being led around by the nose.

The relationship between father and daughter in Le Malade Imaginaire is perhaps the most developed one in the latter half of Molière's repertoire; it is certainly one of the most diverse structures. A total of four father-daughter interviews shows a special relationship between the two family members that will override Toinette's craftiness and Béline's zealousness.

The first encounter, lengthy and humorous, has familiar roots in Le Tartuffe; the maidservant/daughter/father triad, unreasonable father and impertinent servant, and the convent threat pave the road for a more original interview in Act II scene vi where the spectator enjoys the diverse interactions of father-daughter, stepmother-daughter and Diafoirus father and son.
In the second father-daughter encounter, Angélique comes across as an alert and intelligent young lady. She rapidly masks her surprise at seeing her disguised lover by stating that she had seen this new music instructor in a dream. She has no time to enjoy her invention since a new threat has just arrived—the father and son team of Diafoirus. There now ensues a third confrontation between father and daughter. On one side are Angélique, Toinette and the silent encouragement of Cléante while the other side is represented by the patriarchy: two fathers and a son whom Molière has taken pains to describe as "un grand bênet, nouvellement sorti des Ecoles" (II, v). Under the watchful eye of the two fathers, Angélique must argue sensibly against the absurdities of Diafoirian logic. To her father, she simply yet nobly states, "Le mariage est une chaîne où l'on ne doit jamais soumettre un coeur par force" (II, vi). To young Diafoirus' tactless attempts to justify forced marriage by resorting to ancient tales of the rape of Sabines, she counters:

Les anciens, Monsieur, sont les anciens, et nous sommes les gens de maintenant. Les grimaces ne sont pas nécessaires dans notre siècle; et quand un mariage nous plaît, nous savons fort bien y aller, sans qu'on nous y traîne. (II, vi)

The collective force of the pronoun "nous" effectively delineates the gap between old and new ideas. The above statement may well serve as a general observation of parent-child conflicts throughout the domestic comedies.

In the final episode of the play, the hypochondriac plays dead in order to gauge the reactions of both his wife and child. Both women "sound true" and Argan's disgust over Béline's betrayal is tempered by
the comfort given him by his daughter's faithfulness. Of special interest is her vow to renounce all marriage plans out of grief for her father. Argan's feelings for his daughter are more authentic than those in a previous scene in which little Louison plays dead; there will always linger the suspicion that Argan knows of Louison's make believe and that his words "Ah! malheureux, ma pauvre fille est morte" (II, viii) are only part of a game. 33

Angélique, thus has run the gamut in incarnating all the attitudes of previous daughters: tolerance of a father's authority, tact, inventiveness, reasoning and sensitivity. Although dependent on her maidservant and uncle for help, she exemplifies an agreeable mixture of traits from all three archetypes: Isabelle, Agnès, and Mariane. 34

Good Grammar or Good Taste

Les Femmes Savantes bears witness to the statement that family relations are diversified in Molière's world. In this curious play, a matriarchy rather than a traditional paternal order is challenged. Three women have formed a literary and scientific coterie or "subfamily" within the bourgeois household. Their most undomestic attitudes place them at odds with the servants and the rest of the family—particularly the father. Chrysale is not only flustered by the scholarly pursuits of his wife, sister and daughter Armande but by the matriarchal authority that he has allowed to run the household for some time. Thus, the well known theme of "unreason" can be more readily found in the female troika than in other parts of the household. It also follows that conflict in the choice of marriage partner would arise in the female sector.
Les Femmes Savantes, like Le Tartuffe and Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme minimizes father-daughter relationships. This reduction is due either to the presence of sociability or to the activities of the household members. In Les Fourberies de Scapin father-daughter structures are made evident to the spectator only at play's end with the discovery of hidden identities. The present play deemphasizes the importance of father-daughter relationships largely due to the matriarchal nature of the household. Conflict is between Henriette and her three female relatives, whereas her father, like her uncle, are her allies. The author has also pitted father against mother in Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme and will do so less ostensibly in Le Malade Imaginaire.

The concept of a sympathetic father and a hostile mother is novel in Molière's domestic comedies. However, Chrysale's sympathy for his daughter is scarcely founded on altruism. The first indication of his true demeanor is Henriette's statement that her father can be easily molded: "Mon père est d'une humeur à consentir à tout" (I, iii, 205). She is doubtless anticipating her next remark that her father has even consented to let his wife govern the family: "C'est elle qui gouverne, et d'un ton absolu/Elle dicte pour loi ce qu'elle a résolu" (I, iii, 209-210). Several more suggestions of Chrysale's sympathy for his daughter's cause are seen in a later interview between the two brothers—Ariste and Chrysale. The young lover, Clitandre, having failed to gain any headway from his talk with two members of the female entente, Béliste and Armande, gratefully reverts to the male segment of the play represented in part by Ariste. The sage uncle, having promised the young man that he will intervene, broaches the matter to his brother. A curious departure from the economic imperative of typical Molièresque
fathers is evident in Chrysale's acceptance of Clitandre who has little wealth, "Il est riche en vertu, cela vaut des trésors" (II, iv, 405). However, as the spectator finds out, Chrysale accepts Clitandre as his gendre less for the young man's virtues than for those of his father; Clitandre's father, it seems, was on quite friendly terms with Chrysale in younger days when both of them used to pursue the ladies in Rome. Thus, Chrysale has given in to his brother's request as he has been in the habit of doing to his wife's. The absence of conflict between father and daughter is evident as well as the dramatist's use of the uncle to intercede in the affairs of his niece—a device seen before in Le Tartuffe.

Not until the end of the third act does Molière present a father-daughter interview. The daughter's feelings have been previously relayed to Chrysale indirectly via Clitandre and directly by means of the Uncle. The substance of the late interview shows us a father trying to gain back the power that he has yielded to his wife. His two actions: 1) the announcement of his decision to marry Henriette with Clitandre, 2) the order to Armande to cease protesting and to rejoin her mother. Henriette is amenable to her subjection to paternal authority whereas Armande insists on the mother's role in shaping family decisions.

From the interview, the observer can glean two points. One, the entente between father and daughter is still based on a power structure—specifically on her recognition that he is the master in the family. Secondly, there is the idea that any filial sympathy is overridden by the father's desire to overthrow the mother and consequently to come out as victor in a family political struggle. The father uses Henriette as a test case just as he does Martine in the famous kitchen debate of Act II, scene vi.
Further evidence to support the above conclusions can be drawn from the second and next to last father-daughter confrontation (V, ii). Tyrant-subject are the two roles that Chrysale would have himself and Henriette play. The daughter must be a "yes" person and bolster her father's feelings of authority:

Chrysale: Aucun, hors moi, dans la maison, 
          N'a droit de commander.

Henriette: Oui, vous avez raison.

Chrysale: C'est moi que tiens le rang de 
          chef de famille.

Henriette: D'accord.

Chrysale: C'est moi qui dois disposer de 
          ma famille.

Henriette: Eh! oui. (V, ii, 1587-1590)

The cowardly father is in strong need of family support when, seeing his wife approach, he sounds off with "Secondez-moi bien tous" (V, ii, 1599). The above sequence is delectable with its exposure of the fanfaron father and is indicative of his impotent wish for exclusive control over the family. As much as he wants to exploit Henriette's marriage issue, he must depend on others for support. His faltering strength is the keynote to the rest of the play and logically cries out for the presence of a "ruse" that takes place in the guise of a letter.

Philaminte is no less precise in the definition of her aims. She warns:

Je lui montrerai bien aux lois de qui des deux 
Les droits de la raison soumettent tous ses vœux. 
Et qui doit gouverner, ou sa mère ou son père, 
   (IV, i, 1127-1129)
Philaminte like Chrysale is to be criticized for her refusal to compromise; both father and mother are exclusive in their demands for power.

Caught in the middle of family politics is Henriette who, although loyal to her father, feels her mother's forceful presence and tacitly acquiesces when Philaminte bids her to remain and hear Trissotin's literary ramblings (Act III). The bombshell or distasteful marriage announcement is not delivered by the traditional father power figure but rather by the mother, another indication of matriarchal exercise of authority and the departure from paternal decisions in wedding matters characteristic of previous plays—many of which did not even contain a mother role. Henriette's role is certainly underplayed during the interactions of Trissotin and the _femmes savantes_; her character is tactful yet spirited when she answers Trissotin's oily advances with "Tout beau, Monsieur, il n'est pas fait encore: / Ne vous pressez past tant" (III, iv, 1082-1083). Her response shows a praiseworthy recovery from the bombshell news and anticipates Angélique's masterful handling of Diafoirus Junior in _Le Malade Imaginaire_.

When the husband-wife showdown becomes a stalemate in the presence of the bewildered notary, the fabricated letters reveal Trissotin's greedy interests and prove Clitandre's mettle. For the brief moment before the truth of the letter's fabrication is laid bare by Ariste the uncle, Henriette finds the moral courage to go against her parents' marriage choice and to follow her own inclinations. Still believing her family to be destitute, she argues that love without financial comforts is precarious. In this way she shares the practical and materialistic view of her father. The daughter is irrevocably a _bourgeoise_, even though she shares the sensitivity of Agnès and the virtues of Angélique in _Le Malade Imaginaire_.

When Ariste reveals the strategy of the letters, the other daughter, Armande, whines significantly to her mother, "Ainsi donc à leurs voeux vous me sacrifiez?" (V, scène dernière, 1770). Philaminte counters majestically yet with reason that Armande has her philosophy books to content her and is much above these secular passions. Armande, like her father, lacks the backbone to refuse the motherhead's authority; in her own case she feels compelled to emulate Philaminte's attitudes. Henriette, on the other hand, identifies both with Agnès' lucidity and Isidore's ability to deal with male power figures. Thus, towards the end of his career, Molière incarnates in Henriette the two archetypes, Agnès and Isidore.

Professor Couton points out that, despite the obnoxiousness of Bélide and Armande, one can sympathize with their condition and especially the roles to which Chrysale would reduce them. Whether Molière was ridiculing key figures, pedantry or the whole woman's movement itself has kept ink flowing for some time. Perhaps one indication of the rightness or wrongness of the femmes savantes lies in the parent-child interrelationship. Philaminte, Bélide and Armande are not to be condemned for their scholarly pursuits. Several verses pronounced by Philaminte, allude to the import and seriousness of their cause. Yet in one point are they wrong: in striving to promote the status of women, Philaminte and her colleagues totally neglect Henriette's feelings, her character and most importantly her right to marry whomever she chooses; in striving for their own freedom, they would squash the freedom of one of their sisters. This apparent contradiction is indeed what makes Philaminte's ambitions so questionable; if she cannot acknowledge the essential freedoms of her daughter, she as a mother cannot be liberated.
just as Arnolphe, Orgon and Sganarelle are locked into their patriarchal roles.

Of Fathers and Sons

Brief remarks have been made about the sparse father-son relations in *L'Etourdi* and *Le Dépit Amoureux*. The relations are indeed significant since there is no development of the structure and little concept of household. Although Molière had chosen to follow the traditional father-daughter conflicts in most of his domestic comedies, he nevertheless has explored extensive father-son relations in *L'Avaré* and less important father-son interactions in *Le Tartuffe* and *Les Fourberies de Scapin*. There is of course a plethora of sons-in-law and future sons-in-law but there are very few father-son relations in the repertory.

The sons are also brothers; they like their sisters are not yet married and live within the nuclear family. Primogeniture is important in Molière's bourgeois families, as the threat of disinheriance occurs in the three above mentioned plays. Finally, although sons are not closeted like their sisters, they are held accountable for their actions; they owe devotion and obedience to their parents and are generally kept in a tight budget by their parsimonious fathers. 38

In *Le Tartuffe*, Molière has prepared the audience for the dramatic confrontation between father and son by giving them an inkling of Damis' spurious and reckless nature early in the first act. He warns the family (I, i) that he is not incapable of taking up arms against the power team of father and imposter, "Il faudra que j'en vienne à quelque grand éclat" (I, i, 60). Damis' impulsiveness leads to his blunder and downfall at the end of the third act. The son's impeachment of Tartuffe's
moral before the father is untimely and awkward. Orgon will easily accept Tartuffe's phony contrition and will order his son to fall on his knees for forgiveness. But the son is as stubborn as the father and refuses to do so. Orgon takes this to heart as a violation of paternal authority. What follows is tragic and detrimental to family structure. Damis is excommunicated, disinherited and cursed by the father. Bad son has replaced good son and will marry Marianne. Once more, the primogeniture system is no longer inviolate since Orgon in a following scene makes Tartuffe the sole heir of all of his possessions.

Thus, in a series of subtle moves, Tartuffe becomes more and more entrenched in the family. He moves from spiritual advisor to future son-in-law to heir. His marriage to Marianne will clinch his family ties and will no doubt create a type of extended patriarchal family with two couples living under the same roof. Yet, the dire consequences of these constructive ties are no worse than the havoc Tartuffe tends to cause in the relations between Orgon and Elmire by coveting his sponsor's wife.

Damis is of no real help to the anti-Tartuffe forces. His impulsive, tactless, and vengeful nature makes one think of the miles gloriosus of Latin comedy when he challenges M. Loyal or when he offers his arm to his father. His style is both humorous and touching when he addresses his family united before a common threat:

Laissez-moi, je lui veux couper les deux oreilles:  
Contre son insolence on ne doit point gauchir;  
C'est à moi, tout d'un coup, de vous en affranchir,  
Et pour sortir d'affaire il faut que je l'assomme.  
(V, ii, 1634-1637)

Never before in Molière's theater had antagonism been portrayed more bitterly between father and child than in L'Avare. Father-son confrontations are numerous—six scenes of which three are exclusive interviews:
1. Father and son discover each other's roles in the usury caper. (II, ii)

2. Father tricks son into confessing his love for Mariane. (IV, iii)

3. Follow-up scene. Pseudo-reconciliation—Definitive rupture and disinheritance. (IV, v)

A fourth significant confrontation occurs before everyone at the dénouement—"the Deal"—by which Cléante assures his father that his gold will be returned if Harpagon will allow him to marry Mariane. The theme of amorous rivalry between father and son is rampant; in several scenes one tries to "outdo" the other: e.g. Cléante's wooing Mariane in front of Harpagon, Cléante's giving her his father's ring, and Harpagon's tricking Cléante into revealing his love's name.39

In the above three exclusive father-son interviews hatred and alienation grow between the two. Although Frosine assures Harpagon—"Vous mettrez en terre et vos enfants, et les enfants de vos enfants" (II, v)—Cléante admits to Maître Simon that he expects his father to live eight months at the most.40 The miser's stinginess and narcissism have extinguished any feelings of love and devotion on the son's part.

Hearing Harpagon's wish to marry Cléante's own girlfriend, the son would seek funds from a money-lender in order to carry out an elopement scheme. The young man's indignation over the painfully high interest rate is topped only by his anger over the discovery that the undisclosed usurer is his father and that Harpagon is not at all ashamed of this pastime. The generation gap thus grows with mutual loss of respect.

Having failed to raise money for his elopement, Cléante joins forces with his sister, Frosine and Mariane, who agree that Mariane's
mother should be solicited to break off her daughters' marriage that she had contracted with Harpagon. Here, acknowledgement of maternal authority is significant and rare in a theater dominated by patriarchal say.

Cléante's resourcefulness is worthy of Scapin's praise. Playing on Harpagon's conviction that children are against their father's remarriage, Cléante tells his girlfriend in all honesty that he cannot approve of her becoming his stepmother. He then changes his tone and bestows extravagant presents on Mariane—gifts that he has ordered in his father's name. Harpagon is perhaps less furious over the squandering of his money than he is curious over his son's motive, and in the second father-son encounter, he tricks Cléante into revealing his love for Mariane. A power confrontation follows in which the father calls on paternal respect; the son retorts, "L'amour ne connoît personne" (IV, iii).

There follows a reconciliation scene involving Maître Jacques as mediator who succeeds in lulling each side to believe that he has gotten his way. The quid pro quo produces a pseudo-reconciliation, an exchange of long fluid praises punctuated by the staccato rhythm of short phrases signifying the renewal of argument:

Harpagon: Qui est-ce qui parle de t'accorder Mariane?

Cléante: Vous, mon père.

H: Moi!

C: Sans doute.

H: Comment? C'est toi qui as promis d'y renoncer.

C: Moi, y renoncer?

H: Oui.

C: Point du tout. . . .

(IV, v)
Tension increases to such a level where father must seek relief by renouncing and disinheriting the son. Cléante rejects the patrimony in his careless phrase, "Je n'ai que faire de vos dons" (IV, v).

The dénouement produces hidden family structures that cause Harpagon's marriage plans to go awry. Valere and Elise have signed a marriage agreement; Mariane now has a father and brother who will promote her marriage with Cléante. Despite such tremendous odds against the father, Molière has seen fit to allow Cléante, the expatriate son, to level the final blow in the guise of a deal—Cléante will return Harpagon's gold if the old man will consent to his son's marriage with Mariane. The deal is foolproof and Cléante sees himself reinstated with both families.  

Although Tartuffe's promise to throw Orgon's family onto the streets far surpasses Harpagon's blundering marriage arrangements, the miser's action of taking over his son's right to marry Mariane is of a most hideous nature. Gutwirth is alert to this perverseness:

C'est peu de retenir pour lui-seul une fortune qu'ilenterre et d'en priver la génération dont il usurpelaplace, il doit l'évincer dans sa chair et dans son bonheur, prendré tout squelette glacé qu'il est, placela de son fils sur la couche nuptiale, consommer dans toute son hideur le sacrifice de l'avenir au passé, de la vie à la mort, de la jeune fille livrée en pâture au monstre.  

One can indeed reevaluate the archetypal voleur-volé in light of the above statement that points out the old man as the criminal attempting to cheat the youth of his fleeing pleasures.

The single father-son confrontation in Les Fourberies de Scapin, a play with two widower-son structures, is largely due to the omnipresence of Scapin and to the cowardliness of one of the sons. Scapin effectively keeps fathers away from their offspring. If one also considers
the hidden father-daughter structures that are only revealed at play's end, he can conclude that household identity is played down and that the family is kept apart.

Argante, ignorant of his son's marriage, has contracted for his son a marriage with the daughter of his best friend. Octave unable to face his father, flees and leaves Scapin alone to face Argante. The familiar theme of servant taking over the children's defense has been seen in L'Amour Médecin and Le Tartuffe. In the ensuing dialogue between master and servant, Argante warns that he will lock up his son in a safe place and that he will go see a lawyer to annul the marriage. Should the son refuse such a move, he will be disinherited. The same threat is made in the following scene between the second father-son pair. Géronte probes his son in an investigation reminiscent of Arnolphe's drilling Agnès. The message from both interviews is the absolute power of the father and the son's abject status.

Both fathers are made to believe incredible stories of kidnappings and forced marriages fabricated by the ingenious servant who is the good will ambassador on behalf of the sons. But like Le Dépit Amoureux and L'Ecole des Femmes, the effective remedy to the son's quandary arrives through a Deux Ex Machina, the coincidental matching of Octave's lady love with the father's choice. In light of the discoveries, conflict vanishes and the comedy is ready to end. When Octave musters up his courage to rebel against the powers that be, his action is meaningless and ironic.

As in former plays, the young people depend on servants to extricate them from their dilemmas. Their helplessness is offset by Scapin's craftiness who is also not wanting in insight. When he mentions that father and son are worlds apart—"Entre lui et vous aucun soupçon de
ressemblance" (II, iv)--Scapin is not only summing up the theme of misunderstanding and disassociation between the two age groups, but he touches on the importance of conflict and differences in family politics that Molière has used to produce laughter in his theater.

**Conclusion**

Parent-child relations undergo transformations in the course of Molière's artistic development. Although the role of unreasonable and ridiculous fatherhood remains fairly static throughout the repertory, women and servants--the traditionally submissive family elements--affect family politics and behavior through their attempt to reverse the parental marriage decision. Thus, the overriding presence of the patriarchy in Molière's earliest five-act comedies is offset by the brazen pretensions of Cathos and Magdelon. In the two *Ecoles*--the third phase of the development of women's roles--Molière achieves an equilibrium of sorts between male and female family members when he not only increases the young lady's number of lines but also gifts her with a sensitivity and intelligence that makes the paternal role all the more despicable.

In later plays, both daughters and maidservants incarnate the archetypes of cleverness and enlightenment--associated with the leading ladies of the two *Ecoles*. Quite often, in these later productions, Molière utilizes the maidservants to defend the helpless daughter before the outraged father--the result being that household activities outweigh in number and importance parent-child interviews. There is consequently an augmentation in female power after the two *Ecoles* which is seen not only in the development of the daughter's sensitivity and astuteness but also in maidservants and wives: Dorine, Lisette and Toînette; Madame Jourdain, Philaminte and Béline.
In a few plays like *Le Tartuffe*, the daughter appears lackluster and dependent on more colorful servants and family members for their inventiveness. In these instances Molière is perhaps indicting the authoritative system in which too much discipline squashes creativity and innovation. With the exception of Cléante (*L'Avare*), sons are generally as helpless as certain daughters in Molière's cast of characters. They can be virile yet foolhardy like Damis, or their very essence may appear to have been pressed out of them by domineering fathers. Young Diafoirus is an unforgettable example of an adolescent who has been structured into accepting authority without question. His uncreative and dull personality—much to his father's satisfaction—is blindly submissive to family power and politics. It is ironic that in Molière's theater stubborn parents are often more colorful than their subjected children. Young adults seldom find the strength within themselves to revolt against a nasty parental decision and must depend on others for support. One cannot help but wonder what dull and unimaginative parents they themselves will become after marriage.
CHAPTER III

HUSBAND-WIFE POLITICS
Eh! Mon Dieu! tu feras
Comme les autres font, et tu t'adouciras.
Ces gens, avant l'ymen, si fâcheux et critiques,
Dégenèrent souvent en mairs pacifiques.
Le Dépit Amoureux V, viii, 1787-1790

Par un bon mariage on voit tout rajusté;
Le Dépit Amoureux III, ix, 1072

When Chrysale whines in Les Femmes Savantes, "C'est une chose infâme / Que d'être si soumis au pouvoir d'une femme" (II, ix, 699-670), he admits his own weakness and reveals the continuity of husband-wife relations throughout Molière's domestic comedies. The woman is almost always the stronger of the two—a fact that contradicts the seventeenth century view of the man being the household head. Although in theory Monsieur Jourdain and Chrysale are to run the ménage as they see fit, they inevitably abdicate the powers to their wives.¹

Power struggles, fits of jealousy, adulterous urges, or an aggressive-passive relationship: the eight domestic comedies containing husband and wife structures show a combination of all four of the above. With the exception of Le Malade Imaginaire, there is always blatant and overt discord between the partners, whether it be an argument over woman's independence in George Dandin or a fear of cuckoldry in both Dandin and Sganarelle ou le Cocu Imaginaire. Differences of opinion can arise over inequality of station (bourgeois versus aristocrat), a forced marriage, frustration, jealousy or of course the husband's or wife's indulgence in a particular whim or passion. Yet, in six of the eight plays, the central conflict is based on the choice of the marriage partner for the young lady.

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The use of Laslett's nomenclature produces the following breakdown of husband-wife structures in the eight plays:

Category 3: Simple Family Households

CLASS A: Married Couples Alone

La Jalousie du Barbuillé

Δ — 〇

Le Barbuillé-Angélique

Sganarelle ou Le Cocu Imaginaire

Δ — 〇

Sganarelle-wife

Le Médecin Malgré Lui

Δ — 〇

Sganarelle-Martine

Lucas-Jacqueline

(Both are secondary households)

George Dandin

Δ — 〇

Dandin-Angélique

Les Sotenville

CLASS B: Married Couples with Child(ren)

Le Tartuffe

Δ — 〇

Orgon-Elmire

(stepmother)
As may be seen, there is a relative paucity of childless couples in Molière's bourgeois comedies. La Jalousie du Barbouillé and George Dandin, resembling each other in many respects, are the only plays portraying Category 3 Class A (Married Couples alone) as the principal household. In Sganarelle ou Le Cocu Imaginaire and Le Médecin Malgré Lui, the parent-child relationship exists in a principal household and supersedes in importance the husband-wife structure. George Dandin, then, is the only play of importance that does not have some sort of a parent-unmarried child relationship. Yet, Molière attenuates this glaring exception through the témoignage of the Sotenvilles who share a parent-married child relationship with Dandin and Angélique.
In many of the comedies, both the spectator's and the household's sympathies are won over by the female position, which is diametrically opposed to the traditional, male viewpoint. Of course, the last two plays, _Les Femmes Savantes_ and _Le Malade Imaginaire_ depart somewhat from the ridiculous husband/reasonable wife structure of previous plays by casting the woman in a foolish or odious role.

Chapter II has shown that the interference of servants like Dorine and Toinette lessens the impact of father-child confrontations. Similarly, the presence of domestics, outside relatives and children in _Le Tartuffe_ and _Les Femmes Savantes_ minimizes the number and the importance of husband-wife confrontations. Another reason for fewer meetings is of course the sociability of the day; Jourdain's music masters, Philaminte's poet and Orgon's parasite preclude a great amount of time to be spent with the family.

_Sister Plays: La Jalousie du Barbuillé_

_and_ _George Dandin_

Before _Le Tartuffe_ 's first presentation in 1664, _La Jalousie du Barbuillé_ and _Sganarelle ou Le Cocu Imaginaire_ were the only plays to contain a husband-wife ménage. In both cases, the relationships are sketchy and underplayed, yet share similarities with Molière's principal comedy on husband-wife problems, _George Dandin_. Moreover, husband and wife quarrels show Molière's acknowledgement of the tradition of medieval Franch theater, "Querelles de ménage, sujets favoris de nos farces médiévales."³

_Le Barbuillé_ is a drunkard, a _niais_ who would seek advice from an even more absurd _docteur_. He is also a husband and father of small
children whom the audience never sees. His wife, Angélique, is galante and would rather seek pleasure in the arms of a lover than boredom in her husband's household. There are of course more parallels between the play and George Dandin: the triangle of husband/wandering wife/lover, the conniving maidservant, the door scene at the denouement and the presence of the in-laws as judges.

S. Plummer's treatment of George Dandin as a series of court scenes presided over by the parents-in-law can also be applied to La Jalousie du Barbouillé. Angélique's pretext of a sick brother fails to allay her husband's suspicions of her questionable activities with Valére. The argument erupts and subsides with the appearance of the male powers—Gorgibus the father, and Villebrequin, undoubtedly the uncle. Having abandoned her attempts to communicate with her "sac à vin de mari," Angélique appeals to the dual tribunal of father and uncle, whereupon Le Barbouillé addresses her in violent terms: "Tiens, je suis bien tenté de te bailler une quinte majeure, en présence de tes parents" (scène v). Any hopes which Le Barbouillé might have of explaining his wife's extravagant behavior vanish when order disintegrates into a free-for-all argument with everyone speaking at once. Round one of the prize fight is over with a slight victory for the wife when the father orders both to go home. The second and final round is again a victory for Angélique. The window conversation shows the inflexibility and unfor-giving nature of the husband and predicts the inevitable tensions that will always exist between the two. Like George Dandin, La Jalousie du Barbouillé paints its conjugal relationships very black.

Molière apparently did not think it worthwhile to give a name to Sganarelle's wife in Sganarelle ou le Cocu Imaginaire. Conversations
between the spouses are few and far between, and the marital relationship is of course subservient to the wild *quid pro quos* or much ado about nothing atmosphere which is caused by Célie's fainting spells and a misplaced portrait. Like Poe's purloined letter, the likeness falls into wrong hands, causes much mischief and determines the players' behavior; it is the signifier which lets them see imaginary relationships and become insanely jealous.  

Up to the denouement, the complicated train of *quid pro quos* prevents Sganarelle and his wife from ever getting together to clear up the mystery. Lack of communication between spouses is compounded by the proliferation of damning circumstantial evidence: the wife sees her husband bending over Célie; Lélie observes him with his portrait and Sganarelle witnesses Lélie speaking to his wife. All of the above obscure the truth and confirm everyone's growing fears of betrayal and cuckoldry.  

*Sganarelle ou le Cocu Imaginaire* is the only play in which both the issues of cuckoldry and of a potentially forced marriage hold equal priority. Although Tartuffe's seductive attempts are genuine, Orgon does not find out about them until the end of the fourth act. Moreover, Orgon and Elmire do not doubt each other's fidelity. In this way, the cuckoldry issue in *Sganarelle ou Le Cocu Imaginaire* makes for a very unstable relationship between the two spouses and anticipates the private hell of George Dandin and Angélique; the households of Sganarelle and Dandin lack the cohesiveness and resources of Orgon's family in time of crisis.  

The jealousy scene in *Sganarelle ou le Cocu Imaginaire*—carried over from the preliminary farce, *La Jalousie du Barbouillé*—is not
without its short courtroom interlude between Sganarelle and his wife's relations. The latter agree that their son-in-law's testimony is inconclusive and does not warrant the declaration that the wife is an adulteress:

Et tout ce que de vous je viens d'ouir contre elle
Ne conclut point, parent, qu'elle soit criminelle,
C'est un point delicat; et de pareils forfaits,
Sans les bien averer, ne s'imputent jamais.
(xii, 313-316)

The in-laws' reluctance to accept Sganarelle's testimony is of course unwarranted, for things are not the way they seem. It is ironic that in George Dandin Angélique's activities are in fact what they appear to be to the frustrated husband and that he is incapable of proving them to a pair of blind in-laws.

George Dandin is Molière's most scathing indictment of marital relations. Both George and Angélique are frustrated, each for his or her own reasons. Angélique has been obliged to submit to a forced marriage and admits that she has little patience for despotic husbands like Dandin, "C'est une chose merveilleuse que cette tyrannie de Messieurs les maris" (II, ii). Several more of her statements are remarkably feminist and add greater depth to her character. In Act II, scene ii, she and her husband hold their principal confrontation during which she identifies the big mistake in their marriage: "Pour moi, qui ne vous ai point dit de vous marier avec moi, et que vous avez prise sans consulter mes sentiments, je pretends n'etre point obligee a me soumettre en esclave a vos volontes. ..." (II, ii). The words "obligée" and "esclave" are particularly significant at this point in the play where, having had to submit to her parents' acceptance of Dandin's marriage proposal, Angélique confronts her condition lucidly and feels that it is about time that she
strike back by carousing with her boyfriend, M. le vicomte. She is not
then totally at fault since she infers that both Dandin and the Sotenvilles
are at least partially responsible for her outings.

It is not without good reason that Angélique chooses Clitandre to
be her lover. She despises Dandin's earthy ways and yearns for the more
refined life of the court:

Ah! Claudine, que ce billet s'explique d'une façon
galante! Que dans tous leurs discours et que dans
toutes leurs actions les gens de cour ont un air
agréable! Et qu'est-ce que c'est auprès d'eux que
nos gens de province? (II, iii)

Angélique defends her search in almost hedonistic terms:

et je veux jouir, s'il vous plaît, de quelque nombre
de beaux jours que m'offre la jeunesse, prendre les
douces libertés que l'âge me permet, voir un peu le
beau monde, et goûter le plaisir de m'ouvrir dire des
douceurs. (II, ii)

This carpe diem philosophy does not succeed in reaching Dandin who,
knowing the rules of the game of subjection and domination, retorts,
"Je suis votre mari, et je vous dis que je n'entends pas cela" (II, ii).

Angélique's preference of Clitandre and the gens de cour shows a
departure from Dandin's rude manners and the parents' dubious but con-
tinual emphasis on honor and tradition. Angélique, as much as Célimène,
represents the younger generation, influenced by affectedness, finesse
and flightiness. Although Célimène and the pecques provinciales are
unmarried and not slaves to jealous husbands, their wishes to enjoy life
now and not to wither away in a convent-like atmosphere are also expressed
by Angélique, "Car pour moi, je vous déclare que mon dessein n'est pas de
renoncer au monde, et de m'enterrer toute vive dans un mari" (II, ii).
To Angélique, separation is not a social opprobrium. When she brings up the matter, her parents rapidly dismiss it with warnings of scandal; they of course fail to mention the financial cutoff from Dandin's treasury should there be such a rupture. Thus, the personalities of Angélique, Célimène and the précieuses suggest more than the characterization of a silly fad. They depict the reaction of the younger generation against the more solid cornelian values of honor and defense of family amid conflict.9 Several critics even see the préciosité movement as an attempt by women to find identity in the second half of the seventeenth century and to survive "les vices du temps."10

George Dandin regrets only too late the decision he made to marry into a noble family. He realizes that he can never be above his wife which in his power-oriented world is the only acceptable position. He laments:

J'aurais bien mieux fait, tout riche que je suis, de m'allier en bonne et franche paysannerie, que de prendre une femme qui se tient au dessus de moi, s'offense de porter mon nom, et pense qu'avec tout mon bien je n'ai pas acheté la qualité de son mari.

(I, i)

The au-dessus position must particularly bother him—a type of reverse power structure which even his wealth cannot turn around to satisfy his wants.

There seems to be no love lost between the two. Angélique receives enough love and affection from her galant viscount, whereas the husband speaks about her in such terms as: "Voilà une méchante carogne" (III, vii). Showing the consequences of a forced marriage, George Dandin upholds the Molière doctrine that wealth and social standing do not by
themselves a happy marriage make and that the final ingredient is the free choice of the marriage partner.

Aside from Angélique's declaration of her rights in Act II, scene ii and the famous door scene at the play's end, husband-wife dialogues are sacrificed by Molière to the court-room scenes involving children, parents and often servants and the lover. There is a special rhythm reminiscent of the rounds of a prizefight where, at the end of each round, Dandin prostrates himself before the other forces. Each of the three acts follows essentially the same format:

**ACT I**

1. *Intelligence report* Evidence (scene ii)
2. *Call of Witnesses* (scene iii)
3. *Challenge made by Dandin* Overruling Humiliation (scenes iv–vi)

The play opens with a monologue—Dandin's statement on his miserable condition. After Lubin's intelligence briefing of what has been going on between Dandin's wife and Clitandre, there is another *interiorisation* or self-examination. Molière, throughout the play, brackets the major actions with internal monologues in which Dandin has the chance to get away from the world, sift over the facts and decide on his next move. The recourse he chooses is inevitably an appeal to the parents-in-law. Thus, each of the acts has the same pattern: challenge, overruling and humiliation.

Dandin's inferiority complex and respect for the Sotenvilles' standing have been discussed by several critics. Perhaps the best argument for his attachment to the Sotenvilles has been advanced by
Mr. Gossman and is well within keeping of seventeenth century marriage customs: Dandin has not so much married Angélique as he has married her parents.\textsuperscript{13} Whereas Hubert sees Dandin's quest as a search for truth, Gossman must add the paradox of a man looking for the damnable truth yet afraid of finding out the reality that will hurt the Sotenvilles' name and inevitably his own. Thus, if Dandin would prove Angélique's guilt, his esteem for Sotenville would suffer. As Gossman puts it, "George Dandin hates himself because he is not Sotenville and he hates Sotenville because he is not Dandin."\textsuperscript{14} Dandin then does not use his rights over Angélique because he has a type of vassal relationship with his lord, Sotenville, which precludes a husband-wife power ratio. He is incapable of exercising authority although he would like to. In the Sotenvilles' eyes he is the bad son whereas Clitandre is the good son. Regrettably, the baron has had to accept Dandin as son-in-law and risk muddling the sacred identity of his aristocratic name with the earthy roots of a country bumpkin.

The cyclical aspect is one of the more interesting facets of the play: three acts or three rounds, morning, afternoon and night. On the following day all will doubtless begin again: suspicion -- challenge -- defeat. Perhaps, as Gossman maintains, the husband does not really want to expose the wife and yet he must. In any event, the Dandin-Angélique couple suggests an irreparable and hopeless conflict, a very dark indictment of marriage by Molière.

Clobbering and Conniving in "Le Médecin Malgré Lui"

Le Tartuffe, Le Médecin Malgré Lui and the husband-wife plays that follow George Dandin are lighter in their description of marital
relations since there are the children's interests and the servants' escapades with which to reckon. Although the husband's monomania or whim varies from play to play, his character remains stubborn and authority-conscious. The wife's character, on the other hand, undergoes a series of modifications from the generous Elmire to the malevolent Béline. Wives as mothers combine the enlightened nature of Agnès with the practical qualities of an Isabelle. Their roles are significant to the play's plot and meaning as well as entertaining to the audience.

The seriousness of George Dandin is totally absent in Le Médecin Malgré Lui, a farce of light-hearted fun where Molière has seen fit to portray three families:

1. **Widower-daughter**: Géronte-Lucinde

   ![Diagram 1](image)

2. **Husband-wife**: Lucas-Jacqueline

   ![Diagram 2](image)

3. **Husband-wife**: Sganarelle-Martine

   ![Diagram 3](image)

Lucas and Jacqueline are a couple of rude and unsophisticated servants, married and living in Géronte's household. The other peasant couple, Sganarelle and Martine, live in their own dwelling. As in Le Cocu Imaginaire, there are multiple households; however, Martine is no longer just "Sganarelle's wife" and is more developed than her counterpart in the earlier play. In fact, Le Médecin Malgré Lui leads off and closes
on an exchange of witticisms between Sganarelle and Martine. The first two scenes of the play afford an excellent view of a peasant husband and wife squabble and the very best elements of farce—contradictions, insult swapping and all sorts of banter leading to an ever quickening repartee and to the inevitable clobbering.

*Le Médecin Malgré Lui* contains a number of beating scenes, the first one in which husband beats wife followed by Martine's slugging a well-meaning neighbor who has made the mistake of sticking his nose into the affairs of two souls who would rather not be counseled. Sganarelle's physical handling of his wife drives home the point that he has control and power over her. The statement—"C'est ma femme et non pas la vôtre"—upholds the notion of women as chattel.

Sganarelle has little respect for the *douceurs* or sacrament of marriage. He feels that beating his wife is the just way of satisfying her—perhaps a Freudian reference to the stick's shape. When, before the meeting, he is accused of being a drunken and irresponsible mate who leaves the wife with four small children to rear, he snarls, "Donne-leur le fouet" (I, i).

Sganarelle's nonchalance towards adultery is of course part of the open farce in the play. He cares little about Lucas when chasing the poor peasant's wife, Jacqueline. In a most revealing sequence, Act III, scene iii, Jacqueline tells him that Lucas has a nasty disposition to which he responds: "vous ne feriez pas mal de vous venger de lui avec quelqu'un." Of course, in an earlier scene, Lucas is shown to be as authoritative as Sganarelle but much more stupid. When Jacqueline gives a naïve but stirring defense of freedom of choice in marriage, she is verbally assaulted both by master and husband—the
two vestiges of the male hierarchy. In addition, Lucas takes a swipe at
her but fortunately misses and raps his master on the chest. He jibes,
"Monsieu est le père de sa fille, et il est bon et sage pour voir ce
qu'il li faut" (II, i). Despite the pure enjoyment of the farce,
obvious attempts at marital discipline are seen in both the Sganarelle/
Martine and Lucas/Jacqueline beatings. In the latter relationship, of
course, Lucas is jealous of the flirting going on between Sganarelle
and Jacqueline. The jealousy, however, is open and seemingly less complex
than George Dandin's feelings.

Sganarelle would not be a would-be doctor if Martine had not
passed him off as a genuine one to Géronte's servants. Moreover, had
he not entered Géronte's household, Sganarelle would not have saved the
daughter from a forced marriage. The happiness of the two young lovers
thus hinges on Martine's billing her husband as a doctor—her revenge
for the way Sganarelle has treated her in the opening scene. Although
Sganarelle, unlike George Dandin, wears the pants in the family, he has
a wily and scheming wife who knows how to get even with him. The beating
and near hanging that he receives in Géronte's household is recompense
for his prior conduct with Martine. In this way, Sganarelle as husband
obtains the spectator's forgiveness. Such absolution can never be the
case with George Dandin, husband.

Both Jacqueline and Martine gain the spectator's approval with
their respective forthrightness and ingenuity. They refuse to be
squashed by their authoritative husbands and remain fused in Molière's
theater as colorful characters and as essential and forceful wife figures
of Le Médecin Malgré Lui.
In one significant way does *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* fail to depart from the family structures encountered in earlier Molière plays. The primary household falls in Category 3, Class C, *Widowers with Child(ren)*. Because Jacqueline and Martine are appraised uniquely as wives, there is no mother element in the play. The honors of being the first wife and mother in Molière's theater fall to both Elmire and Madame Jourdain, if one forgets the brief reference to children in *La Jalousie de Barbuillé*. In addition, Orgon and Elmire are the first husband-wife couple to constitute a primary household in a play longer than one act. Molière thus experimented with husband-wife couples such as Sganarelle-wife and Sganarelle-Martine while still holding onto the widower-daughter as the principal household. When the dramatist came to *Le Tartuffe*, he was ready to mold effective comedy around a more complex system of family relationships.

Although Elmire is concerned about Mariane's and Damis' happiness, she is still only their stepmother. Madame Jourdain and Philaminte are the only two genuine or "blood" mothers in the domestic comedies.\(^{15}\)

Madame Jourdain and Philaminte both appear as late as 1670 and 1672—at the end of Molière's career. A suitable explanation for their inclusion at this late date is that Molière desired to depart from customary widower-daughter relationships that he had sketched in over ten plays and that, his technique having matured, he was able to introduce a more developed series of relationships within the nuclear family as well as the presence of uncles, aunts and even a grandmother. Initially plagued by the need to introduce a small family in order to centralize tensions around the marriage issue, the dramatist had, with *Le Tartuffe*, learned to compose a play with an interlocking series of
family relationships—three generations' worth—without losing any tightness in plot or character study. On the contrary, the development of female roles—wives, mothers, and maidservants—and their relationships with the male counterparts enhanced the notion of household, the identity of family and made the audience feel that they were viewing a sacred unit both living for and struggling against the pleasures of sociability.  

Molière and Matriarchy: Three Viewpoints

Roger Guichemerre contends that mothers are rare in French comedy due to the influence of the Spanish *comedia* and the virgin image with which mothers had been associated in Spain. The psychoanalytical study of Molière by Mauron has insisted on the *barbon-blondin* antithesis of father and son which has tended to exclude a consideration of the mother's role in the great majority of Molière's plays. However, M. Mauron goes on to say with reason that the last few comedies show the "apparition des femmes redoutables" which exhibit a "régession comique vers un régime matrimonial." Moreover, "la figure maternelle apparaît moins riche en comique que celle du père ou du fils."

Studying these impressions, one does see that the mother becomes more assertive and the father weaker in *Le Tartuffe*, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, *Les Femmes Savantes* and *Le Malade Imaginaire*. Opposed to the hard-hitting realities of everyday life (the conception of Elmire, Madame Jourdain, Chrysale and Béline) is what Mauron terms the "fantaisie de triomphe," a certain flightiness or evasion from reality, obvious in the behavior of the above characters' mates.

A third critic, George Attinger, implies the existence of a matriarchy by stating that the strength of male royalty—visible in
Tartuffe, Alceste or Dom Juan—is no longer present in the final plays, that the fathers are puppets or a "puissance negative," and that their passions are weaknesses rather than strongpoints.21

Elmire and Madame Jourdain: Preservers of the Family

From a traditional seventeenth century viewpoint, Elmire and Madame Jourdain are held responsible for the welfare of husband and children. Philaminte as well as Béline will turn this imperative upside down and exhibit behavior that is respectively startling and reprehensible. Elmire is certainly in the shakiest position of the four wives. No doubt a victim of a marriage of convenience to Orgon, she is but his second wife and the stepmother of Mariane and Damis. In an era imbued with conventions of good taste, Molière's tactfulness in exposing only a stepmother to the seductive guile of Tartuffe is understandable. Whether Elmire still loves her husband—or ever loved him—is debatable, but from all indications she wishes to remain faithful to both Orgon and to the children.

At the play's outset, identities and relationships are sketched by Madame Pernelle, the grandmother, who also introduces the family to the audience. We are told that Elmire is Madame Pernelle's daughter-in-law, Orgon's wife and a woman fond of entertaining. The grandmother's garrulousness is more than compensated for by her daughter in law's reticence; Elmire says no more than three words in the first act after which she excuses herself to wait for her husband's appearance. Apparently, Molière decided to have the subsequent brother/brother and father/child/servant interviews without the mother; Elmire's participation
in the marriage quarrel is played down and is on a different par from the channels that Madame Jourdain and Philaminte elect to pursue.

Husband and wife confrontations have been avoided by the author. Elmire, despite her affinity for the rest of the family, has but one practical function—to reveal Tartuffe's true nature. The unmasking is an ingenious ruse thought up by the wife which involves the whole family less Dorine. Cléante and Mariane escort Tartuffe to Elmire's salon where Orgon is hidden in the cabinet. Thus, the three remaining people are trompeur trompé (Tartuffe), témoin (Orgon) and meneur du jeu (Elmire).

It should be noted that unlike George Dandin, Elmire has taken the precaution of insuring that the témoin is in place in the carefully rigged trap for the trompeur trompé. Additionally, the father will not make a premature appearance like the son who had also taken shelter in the cabinet.

Elmire's second encounter with her husband is but a brief scene after Tartuffe has exited to see that they are indeed alone. From his cocksure and stubborn pinnacle of blind husband, Orgon is suddenly plunged into confusion; Elmire, in a command posture, ironically asserts that "l'on ne doit point croire trop de léger" (IV, vi) and attempts to hide him once more when the Imposter reenters.

The third encounter in the following scene, IV, vii, is again brief and is characterized by the husband/wife reaction to Tartuffe's enigmatic statement of approaching vengeance. The Imposter's newly revealed iniquity has squashed the inequality of power between Orgon and Elmire; the scene shows two spouses united before a common threat and anticipates the theme of the fifth act which is the solidarity of the family—the unit fighting for its survival.
By including the roles of wife and mother in Le Tartuffe, Molière has provided a new symbol in his theater—the family preserver—which will reappear in the character of Madame Jourdain. Of the Jourdain household, one critic has remarked, "Seul couple de longue date en la grande comédie molièresque, les Jourdain sont essentiellement un ménage."\(^{22}\) The Jourdains, perhaps more than any other Molièresque couple, owe their existence to the bickering duos of medieval farces. Madame Jourdain's crustiness and bourgeois sensibility and Monsieur Jourdain's flightiness are natural opposites producing humorous clashes in the best farcical tradition. Because Madame Jourdain is not worldly, she could not care less about non-business dealings with the outside world; in the truest domestic sense, she is the provider for her family's security. Fortunately, this arrangement suits Monsieur Jourdain who is free to mix with aristocratic parasites such as Dorante. His family will look after him no matter what whim he is pursuing; in this sense his alienation from the other household members is not a tragic one like that of George Dandin whose family shows no sympathy for him.

The Jourdains' marriage must have been a typical marriage of convenience between the families of two cloth merchants. One might expect to encounter it in the annals of P. Goubert's Beauvais establishment.\(^{23}\) By law, Monsieur Jourdain is the head, yet Madame Jourdain is allowed to run the household. She is determined to marry her daughter to a healthy bourgeois lad. Consequently, the need for a Dorine "big sister" role is eliminated; Nicole nevertheless inherits Dorine's earthy laughter and her outspoken tongue. Yet, for all her sincerity and concern for family happiness Madame Jourdain must rely on forces outside the household—Cléante and Covielle—to overcome Monsieur Jourdain's opposition.
That the solution to the marriage issue comes from outside the household is not surprising, since it is quite in line with the invasion of the Jourdain ménage by outside elements: music masters, aristocratic friends, tailors and a lover. Indeed, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme is composed in a manner directly opposite to the structure of Le Tartuffe:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Le Tartuffe</th>
<th>Acts I, II--Inner Family</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acts II-V--Tartuffe's presence (exterior)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme</th>
<th>Acts I, II--Outside Element (sociability)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acts III-V--Inner Family</td>
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</table>

In Le Tartuffe, the invading figure of the hypocrite is seen no earlier than the outset of the third act and is preceded by an ample orientation to Orgon's household; in Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme any meeting of family is preempted by the social intercourse between Jourdain and his teachers in the first two acts. The appearance of mothers and daughters is held back until the third act. A practical reason for this latter arrangement is that Molière purposely constructed the play to allow several of his actors to play more than one role apiece.  

The spectator must then wait until the third act for family conflict to erupt. Although the father spends a considerable amount of time with his teachers and Dorante--the outside element--husband/wife encounters are surprisingly numerous and much more significant here than in Le Tartuffe. The primary effectiveness of such reunions is to show the clash between the two sensibilities and the two social strata: the affected and the earthy, the aristocrat and the bourgeois.

After having been suitably pampered by school masters and tailors, Jourdain enters the domestic world of Act III. The change is underlined
rather brusquely by Nicole's entrance and hysterical laughter over Jourdain's attire (III, ii). Her hilarious outburst is an excellent lead into the no-nonsense appearance and hard-hitting realism of Madame Jourdain in the following scene. Earthiness thus confronts affectedness, and sociability must defend itself against the needs of the household. The entire scene is a two-against-one clash and power struggle which can be summed up in Jourdain's desperate reply: "Taisez-vous, ma servante et ma femme" (III, iii). The possessive adjective "ma" leaves no doubt as to Jourdain's attitude toward domestic authority over his wife and servant.

The first man/wife conversation has four parts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Jourdain: Defense or Offense</th>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Tone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clothing Harangue</td>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>III,iii</td>
<td>Practical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage Issue</td>
<td>Defense Turning point:Les Belles Choses Offense</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Practical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonetic Lesson</td>
<td>Offense</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Affected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money Lending to Dorante</td>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Practical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The dichotomy of the affected/earthy values is seen in the ways the two spouses try to change the direction of their conversation. The marriage issue, brought up by the wife, rings of practicality and realism. It follows the "clothing harangue"—the wild laughter that Jourdain's costume provokes. The husband capitalizes on the marriage issue by submitting that he would rather change the subject and talk about learning "les belles choses." The husband then has the floor during his
farcical recreation of the phonetic lesson. His exclaiming—"J'enrage quand je vois des femmes ignorantes" (III, iii)—anticipates the male/female opposition that will prevail in Les Femmes Savantes, but on reversed poles. Finally, Madame Jourdain brings the conversation back to earth by mentioning her husband's haunting the nobility and his lending money to Dorante.

The next sequence of three scenes covers the money lending episode where before a helpless wife, the impecunious Dorante swindles additional sums from the gullible husband. "Allez, vous êtes une vraie dupe" (III, iv) is all she can muster after such a scene.

Later on, in the third act, Madame Jourdain unsuccessfully tries to elicit her husband's consent for the desired marriage of Cléante and Lucile. Upon hearing the husband's refusal of Cléante's offer of marriage, the wife once again brings up the issue of social rank and frankly states that she will not tolerate a son-in-law who is not a bourgeois like herself, to whom she can not say without reserve, "Mettez-vous là mon gendre, et dînez avec moi" (III, xii).

Molière must have had a particular desire to use Madame Jourdain in a spoiler or gangbuster role. "C'est ainsi que vous festinez les dames en mon absence" (IV, ii) she heartily proclaims to a dumbfounded Jourdain when she disrupts the Dorante/Dormiène banquet to which she obviously had not been invited. In no other scene of the play is the conflict more clearly outlined between sociability and the rights of the household. "Ce sont mes droits que je défends," screams Madame Jourdain as she exits, having succeeded in breaking up the party.

Madame Jourdain is again present at the outset of the fifth act in which she pokes fun at Jourdain's Mammamouchi costume and perpetuates
the onslaught between capricious make-believe and hard-hitting reality.
To accent further Jourdain's departure from everyday concerns, Molière has his star funny man speak in the few words of the foreign language that he has gleaned:

Madame Jourdain: Qu'est ce que cela veut dire?
Monsieur Jourdain: Iordina, c'est a dire Jourdian.
Madame: He bien! quoi, Jourdain?
Monsieur: Voler far un Paladina de Iordina.
Madame: Comment? ....
Monsieur: Dara dara bastonara. (V, i)

Such a dialogue shows the difference between the two worlds of each spouse and cannot help but prepare the audience for the ultimate yet beneficial alienation at play's end. From here on, anything goes.

The final scene, one more time, throws Madame Jourdain into an unfamiliar situation. The banquet interruption and her disbelief over the Mammamouchi outfit were of course two prior examples of her stepping into a reality different from her own. Matters now seem completely absurd to the poor woman; her husband has agreed to become a Mammamouchi, and her daughter is willing to marry a Turk. Before she is let in on the fun, she says of her daughter—"Elle est à moi aussi bien qu'à vous"—implying the mother right to participate in the decision process.

Entente is reached in the closing scene of Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme. Jourdain thinks that he has allied his family with nobility, and the free choice imperative has been honored. The father is allowed to go his own way as long as the workings of the household are not
compromised. M. Gutwirth, speaking first of the father and then of the women, comments:

Le réel le récompense en le déchargeant
de ses obligations, Lucile et Madame
Jourdain étaient parfaitement capables de
faire leurs affaires par elles-mêmes.25

A type of matriarchy is thus reached through this accord; Madame Jourdain has earned the responsibility of preserver and director of the household—not witnessed in previous plays.

Good Grammar or Good Taste Revisited

In Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme the small number of lines that the wife utters—claiming her right to participate in the marriage decision—take on extensive dimensions in Les Femmes Savantes. Philaminte has succeeded in estranging her sister-in-law and older daughter from the traditional, male power element of the family and has formed a working matriarchy or family within a family.

Family politics between man and wife are more evident here than in the other plays. Structures are reversed; Philaminte is the head of the household—discernible in Henriette's statement, "C'est elle qui gouverne" (I, iii, 209). A more subtle and drawn-out indication of the power structure is the pecking order outlined in the first two acts. The message—parental permission for Henriette to marry Clitandre—steadily climbs up the family pyramid and waits for the final word to be delivered not by the father but by the mother. The following sketch shows how things work in Les Femmes Savantes:
Henriette—Clitandre—Bélise (dead end)—Ariste—

Chrysale—Philaminte

Clitandre, choosing a round about fashion of getting permission for the marriage, runs into a dead end with Bélise and decides to take the issue to the men. Ariste then seeks out Chrysale who gives his consent to the marriage and insure his brother that his wife will comply with his decision.

Despite the heated power struggle over family policy making, there are only two major encounters between Chrysale and Philaminte:

1. The "good grammar or good taste" episode (II, vi)
2. The "Mexican standoff"—Denouement (V, iii)

The small number of man/wife interviews is partly explained by Chrysale's fear of seeking his wife out. Each spouse is ensconced in his or her encampment, and is reluctant to give an inch to the sparring partner. It should also be noted that the solidity of the three savantes is worlds away from the precarious position of Cathos and Magdelon, because Philaminte is established and recognized as the household power. Inflexibility plus the elaborate chain of command sketched above enable other family members to interfere: uncle, aunt and daughters. The outside non-family element is also important; Clitandre spends a good part of the fourth act debating with the femmes savantes and Trissotin, whereas the ladies entertain the poet throughout the third act in sequences reminiscent of both Le Misanthrope and Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme. Thus, sociability occupies much of Philaminte's schedule and both discourages and limits interviews with Chrysale. Jourdain, too, has a love
affair with social graces outside the nuclear family and is hardly concerned with his wife and daughter.

In II, vi, husband and wife lock horns for the first time over the issue of Martine's suitability as a cook, and they initiate the theme of "favorite choice." Philaminte prefers good grammar, Chrysale opts for good taste or culinary expertise as the more important qualification—"Je vis de bonne soupe er non de beau langage" (II, vi, 531). At first, Philaminte's aggressive tone and authoritative statements—"Je veux qu'elle sorte" (II, vi, 432) and "Je ne veux point d'obstacle aux désirs que je montre"—impress the spectator. However, from line 460 onward, Philaminte makes her imperious manner look ridiculous and devoid of reason when she orders Martine to be expelled on account of her poor grammar. This crumbling or dévalorisation of power by exposure of the household head's bête noire is characteristic of other Molièresque father figures and of course shows the author's genius in reversing the traditional male/female roles in Les Femmes Savantes.

In the following scene (II, vii), Chrysale gets up enough initiative to defend not only Martine but paternalism and the old guard's good sense of keeping books out of the hands of women. In contrast to Philaminte's abstract vocabulary, the husband proffers concrete words: "viande bien creuse," "bien collet monté" et "mettre mes rabats" (II, vii). The husband's diatribe is countered by both the wife and sister—the latter commenting, "L'esprit doit sur le corps prendre le pas devant" (II, vii, 546). Philaminte, in Act IV, will later elaborate on this important concept: "Et qui doit gouverner, ou sa mère ou son père, / Ou l'esprit ou le corps, la forme ou la matière (IV, i, 1129-1130). Duality upon duality, for or against Martine, for or against woman's efforts
to improve her mind—the above lines furnish a strong *raison d'être* for the couple in *Les Femmes Savantes* and in other Molière domestic plays. The binary opposition of *corps* versus *esprit* is found through Molière's theater on one of several levels. First, *corps* can denote male strength—authority justified by force and virility opposed by *esprit* or woman's enlightenment, intelligence and finesse. The patriarchy of the two Ecoles and the reactions of Agnès and Isidore as well as Angélique's challenging Dandin illustrate this first level.

On another level, *corps* expresses materialism, the *bourgeois* concern for assimilation and transfer of wealth, the daughter transfer in marriage and even the earthiness of a Madame Jourdain or Chrysale who places greater value on Martine's cooking prowess than on her use of proper syntax. Monsieur Jourdain's disdain of his social origin, Cathos' and Magdelon's reference to Gorgibus' rhetoric as "du dernier bourgeois" and Philaminte's interest in ideas or spiritual communication fall into the second connotation of *esprit* versus *corps*.

Finally, the opposition of platonic and physical love is found in both *Les Précieuses Ridicules* and *Les Femmes Savantes*: Cathos' aversion to sleeping with a naked man and Armande's references to a pure and courtly love. The above characters demonstrate the presence of préciosité in Molière's theater and the influence that the movement exercised over them. In *Les Femmes Savantes*, especially, the themes of preciosity and woman's liberation are set off together.

The interview closes on the second issue prompted by Chrysale who, like Madame Jourdain, turns the conversation to another matter at hand—Henriette's marriage. Molière in II, vii has taken care to avoid further argument by simply not allowing the husband to get a word in
edgewise. Thus, by the end of Act II, the tables have been turned on traditional male supremacy. The matriarchy has won two victories: the firing of Martine and the preliminary decision to marry Henriette to Trissotin.

Chrysale's loss is so substantial that it takes the poor man two acts to recover both his strength and ego. The playwright succeeds in creating a power tension during Acts III and IV by keeping husband away from wife. As various family members "play off" each other, the spectator wonders whether Chrysale and company will be able to block one marriage and promote another.

The third act expounds on Philaminte's plan for her academy and her ideas on the suppression of women. At the same time, it presents Trissotin--a type of literary Tartuffe--and thus brings to the attention of the alert spectator two important items:

1. For all their "enlightenment," the ladies are not precluded from being duped by a parasite poet.

2. Philaminte is a tyrant since she wishes to impose her will on Henriette; consequently, her ideas on liberation lose some of their credibility.

Trissotin has another function in addition to that of deceiver. He reinforces the duality theme of rivals: Trissotin/Clitandre, Chrysale/Philaminte, Henriette/Armande, even Trissotin versus Vadius. Later on in Act IV, scene vi, the two sisters each predict who will win the upcoming battle:

Henriette: Un père a sur nos voeux une entière puissance.

Armande: Une mère a sa part à notre obéissance.

(III, vi, 1105-1106)
The sisters then incarnate the husband/wife struggle during the parents' absence.

Molière skillfully uses Acts III and IV to build up tension for the long-awaited showdown between husband and wife. Chrysale—encouraged by his chasing away Armande of the opposition—is given additional support by the male presence of Clitandre and Ariste when he boasts:

Ah! je leur ferai voir si, pour donner la loi,
Il est dans ma maison d'autre maître que moi.
Nous allons revenir, songer à nous attendre.
Allons, suivez mes pas, mon frère, et vous, mon gendre.
(V, v, 1443-1446)

It's as if he is delivering an ultimatum to the triumvirate of father/uncle/son-in-law which will provide enough momentum to carry him through to the final battle.

The ladies' coterie is not inactive during Acts III and IV. Armande dutifully informs her mother of the strengthening father/daughter forces and Philaminte fails in her attempt to persuade Clitandre to accept Armande as a compromise choice. Vadius' letter, too, gives a hint of Trissotin's real nature and prepares the stage for the denouement marked by a second letter.

In Act V, Chrysale reinstates Martine and nullifies his wife's previous victory. His newly found courage carries him into the dénouement. The notary scene again exhibits the favorite son theme—each spouse advocating his or her favorite candidate for Henriette's hand. The stalemate, reached at the outset of the denouement is followed by an eloquent if not entirely satisfactory statement by Martine, "La poule ne doit pas chanter devant le coq" (V, iii, 1644); it is a reactionary message full of allusions to the husband's right to beat
his wife and imprecations of the evil of books mixed with marriage. Such an exhortation coming from the male segment is as ridiculous and uncompromising as Philaminte's intolerance.

The notary's powerlessness and Martine's amusing truculence are followed by a growing weakness on Chrysale's part. Had not Henriette and Clitandre voiced their displeasure over Philaminte's offer of a Clitandre/Armande union, the father might well have consented (V, iii, 1679-1681). A fabricated letter, like the portrait in Sganarelle ou le Cocu Imaginaire, resolves the crisis, and governs the behavior of the principal players. The letter's message that Philaminte and Chrysale have lost all their investments suspends the power struggle, equalizes man, wife and children, and resolves the marriage conflict by exposing the good and bad points of the two male rivals. Although all's well that ends well in this comedy with a traditional marriage arrangement at the denouement, family politics come into focus with Chrysale's brave but useless attempt to reestablish his sovereignty in the household: "Allons, Monsieur, suivez l'ordre que j'ai prescrit, / Et faites le contrat ainsi que je l'ai dit" (V, scène dernière, 1777-1778). The words hardly sway the audience and give them the feeling that, although the marriage issue was finally settled with everyone's approval, the power struggle will begin anew on the next day.

Philaminte's behavior is of course more than just a power contest with her husband. J. Hubert alludes to the wife's status--"deprived of military and political dominance." One can add that, in light of the rapport between preciosity and the emancipation of women from traditional values, Philaminte shows the sincere effort of some women in the seventeenth century to make sense of the world in which
they live, to overcome the frustrations of their narrow roles in a man's world and to give of themselves something more than what is expected of mothers and wives. The feminist academy could very well become today's feminist workshop. The word "nous"—used profusely in II, ii—shows the solidarity of women opposed to men or even to men and women together. The seriousness of their purpose—transcending the petty points of correct grammar that is so comical—can be appraised in the following words or women longing to use their brains:

C'est faire à notre sexe une trop grande offense,  
De n'étendre l'effort de notre intelligence  
Qu'à gagner d'une jupe et de l'air d'un manteau,  
Ou des beautés d'un point ou d'un brocart nouveau.  
(III, ii, 857-860)

Unfortunately, for Philaminte, her idealism precludes the selflessness of an Elmire or the preserver instincts of Madame Jourdain. Philaminte's intolerance of the rights of Henriette—a "sister"—and her capacity to be duped by Trissotin are of course two contradictions sought by Molière to provide comical effects and two shortcomings that deflect from her credibility.

Female Tartuffe

The evolutionary theme of woman's growing power in the household takes on dissonance in the personnage of Béline in Le Malade Imaginaire. She cares neither about the welfare of her step-daughters, the progress of women nor about social rank. She would rather have her step-daughters marry the convent than any suitor, for the same selfish reason expressed by Lucrèce—Sganarelle's niece in L'Amour Médecin. Béline is the female Tartuffe, crafty, insidious and unctious to such a degree that
she could qualify for the most distasteful female character award in Molière's repertory.

In *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, the keynote might well be a toast to life and vigor, whereas in *Le Malade Imaginaire* the picture is a morbid array of syringes and pills, of winding down one's life, of wills and testaments and of evil plotting. In Jourdain's household, the master is entitled to pure and open indulgence as long as the household reins are kept tightly in the hands of the mistress preserver; Béline, unlike Madame Jourdain, is a step-mother and is determined to further her own interests rather than the family's; she is a destroyer rather than a preserver of the family's integrity. Her ruthless disregard for the happiness of Angélique and Louison would be more scandalous if she were their real mother. In *Le Malade Imaginaire* the alienation is not between husband and wife but between parents and children. Béline lulls Argan into believing that she really cares for him and his best interests so that there is a type of pretended entente and good will between the spouses. In *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and *Le Tartuffe*, sociability in the form of music masters and a pious scoundrel come between the husband and wife. If either Monsieur Jourdain or Orgon deceive their wife, they do so with no sinful intention; their fault lies more in deceiving themselves than their partner. In *Le Malade Imaginaire*, Béline deliberately and sinfully deceives Argan.

Like *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, the play abounds with sociability; Argan's relations with the Diafoirus pair bring the medical world into the picture, and his wife's dealings with M. Bonnefoy introduce the spectator to the invasion of the legal world. Thus, Molière draws
parallels between the medical world's efforts to restore health and the
law's interest in preparation for death; one world supplements the other
in Le Malade Imaginaire.

Man and wife confrontations in Le Malade Imaginaire and in Le
Bourgeois Gentilhomme take place usually among a host of outside
influences. There are four interviews or episodes between husband and
wife that sometimes resemble more of a mother/son dialogue:

1. Introduction to husband/wife (I, vi)
   a. Husband/wife/lawyer

2. Husband/wife/medical element (II, vi)

3. Setting up of the inquisition (II, vii)

4. Trompeur trompé (III, xii)

In the first husband/wife interview, the spectator is struck by the
maternal affection which Béline lavishes on Argan—a type of nanny
fixation to which both cater. Clearly, the husband/wife cooing is a
departure from husband-wife alienations in previous plays. The opening
greetings—"ma femme," "mon pauvre mari"—quickly become more intimate
exchanges, "m'amie," "mon petit fils" exemplifying the nanny fixation.
The initial conversation has four steps:

1. Preliminary cuddling

2. "Naughty Toinette"

3. Cuddling resumed (I, vi)

4. The will (I, vii)

The marked presence of Madame Jourdain, Ariste and Chrysale precludes the
need for a developed servant's role in Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme and Les
Femmes Savantes. In order to watch out for the two daughters' interests
in *Le Malade Imaginaire*, Molière created the spunky character of Toinette, as disrespectful of parental power as Dorine and as resourceful as a Sganarelle or a Sbrigani.

During the dialogue, Béline prepares Argan for the real substance of her visit—the testament. Toinette, who has divined Béline's interest in sending both sisters to a nunnery, plays along with the wife and thereby wins her confidence that will ultimately provide for the evil woman's undoing.

The mention of the will is the lead in to Act I scene vii—the intrusion of the notary into the conjugal bliss of the love-birds. Béline has appeared to infect Argan with her lack of concern for the rest of the family. Alienation of the father-mother couple from the children is evident in Argan's questioning the notary: "Comment puis-je faire, s'il vous plaît, pour lui donner mon bien, et en frustrer mes enfants?" (I, vii). Argan has not only been duped into loving an uncaring wife, but he has consciously repudiated his own blood—his children—through his desire to disinherit them. Such a decision destroys family stability and invalidates the primogeniture system.

In *Le Malade Imaginaire*, family alienation and love are twofold: imaginary and real. The divorce between the husband/wife couple and the children is imaginary—fabricated by Béline. She would have her husband believe that the two of them are plotting together to cheat the children out of the inheritance:

```
Béline-Argan
   |
Children
```
The true alienation of course is between Béline and the entire family; she wishes to deceive both husband and step-children who are in reality on the same level—below her:

Béline

| Argan-children

The latter diagram shows the true status of Béline—alienated from the family—who would also separate the father from his children. When her charlantanism is discovered, she is chased from the family much like Tartuffe who had imbedded himself in Orgon's household. Family stability then suffers not only for want of a reasonable father but for lack of a mother as a preserver figure.

Angélique's future may take any of three directions supported by three points of view:

1. Marriage to Th. Diafoirus (Argan's choice)
2. The convent (Béline's view backed up by lawyer)
3. Free consent marriage to Cléante

In Act II, the proponents of all the above viewpoints are present. Béline is too sly to attempt openly opposition of Argan's plans. Consequently, in II, vi, a stepmother/daughter controversy supplants the husband/wife argument over the marriage issue—also evident in Les Femmes Savantes. The Béline/Angélique dialogue is a game of suggestions in which Angélique alludes to Béline's grasping nature—a hint that Argan fails to catch. The high-keyed verbal exchange is cut short by the impetuous father who offers Angélique two choices: Diafoirus or the nunnery. Should she accept the ungainly lad, she would be cementing
relations between Argan and the medical world. If she chooses the convent, she jeopardizes the financial security of the family by allowing Béline unfair control of the estate.

The following scene (II, vii) sets up an inquisition-like interview between the father and Louison, the small daughter; Béline alerts Argan that Louison can furnish details on a man who has been seen in Angélique's chambers. Béline's move is a stroke of malevolent genius since it further alienates the father from his children and strengthens the phoney "sincerity" bond between her and Argan. Such an avowal compromises Angélique's reputation and leads to Argan's interrogation of Louison—where the father causes his little daughter to reveal a secret. Alienation can further develop between sisters because one has tattled on the other.

Toinette's impersonations in the final act are in the best tradition of Sganarelle. Due to the brother's instigation, Argan incurs the doctor's opposition and sees all hopes of a Diafoirus/Angélique/Argan alliance fly out the window. Toinette's stratagem, of course, upsets Béline's plans of committing the children to a nunnery and stripping them of their lawful inheritance shares. During the final confrontation of man/wife, the trompeur-trompé device of Le Tartuffe is reinstated—only this time there are more participants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Témoin #1</th>
<th>Témoin #2</th>
<th>Trompeur</th>
<th>Meneur du Jeu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Béralde</td>
<td>Argan</td>
<td>Trompè</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(plays dead)</td>
<td>Trompè</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Béline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Toinette</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The modification is that Toinette takes over Elmire's role as _meneur de jeu_. Yet, this role is still played by a woman who is a household member. Béralde and Argan—brothers, males and as such substantial citizens—are the _témoins_ with the three contestants or victiims being Béline, Angélique, and later Cléante.

In _Les Femmes Savantes_, two hoax letters compel Trissotin to reveal his true grasping nature, whereas the personage of Elmire makes Tartuffe show his seductive nature to Orgon—a hidden witness. In _Le Malade Imaginaire_ the husband is both witness and principal character in the playing dead act that forces Béline to reveal her true sentiments. Complete with evidence, witnesses, and verdict, the unmasking scenes of _Le Tartuffe_ and _Le Malade Imaginaire_ are both masterminded by women and succeed where George Dandin's attempts fail. As in _Les Femmes Savantes_, he who has dishonest intentions is routed and chased from the household.²⁹

The ceremony ballet at the play's end marks a harmless alienation of the father from reality and not from his family. As Béralde states, his brother should make himself a doctor to heal himself directly rather than through an intermediary. Looking at Argan's transformation from the perspective of family analysis, one can also see that he can now keep away from the family the hordes of doctors that invade the household, inveigle the family head and endanger the family's identity and safety.

Before the advent of Toinette's play dead ruse, the family suffered from both an internal evil in the form of the step-mother and from an external threat—the professional invasion of doctors, pharmacists and lawyers. Like Tartuffe and Ariste's letter, the mother's presence in _Le Malade Imaginaire_ threatens to alienate father from family and to deprive the family of its financial impetus—the estate. Here, in
Molière's final play, the mother/wife is painted black with no redeeming qualities. The figure is consistent, however, in the evolutionary pattern of a more powerful and forceful role for women—especially mothers and wives in the household. Toinette and Béline, for all their differences, have both come a long way from the initial naïveté of Agnès.

_Le Malade Imaginaire_ is unique in the very somber portrait it paints of the wife whose entente with Argan, however illusory, prevents any arguments or open opposition. The utter helplessness of the children is perhaps more clearly underlined in this play than in others since neither of the parents is watching out for their interests. Because the husband/wife entente precludes consideration for the children's welfare, the young ones must look elsewhere for help and with this in mind Molière had to enlarge the roles of Toinette and Béralde, the uncle. The absence of a mother-preserver and Argan's all consuming interests in his body's functions place the future of the family, particularly of Louison, in a dismal light.

A striking similarity between the final plays and its predecessors is the opposition of two generations and two mentalities: the marriage of convenience (Argan-Béline) and the marriage based on love and free choice (Cléante-Angélique). Whether Molière defended free consent marriages will never be known for sure and is immaterial. There are however two conclusions to draw. One, marriage in all plays but _Le Mariage Forcé_ will come about if and only if the free consent criterion is observed, no matter what the power structure of the family might be. Two, the practical marriages and husband-wife squabbles of _Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme_ and _Les Femmes Savantes_ are inevitable and necessary for the designs of comedy. Molière had recognized that the happy marriage of
the young lovers, a trite item, would only be pleasing if it came about through family conflict, ridicule and duplicity, all sustaining the spectator's interest and suspense and providing good comic fare.
CHAPTER IV

SISTERS, COUSINS AND AUNTS:

MALE GUIDANCE AND FEMALE COUNSEL
Introduction

Arnolphe's dominion over Agnès and Chrysale's cowardice before Philaminte illustrate two types of master-slave or power relations within Molière's domestic comedies: parent-child and husband-wife. Some family members, however, act in an advisory or non-power capacity; they occasionally help out a sibling or a niece by appealing to the parent. In some cases, the suivante is so close to her mistress that her role seems to be more that of a "big sister" than merely that of a domestic. In *Le Tartuffe* and *Le Malade Imaginaire* traditional master-servant distinctions are less evident. On the other hand, the male advisory roles of Ariste in *Les Femmes Savantes* and the uncle of *Le Malade Imaginaire* are quite powerful and gain strengths that the father figure relinquishes.

In Molière's family comedies non-power relations can be viewed from four postures:

1. Male-male and female-female
2. Co-resident and non-co-resident
3. Antagonistic and sympathetic
4. Advisory and active (The *confidente* and the *entremetteuse*)

Males rarely counsel females. Young ladies confess their intimacies to a faithful maidservant or sympathetic *cousine*. The household head sometimes consents to receiving advice from a brother although he is reluctant to deviate from his own way of thinking. The feelings
of brotherhood and sisterhood are often quite strong in *Le Tartuffe* and *Le Malade Imaginaire*, yet fraternal relations are apt to be antagonistic and sister-sister talks to be sympathetic.

If the family member lives within the primary household, he is co-resident. *Mistress-savante* advisory relationships fall into this last category. Since brothers run their own household, male interviews are non co-resident. The last category is the degree of participation that the advisors elect; he or she may only tender a few words of advice or actively campaign in the advisee's behalf.

One of the above categories can be combined with others in the analysis of advisory roles. For example, Ariste and Sganarelle are non co-resident brothers of *L'Ecole des Maris* and their relations are anything but sympathetic. Generally, brother-brother advisory structures are antagonistic; they are always between males of two different households since the very definition of the nuclear family hinges on the separation of brother from brother and father from son upon the attainment of the youth's majority. On the other hand, *cousine-cousine* and mistress-servant interviews are between sympathetic members of the same household.

**Sisterhood: Female Counsel**

Only three domestic comedies contain some evidence of a co-resident sister-sister structure:\(^1\)

*Le Dépit Amoureux* (Ascagne-Lucinde)

*Les Femmes Savantes* (Henriette-Armande)

*Le Malade Imaginaire* (Angélique-Louison)
Do they have a female advisory relation? Ironically, all of them must be disqualified for one reason or another. In *Le Dépit Amoureux* Ascagne has disguised herself as a boy; the little advice she gives to Lucinde must be discounted since the latter is counting on her "brother" for brotherly advice. Ascagne is using her privileged position to dissuade her sister from pursuing the man whom she has secretly married. Of course, Lucinde is both ignorant of Ascagne's true sex and of the marriage.

The competition and mutual resentment between Henriette and Armande effectively prevent either one from entertaining a selfless desire to help out the other sister. The counsel Armande would give to Henriette is far from the other's best interests.

In *Le Malade Imaginaire* no antagonism exists between Louison and Angélique, however Molière obviously did not place a small child on stage to act as Angélique's confidante. The honor goes to Toinette who, in this final comedy by Molière, shows the best traditions of a Dorine and a Scapin combined. In I, iv and again in I, viii Angélique clearly states her dependence on Toinette for advice and help, "Ne m'abandonnez point, je te prie, dans l'extrémité où je suis" (I, viii).²

Genuine co-resident sister-sister structures are then non-advisory. Maidservants more than sisters fulfill the female advisory role. Toinette is but the last in a line of *suivantes* whose love for their mistresses and concern for fair play make them stand up before the household head. *Cousines*, too, give advice to the unfortunate young lady although they are much less in evidence than the helpful maidservant in the following list of nine plays hosting female counsel:
Female Counsel
(Con-resident Advisory Relationships)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Comedy</th>
<th>Mistress</th>
<th>Confidante</th>
<th>Household Position of Confidante</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>La Jalousie du Barbouillé</td>
<td>Angélique</td>
<td>Cathau</td>
<td>Servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Médecin Volant</td>
<td>Lucile</td>
<td>Sabine</td>
<td>Cousin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Dépit Amoureux</td>
<td>Lucile</td>
<td>Marinette</td>
<td>Servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ascagne</td>
<td>Frosine</td>
<td>Servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Cocu Imaginaire</td>
<td>Célie</td>
<td>&quot;Suivante de Célie&quot;</td>
<td>Servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Précieuses Ridicules</td>
<td>Magdelon</td>
<td>Cathos</td>
<td>Cousin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Tartuffe</td>
<td>Mariane</td>
<td>Dorine</td>
<td>Servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L'Amour Médecin</td>
<td>Lucinde</td>
<td>Lisette</td>
<td>Servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Dandin</td>
<td>Angélique</td>
<td>Claudine</td>
<td>Servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Malade Imaginaire</td>
<td>Angélique</td>
<td>Toinette</td>
<td>Servant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The intimacy inherent in the mistress-servant or cousin-cousin rapport can only arise through co-residence, thus the importance of the physical presence of the household. In addition, both women in many cases are young and contrast the older males—both seeking and giving guidance. Thirdly, the confidante’s engagement in the play's intrigue often displaces her initial advisory capacity. Both Sabine of Le Médecin Volant and Toinette of Le Malade Imaginaire are not only advisors but intermediaries and instigators as well. Advisors then can help defeat the father's hideous marriage decision by not only encouraging the daughter to resist but by taking part in the defensive struggle against authority.
Dorine's expert counseling of Mariane, her skillful handling of the dépit amoureux and her courage in defending the daughter's rights before the father constitute one of the high points in mistress-maid servant relations. Dorine is more a sister than a domestic. Toinette, too, displays an inventiveness that can only be equalled by a Mascarille or a Scapin.

The suivante before Dorine is less likely to be on an equal or big sister footing with her mistress. Moreover, the maidservant's role is often underplayed. Cathau in La Jalousie du Barbouillé is sharp-tongued and much like Claudine of George Dandin in her prompt willingness to collude with the young wife on how to deceive the husband. Yet, she speaks only in two scenes. Angélique is more independent than her namesake of George Dandin since she manages the lockout scene without her servant.

Sabine's roles are more varied in Le Médecin Volant. That she is an advisor is clear from the first when Valère begs of her, "Hé bien! Sabine, quel conseil me donneras-tu?" She has evidently been her cousin's confidante before the play's outset because both women have hatched a plot to thwart the paternal marriage choice. Molière thereby employs Sabine as counselor or entremetteuse between the two young lovers and as a means of telling the audience the intrigue in a few words. In this manner, the dramatist has efficiently combined several roles into one personage. 3

Although there is not a single cousin-cousin interview in Le Médecin Volant, the audience is aware that faithful Sabine is working for Lucile's best interests. It is she who intercedes with Valère and with her uncle. Together, both women forge the plan of feigned illness
and bogus doctor. Finally, it is the young confidente who introduces Sganarelle to the father and the would-be doctor to Lucile. Thus, Sabine is much more in evidence as manipulator than confidente. However, curiously enough, her function ends when she yields Sganarelle to her uncle and cousin. She then retires and leaves Sganarelle as the central personnage. The play's title can be misleading since the dupe mechanism consists in the cousin and Sganarelle. Had Sabine not set up the gambit, Sganarelle would not have been able to reap the profits.

Marinette in Le Dépit Amoureux is less successful as entremetteuse than she is as confidante. Her critical plotting goes astray due to the lover's quarrel after which her role is scaled down to essentially an advisory one. By cutting her active part, Molière has allowed the delightful complexities of the dépit amoureux to develop while focusing the spectator's attention on the antics of a single rascal, Mascarille.

Ascagne's Frosine is perhaps the most "secret-laden" confidante in Molière's repertory. By the end of II, i poor Frosine is weighed down with three secrets:

1. Ascagne is a girl.
2. Ascagne is in love with Valère.
3. Ascagne is Valère's wife.

Molière uses Frosine as the filter through which Ascagne's secrets are diffused to the audience. Whereas Marinette has some intermediary functions with Eraste and Gros René, Frosine is the pure confidante.  

Marinette and Frosine are both little more than mirrors of their mistresses. They fit more comfortably into the subordinate position of
the mistress-servant structure than do Toinette or Dorine. The anonymity of the suivante reappears in Le Cucu Imaginaire where the nameless maid-servant lures the spectator into thinking at first that the role is a minor one. However, at play's end the suivante clears up the quid pro quo by efficiently and calmly making each person reveal his or her part of the story. "Répondez-moi par ordre, et me laissez parler," she commands (Scène xxii, 576).

The suivante also appears at the short comedy's outset during which she counsels her mistress to follow her father's choice and not her heart. The servant is part of the paternal command structure and is at odds with the Molierèsque sympathetic counselor.

A bit later, she conveniently leaves her mistress in Sganarelle's arms and unleashes the chain of misunderstandings. The waiting maid is absent from the "mistaken identity" scenes that follow and appears thereafter to clear up the mystery. It is interesting that the two extremes of the power spectrum—household head and servant—are not involved in the quid pro quo; the "sandwich" part of the pyramid is composed of the bewildered couples:
The above sketch suggests the close and necessary interaction between young people, servants and parents that Molière designed in each play. Technical necessity dictated the presence of servants at the pyramid's base in order to help the lovers defeat the parental decision at the apex. The suivante of Sganarelle ou Le Cocu Imaginaire is clear-headed because she is detached from both the social status of the lovers and their situation. Like the maidservant of Le Dépit Amoureux, she is kept from being on an equal social footing with her mistress. Nevertheless, her double role of confidante and mystery solver anticipates the unmasking functions of Elmire, Ariste and Toinette of later plays.  

The affinity between Cathos and Magelon is worlds away from the opposition of the brothers in L'Ecole des Maris and the clashes of the sisters of Les Femmes Savantes. In Les Précieuses Ridicules, one cousin exists to defend the other's views before the father. This kind of double image is seen in almost all of the characters: two young masters, two wily servants and two cousins. 

The young précieuses spend less time in counseling each other than they do arguing with the father and cavorting with the two servants. Yet, one must imagine that prior to the play they have been dreaming about fanciful situations straight out of Clélie and giving each other advice on how to circumvent Gorgibus' will. Their reproachful remarks about the vile ignorance of servants are followed by a fitting sequence in which they frolic with the two servants as galant partners. All sense of propriety is unknowingly thrown to the winds when after a classical parent-child confrontation they amuse themselves with talented
but "lowly" domestics. The movement in the play is progressively downward from father to servants and reinforces the power hierarchy and the incongruity of master and servant.

_Le Tartuffe_ makes the imposter a "brother" of Orgon and Dorine, Mariane's sister. While the former structure is being opposed by most of the household, Mariane encourages Dorine's support and strength. The _suivante_ is no longer relegated to a small role. The advisory relationship is on a sister to sister basis where the maidservant's strong personality compensates for Mariane's timid and withdrawing character. Dorine's major contribution to _Le Tartuffe_ occurs in the second act during the father-daughter scene and the lovers' quarrel. She also ridicules Tartuffe's comportment in Act III, although her laughter is much more bitter than Nicole's wholesome outburst over Jourdain's extravagant costume.

Unlike Toinette, Dorine does not have a major part in the denouement. She is confident that Elmire can trick Tartuffe and devotes most of her time to her charge. From the third act to play's end, Molière leaves behind him the introductory advisory relationships of daughter/lover/maidservant and moves up the power scale to the absolute authority of Orgon-Tartuffe and the mitigating advisory roles of the uncle and the wife.

The more dependent the daughter, the more likely the maidservant will assume the role of "big sister." Lisette in _L'Amour Mèdecin_ counsels Lucinde with words that could have been pronounced by Dorine, "Allez il ne faut pas se laisser mener comme un oison" (I, iv). To Sganarelle, the father, she warns:
Laissez-moi faire, vous dis-je. Peut-être qu'elle
se découvrira plus librement à moi qu'à vous.
(I, ii)

Lisette has both Dorine's sisterly devotion and Toinette's resourcefulness. It is doubtless her stratagem behind her mistress' malingering that convokes the panoply of doctors in the second act and that gets the secretive Sganarelle accustomed to having his sacred household invaded by the outside world. The suivante next puts gameplan two into effect by introducing into the household the lover disguised as a learned doctor. She thus rises joyfully from confidante to entremetteuse and skillful household instigator.

Claudine is present in a total of nine scenes in George Dandin. She is the perfect soubrette to participate in her mistress' dubious activities. For one, she has somehow become attracted to the cumbersome figure of Lubin—the servant of her mistress' lover. From confidante to colluder and intermediary, Claudine both counsels Angélique and helps her plan further rendez-vous with Clitandre. The communications network from lover to lover operates through Claudine's relaying messages to Lubin. However the network breaks down and problems begin for the young women when the information is intercepted by Dandin who plays a sort of confidant to the stupid Lubin.

Claudine and Angélique are together throughout most of the play. They are partners in crime during the famous lockout scene in which they inveigle the husband to leave the sanctum of the inner household. Their knavery, however reprehensible, is a frontal assault against two aspects of the power hierarchy: marital authority invested in the husband, and parental discipline found in the Sotenvilles. Whereas in Le Médecin
Volant the dupe mechanism consists in a female cousin-male servant pair, the deception in George Dandin is carried out by the two women working not separately, but together. Here, Molière developed the preliminary advisory mistress-servant structure into a major opposition to the fatherhead. Where the issue is not marriage but the threat of adultery, the wife for the first and only time in Molière's domestic comedies has taken on a willing and capable assistant.

In Le Malade Imaginaire, Béline invites Toinette to be her confidante and co-conspirator against Argan and his family, but the suivante is too tied in to family loyalty. Toinette is the instrument of vengeance, the unmasker and the family preserver who combat Béline's destructive impulses. She is also Angélique's sole counselor within the household. Toinette has the clairvoyance to mascarade as Béline's confident and thus gleans much helpful intelligence.

Toinette's finest moment is also one of Molière's most ingenuous coups. In L'Amour Médecin Lisette's adeptness ushers in the lover disguised as a doctor. In Le Malade Imaginaire, Molière dispenses with the additional role of doctor by allowing Toinette the inventiveness to create it herself. A bogus doctor, she finds herself in the thick of the action and gives the father a well-deserved shaking. Then, in the denouement, Toinette is the meneur du jeu during the retributive unmasking of Béline. In Toinette, Molière had achieved a dexterous and extremely pleasing female character who is both sensitive and witty. By the end of his career, the playwright had greatly expanded the flexibility and novelty of women's roles in the bourgeois household and had escaped traditionally stifling structures.
After George Dandin, Molière elected not to reemploy co-resident female counsel until Le Malade Imaginaire. In many of the later plays, help comes not always from the inner household—the female advisor—but from an uncle outside the family or from a rogue servant. In conclusion, the presence of female counsel reinforced the concept of household—of the intimate foyer. Secondly, Molière used advisory "big sisters" to contradict the traditional master–servant power structure. Finally, the playwright reduced the number of household members by having maidservants act as these "big sisters" to their mistresses. Co-resident siblings, in some instances, could be quite inefficient in the play's machinery which centralized the intrigue on the parent/child/suivante triangle.

siblings: Ten Plays and Four Determinants

Most effective sibling relationships in Molière's domestic comedies are non co-resident. In Le Tartuffe Damis has very little to do with his sister Mariane. The young man chooses to go his own impetuous way whereas Mariane is under Dorine's wing. Sisterly antagonism in Les Femmes Savantes and Louison's tender age in Le Malade Imaginaire preclude effective sibling advisory structures in these plays. In Le Mariage Forcé, Alcidas says nothing to his sister although he is desirous of defending her honor in the oldest of Cornelian ways. The fifth and final co-resident revealed play is L'Avaré which shows a developed relationship between Cléante and Elise in I, ii; it is an exception to the above four. In this touching scene, both brother and sister reveal that they have secret lovers. The sequence underlines a solidarity between the two and resistance to the father which are absent in the brother–sister structures of Le Tartuffe and Le Mariage Forcé. Cléante concludes:
... et si vos affaires, ma soeur, sont semblables aux miennes, et qu'il faille que notre père s'oppose à nos désirs, nous le quitterons là tous deux et nous affranchirons de cette tyrannie où nous tient depuis si longtemps son avarice insupportable. (I, ii)

The vocabulary—"affranchirons," "tyrannie," "s'oppose"—evokes father-child relations whereas the collective "nous" suggests the sibling solidarity. Cléante's plea for a joining of forces is sadly lacking in humor and strangely disquieting. Moreover, it shows a divided household where brother and sister are both confidants and colluders.

The ten plays exhibiting sibling structures are broken down in the following chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secret</th>
<th>Revealed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Co-resident</strong></td>
<td><strong>Le Dépit Amoureux</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(<strong>Ascagne-Lucile</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Le Mariage Forcé</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(<strong>Alcidas-Dorimène</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>L'Avare</strong> (<strong>Cléante-Elise</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Le Tartuffe</strong> (<strong>Damis-Mariane</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Les Femmes Savantes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(<strong>Chrysale-Bélise</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(<strong>Armande-Henriette</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non</strong></td>
<td><strong>Le Malade Imaginaire</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Co-resident</strong></td>
<td>(<strong>Angélique-Louison</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L'Étourdi</strong></td>
<td>(<strong>Andrès-Célie</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<strong>Valère-Mariane</strong>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L'Avare</strong></td>
<td>(<strong>Sganarelle-Ariste</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<strong>Isabelle-Léonor</strong>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Les Fourberies de Scapin</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<strong>Léandre-Hyacinte</strong>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<strong>Octave-Zerbinette</strong>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Le Tartuffe</strong></td>
<td>(<strong>Elmire-Cléante</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Le Sicilien</strong></td>
<td>(<strong>Adraste-Climène</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Les Femmes Savantes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<strong>Chrysale-Ariste</strong>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Le Malade Imaginaire</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<strong>Argan-Béralde</strong>)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The chart shows a binary division of siblings into co-resident and non-co-resident. Generally, co-resident siblings are younger, the second generation, and living with their nuclear family. This status is in keeping with the very definition of the nuclear family; parents and children who are not yet married. There is never a co-resident brother-brother relation which could be tedious and violate both the nuclear family principle of one married male per household and the comedy's traditional father-daughter conflict. Only one play contains a co-resident secret sibling structure, (two or more siblings living under the same roof and ignorant of their relationship), Le Dépit Amoureux in which Ascagne is not discovered to be Lucile's sister until the play's end. Since Ascagne did not give her sister "female" counsel, the only effective sibling relationship in a co-resident situation is in L'Avaré.

In the non co-resident cases, three plays have unrevealed sibling structures. At the end of Les Fourberies de Scapin, two brothers find two sisters; the secrecy of the relationship enabled Molière to economize on roles and to introduce additionally the element of surprise at the dénouement. The deus ex machina is not only used in Le Dépit Amoureux but in L'Etourdi, L'Avaré and Les Fourberies de Scapin. Once again, in L'Ecole des Femmes, Agnès is put in possession of a father and uncle through last minute disclosures. Revealed sibling and parental ties at dénouement often resolve family conflict. They can prevent a marriage, give a daughter a complete family and lend to Ascagne, Agnès and the two girls of Les Fourberies de Scapin a certain pathos. The resulting new identities and strengthening of family ties reemphasize the bearing that families have on the intrigue in many of Molière's comedies.
Yet, in but four plays are the siblings old. They are all males and no doubt heads of their own household. Complementing the female counselors, they serve in a male guidance capacity, but higher up on the power spectrum. By being close to the head of the household, their influence is sometimes more coercive than advisory. Furthermore, male guidance is often unsolicited and unwelcome. Thus, differences between co-resident and non co-resident relationships are four in number:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-resident</th>
<th>Non Co-resident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathetic</td>
<td>Antagonistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory</td>
<td>Advisory to Coercive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young</td>
<td>Middle-aged to old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Brotherhood**

The middle-aged brother or uncle appears in only four domestic comedies. Three of them contain large households and occur late in Molière's career. The first brother-brother confrontation in the repertory is excruciatingly antagonistic in which Molière pits against one another two contending philosophies: the traditional or patriarchal sentiments of Sganarelle and the modern or feminist perspective that belongs to Ariste. Although Sganarelle is much more scathing in his replies, the antagonism does not come only from his side. Ariste is relentless in his explanation of the dictates of l'usage from which the older brother, like Alceste, would exempt himself. Sganarelle, perhaps more than his older and more liberated brother, realizes the irreconcilable differences between them when he implores:
D'élever celle-là vous prêtes le souci,
Et moi, je me chargeai du soin de celle-ci;
Selon vos volontés vous gouve nez la vôtre:
Laissez-moi, je vous prie, à mon gré régir l'autre.
(I, ii, 105-108)

When Isabelle has thoroughly duped Sganarelle into signing the contract
giving her in marriage to Valère, Ariste cannot help but offer a bitter-
sweet consolation with moral overtones: "Mon frère, doucement il faut
boire la chose: / D'une telle action vos procédés sont cause (III, ix,
1091-1092).

In *Le Tartuffe*, the "brothers" (brothers-in-law) are once again
non co-residential, middle-aged and antagonistic. Molière has transplanted
Ariste's reasonable or honnête home character somewhat into Cléante
although the latter is certainly not amorous of a young lady. Cléante is
moreover an uncle—a relation which Molière will exploit further in
*Le Tartuffe* in an advisory capacity and that he will use in a more active
status in *Les Femmes Savantes*.

Molière sets off Cléante as a foil to his brother-in-law in
*Le Tartuffe*. The opposition is evident in the exclusive interview of
over 160 lines between the brothers in which Cléante establishes that
Orgon can not distinguish between sincere and phoney devotion—an
eloquent appeal that contrasts the abrupt whirlwind departure of Madame
Pernelle in the opening scene. The interview's length shows the student
of *Le Tartuffe* that Molière had wanted to place more emphasis on the
brother-brother confrontation than on the father-daughter one. Because
of his favorable position in the power structure—a brother, male and
head of his household—Cléante should be more effective than either
children or servants in giving advice to Orgon. However, he is only
Orgon's brother-in-law and is not even the true uncle to the children of Orgon's first marriage. As one critic notices, "Neither Dorine nor Cléante is able to exercise any influence on Orgon." 13

Cléante fails in his initial talk with Orgon to get any commitment to Mariane's status; he is again powerless in his appeal to Tartuffe to reconcile an alienated father and son. During the family gathering in the fourth act, Orgon brushes away his brother-in-law's offer of advice: "Ils sont bien raisonnés, et j'en fais un grand cas; / Mais vous trouverez bon que je n'en use pas" (IV, iii, 1311–1312). Even at the play's end, royal intervention, rather than Cléante's help, saves the family from ruin.

The antagonism of brother-brother structures in Le Tartuffe vanishes in the matriarchy of Les Femmes Savantes in which the uncle plays not only an advisory but an assertive role. The danger or threat to family integrity and happiness comes from the mother who, curiously enough, lacks a female advisor. Bélise is more of a "sidekick" than an advisor of Philaminte who seems to function quite well without any one.

There are two major differences between the brother-brother unit of Les Femmes Savantes and the one in Le Tartuffe: Ariste does not philosophize like Cléante and the relationship between Ariste and Chrysale is sympathetic. Moreover, Ariste's role is more dynamic than Cléante's and will change from advisory to aggressive. Ariste will learn that advice is no substitute for action and will compensate for the lack of wily servants in the play.

Les Femmes Savantes is unique in that it represents three middle-aged siblings, two of whom--Bélise and Chrysale--are co-resident. Because of the even more interesting matriarchal structure, the males make
several blunders which set back their momentum. Clitandre, the young lover like Damis, exhorts the uncle to corner the household head and find out exactly where matters stand. However as both uncles discover, their advisory attempts fail.

Ariste's failure is not entirely his own fault since Clitandre has failed to convey to him Henriette's imprecation, "Le plus sûr est de gagner ma mère." The resulting initial brother-brother interview is refreshingly non-philosophical—a warmhearted and nostalgic reunion of two loving brothers who have nothing to hide from each other. Thus, the antagonism of L'Ecole des Femmes and Le Tartuffe is absent from the gaillardises of the two lusty brothers in Les Femmes Savantes. Bélise's entrance and recital of all her imaginary boy friends prolongs and heightens the revelry while it delays Chrysale's decision over Clitandre's request to marry Henriette. Although Chrysale's acceptance of Clitandre's modest income seems to contradict the bourgeois imperative of economic background, the father places either even greater value on his friendship with Clitandre's late father. Indeed, Chrysale is so carried away by his nostalgic memories of a former lusty freedom that he even deceives his brother and himself into thinking that the mother's agreement over his marriage choice is "une affaire faite."

The second interview is strangely lacking in the good-humored ease of the former and shows a tense confrontation between cowardly father and reproving uncle; the uncle this time is more coercive than advisory. Ariste is appalled at Chrysale's mollesse before Philaminte. From this point in the play, both uncle and daughter will encourage the father to stand up before the threatening matriarchal force.
In a later scene (III, vi), Ariste stands by and approves his brother's performance—the abrupt dismissal of the troublemaker Armande. Yet, it is doubtful whether Ariste continues to stand behind his words, "Fort bien: vous faites des merveilles." The uncle is conspicuously absent in the fourth act and during most of the last one in which he must be keeping tabs on Chrysale's progress. During this long absencia from the public he comes to realize the ineffectiveness of counseling and the necessity of action or trickery.

Molière has invested Ariste with the resourcefulness inherent in Toinette and Mascarille and saw no need to include mischievous domestics. The letters drawn up by the uncle and revealed at the denouement are the proper remedy to rout the money grasping poet from the household and to show Philaminte her blindness. Thus, the uncle enjoys a greater participation in the play's intrigue than Cléante of Le Tartuffe.

It is no doubt in Les Femmes Savantes that the playwright has created the most versatile and effective uncle character. Whereas the denouement hinges entirely on Ariste's inventiveness, the outcome of Le Malade Imaginaire is due to the involvement of two people: uncle and maidservant. Each will act in the way that he or she is best qualified. Toinette advises Béralde: "Laissez-moi faire: agissez de votre côté. Voici notre homme" (III, ii). For the uncle lies the avenue of reason, for Toinette dupery.

Béralde, true to the traditional avuncular role of Le Tartuffe and Les Femmes Savantes, initially supports or proposes the marriage choice to the household chief. His philosophizing is less about the hypocrisy of others than about the sickness inside Argan himself. The uncle's brief preliminary appearance at the end of the second act is
auspiciously followed by a Moorish dance after which, in an ample interview with his brother, the two discuss the marriage issue, Argan's illness and his disbelief in medicine. His counsel turns to action when he chases away Argan's pharmacist armed with syringe and threatening the "doctor's curse." The movement of the scene is in three stages:

1. **Counsel:** Argan is not sick
2. **Counsel:** Argan should stop taking medicine
3. **Action:** Béralde chases away the apothecary

The result of the action taken in the third step is Purgon's anger and his calling off the distasteful wedding plans. The uncle has thus accomplished objective number one: the thwarting of the marriage. Toinette will attain the other goal—Béline's exposure with the uncle as witness—after which Béralde will himself propose that his brother become a doctor. Not only will Argan be able to heal himself but he will eliminate the hordes of medical men that endanger the family's safety and welfare. The trust that the family places in the uncle is explicit in Angélique's final words approving the initiation game to be played on the father. She assures her lover that everything is acceptable, "puisque mon oncle nous conduit." In this household deprived of a generous father and decent mother, the uncle's function as family guardian takes on greater importance than in previous plays.

**Conclusion**

In the bourgeois families of Molière's comedies advisory relationships can be divided into two sets: female counsel and male guidance. By virtually excluding co-resident sisters in his early plays, Molière
was able to economize on roles and give the suivante or the cousin the function of confidente that would gradually develop into a big sister role in the personage of Dorine. With the advent of Le Tartuffe, the traditional power hierarchy was challenged by the almost equal footing given to both Dorine and Mariane. By treating each other as sisters, both mistress and maidservant refused to observe the traditional dominantsubmissive structures, a tacit revolt that in its own way helped to win their cause. In George Dandin as in La Jalousie du Barbouillé the suivante becomes not only a confidant but an instigator as well. By Le Malade Imaginaire the playwright had extended the variety of female roles within the household to include Toinette; companion, combattant, and meneur du jeu.

Complimentary to the female advisory roles are the male counselors—from the witty Mascarille and Scapin to the brother of the household chief. Brother-brother structures are principally non co-resident, antagonistic and situated on a much higher position on the power ladder than female counsel. In addition, brothers are middle-aged.

Co-resident siblings are important in the intrigue of few plays; Cléante in L'Avare is the exception. Many times they are ineffective; Damis and Mariane in Le Tartuffe must rely on other household and family members for help. Non co-resident siblings,—namely brothers—can be equally ineffective; Cléante of Le Tartuffe and Ariste of L'Ecole des Maris do not succeed in winning over their brothers through counsel and philosophizing. Ariste of Les Femmes Savantes succeeds only after he realizes offstage that the best resort is action and not pep talks.

Male guidance and female counsel structures rarely are found together in the same play. In Le Tartuffe Dorine and Cléante work within
his or her own sphere, whereas in *Le Malade Imaginaire* Toinette's actions complement those of Béralde. The low power ratio of female counsel compared to the high advisory position of male guidance tends to keep the two structures divorced.

Molière uses brotherhood and sisterhood for several reasons. One, the advisory or coercive interview compensates for the paucity of husband-wife and parent-child confrontation in some plays. Two, the confidant is the brother through whom secrets are revealed to the audience. Thirdly, uncles, "big sister" maidservants and cousins—through either their counsel or action—can help circumvent the father's will. They are all on the female or enlightened side of the power conflict. Ariste would then intervene in the husband-wife politics of *Les Femmes Savantes* just as Claudine would dare to correct the unfair power ratio of man and wife in *George Dandin*.

Only the latter large family comedies make use of the uncle. They also illustrate much sociability. The presence of Mme Perneile and the uncles in *Le Tartuffe*, *Les Femmes Savantes* and *Le Malade Imaginaire* reinforces the identity of the household by delineating between the nuclear family and exterior relations. Their presence also counterbalances in part the invading forces of doctors, lawyers and other parasites in *Le Tartuffe* and later plays. Yet they also contribute to family unity and cohesiveness. This seeming paradox of household identity through sociability and family cohesiveness through turmoil is the key to cementing together both power and advisory structures within the bourgeois families of Molière's comic universe. The paradox is most explicit in *Le Tartuffe*. 
CONCLUSION
Sociability and the Household

"One is tempted to conclude that sociability and the concept of the family were incompatible and could develop only at each other's expense." Ph. Ariès, Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life (P. 407)

Professor Guicharnaud remarks of Le Tartuffe, "La famille y apparaît comme un bloc."¹ In other domestic comedies Molière was content to introduce family members one by one; he has chosen in Le Tartuffe rather to greet the audience with the collective unit or mass after which household members are to assert themselves individually.²

Not only does the spectator confront the entire family in the first two acts of Le Tartuffe, but he is conscious of the physical presence of the household—the ambiance of a wealthy bourgeois home in mid-seventeenth century Paris. Although prior comedies had concentrated more on widower-child or guardian-ward relationships and the resulting intrigues and misunderstandings, Molière occasionally saw fit to use the house as a cadre for dramatic reasons. The door scenes of La Jalousie du Barbouillé and George Dandin require the physical structure of a house that would shelter and protect errant wives, and symbolically draw the line between innocence and guilt. In Le Médecin Volant, Sabine refers to a garden house that gives added dimensions to Gorgibus' residence. There are also brief stage allusions to the house as a set in Sganarelle ou Le Cocu Imaginaire and L'Etourdi.³

Most domestic comedies before Le Tartuffe do not have a centralized household. Sganarelle ou Le Cocu Imaginaire and L'Ecole
des Maris portray two "families" while never developing the household presence of either. Sganarelle in L'Ecole des Maris leaves the sanctity of his own house to visit the residences of Ariste and Valère; his galavanting thus detracts from the concept of household.

In L'Ecole des Femmes matters seem to improve. There is but one parent-guardian couple living in one house. Arnolphe certainly seems to have cut off Agnès from society, a theme already announced in Trufaldin's comments in L'Etourdi (I, iv). Arnolphe's hermitic existence would preclude the social visits of others were it not for Horace's insistence on invading the "fortress" household to see his beloved. Despite the lack of a "real" family in L'Ecole des Femmes, Molière had given the audience the feeling of a household--nearly impenetrable and inviolate--coming to grips with sociability's menacing exterior forces.

Households in Molière's comedies depict the wealthy bourgeois family of the mid 1600's. Although the household is intended to be a protection against the ills of the outside world, it will not shelter the family against the many people that fatherheads usher in. The network of power and advisory relationships, then, takes place within the father's salon and not outside the ménage. The playwright's desire to underline the presence of the bourgeois salon is readily understood in Le Tartuffe; where there are no outside scenes, the entire intrigue takes place within the walls of Orgon's house. At the end of the play, even the king's sheriff himself must enter the household.

In Le Tartuffe the spectator has ample opportunity to become acquainted with the family since it is the highlight of the first two acts. In the first act, Molière dwells on the inner domain of the household through Madame Pernelle's vicious "Sortez" and the use of
"céans" that reappears in verses 45, 62 and 80. "Chez nous" and "chez soi" also reinforce the concept of household. Later on, the words will reappear in Orgon’s mouth when he orders Tartuffe to vacate the premises, "Dénichons de céans (1554) and, "Il faut, tout sur-le-champ, sortir de la maison" (1556). Ironically, M. Loyal also uses the word "céans," and strikes a nerve when he refers to the keys that Orgon must turn over to him.

Tableaux, too, reinforce the idea of an inner family. Two times does Orgon’s family convene: at first, to dissuade a relentless father from giving Mariane away to the hypocrite, and secondly, during the denouement, to unite before a common crisis.

Before composing Le Tartuffe, Molière had experimented primarily with father-daughter structures. The idea of infiltrating a bourgeois family with a faux dévot who would fool only the father and grandmother must have particularly motivated him to create an exceptionally large and interlocking web of relations. He was thus departing from traditional structures by enlarging the family, by introducing a grandmother, and by expanding the role of the uncle.4

In this family of three generations, relatives would bind themselves together against the dual ignominy of Orgon-Tartuffe. Family conflict is suggested at the play’s outset; the alienation between the grandmother and the rest of the family anticipates Orgon’s antipathy to the household and his blind devotion to Tartuffe. More clues indicate that the imposter is much more than a lodger: "pouvoir tyrannique," "Il contrôle tout," and "faire le maître." Orgon’s own words—"Et je verrois mourir frère, enfants, mère et femme / Que je
m'en soucierois autant que de cela" (I, v, 278-279)—demonstrate the schism that has formed between male and female segments of the family.

Prior to Le Tartuffe, sexist opposition was inherent in the widower/daughter structures, but since Molière avoided the depicting of a larger or "complete" family, the binary opposition was on a minute scale. With the advent of the household the size of Orgon's, the family members broke off into two groups—the male or traditionally blind segment and the female or enlightened portion. Male and female elements are thus used to represent authoritativeness and liberation respectively. In Le Tartuffe, the fragmentation is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Invader</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orgon</td>
<td>Tartuffe</td>
<td>Elmire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madame Pernelle</td>
<td>Tartuffe</td>
<td>Cléante</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mariane</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Damis</td>
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<td>Dorine</td>
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<td>Valère</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The overwhelming "female" side is of course composed of all but the traditional male powers vested in Orgon and his "patriarchal" mother. In Le Tartuffe, women and children have the power to resist and defy the authoritative head. However, even with Elmire's well-meaning trickery, royal intervention is necessary.

Tartuffe's progressive usurpation of the family powers is the means of measuring the degree to which Orgon's household erodes during the play. There are seven episodes that show Tartuffe's augmentation of powers:

1. Tartuffe's lodger status (Moves closer to Orgon)

2. T. alienates Orgon from family (Male and female binary opposition)
3. T. lusts for Orgon's wife
4. T. to marry Orgon's daughter
5. T. takes the place of Orgon's son (Orgon disinherits Damis, makes T. heir)
6. T. (via lawyer) delivers eviction notice to family
7. T. (via king's sheriff) attempts to imprison Orgon

In episodes one and two, the alienation promotes family fragmentation and polarization of the male and female segments. In each of the following three episodes (#3-#5), Tartuffe jeopardizes the position and welfare of each family member, one by one. He would replace Orgon's son and Mariane's bridegroom at the same time while depriving Damis of his inheritance right. The imposter furthermore covets his future mother-in-law, an incestful act.

The beginning of the end for Tartuffe occurs with the exposure scene, Elmire's skillful ploy that eliminates Tartuffe's designs on both herself and her stepdaughter (episodes #3 and #4). However, Elmire can not turn about Damis' disinheritance; Tartuffe's control of the family estate plus his knowledge of a damming piece of history in Orgon's past place him in the privileged position from which he can make two moves—family eviction and the royal arrest of Orgon. Both maneuvers are offensives directed against the family rather than the individual.

In no other family comedy is the peril that confronts the household so real and potentially tragic. Although L'Avare might contain "le sujet le plus sinistre," Le Tartuffe remains the most treacherous of Molière's domestic comedies because it portrays two
odious males who would strip the family of both its social and economic rights. This "real" family crisis is thus felt more keenly than Harpagon's tyranny. Tartuffe's threat not only moves an indignant audience, but it unites a divided family. The first family gathering in Act IV is a collective attempt to mellow Orgon into submission. The second assembly puts an end to family schism during which father joins forces with his family before the common menace. Nowhere else in the play is family identity so clearly demonstrated.

In Le Tartuffe, sociability is represented in the personage of the imposter. How the family behaves is largely determined by the amount of control that the father relinquishes to the outside invader. Orgon, like Monsieur Jourdain and Argan, would compromise his family's identity and solidarity by catering to sociability. By introducing someone into the household, the father would not only endanger his family's happiness, but muddle the family's identity. In Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, husband cares naught for his household's welfare and want his bourgeois family to become lost amidst the myriad of "aristocratic" activities with which he pampers himself. Madame Jourdain, on the other hand, insists on the independence and function of the bourgeois family—to raise children properly and to get them married to those who are within their own economic and social stratum.

That Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme is the most sociable of Molière's domestic comedies is confirmed by a look at the author's dramatis personae. Aside from containing the obvious nuclear family, the household receives at one time or another: Cléonte and Ccvilie; the noble Dorante and Dorimène; tutors of music, dance, philosophy and
fencing; an expert tailor and two lackeys. In small writing at the 
bottom of the credits page, Molière has included the full increment to 
accompany the above masters: "Plusieurs musiciens, musiciennes, joueurs 
d'instruments, danseurs, cuisiniers, garçons, tailleurs, et autres 
personnages des intermèdes et du ballet." Jourdain's household clearly 
becomes a carnival—a very sumptuous comédie-ballet.

Whereas the imposter's delayed entrance in Le Tartuffe emphasizes 
family cohesiveness during the first two acts, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme 
is constructed in quite the opposite manner. Since the appearance of 
the household is postponed until the third act, one receives the 
impression that sociable activities take preeminence over family ones. 
In this way Madame Jourdain's fears are well-founded—that her husband's 
ilusions will displace practical family matters. Nevertheless, as one 
scholar has indicated, the wife is perfectly capable of running the 
household without Jourdain's interference.7

Madame Jourdain has to contend with many forces: her husband's 
fancies, Dorante and Dorimènes, the host of private tutors. Monsieur 
Jourdain, Orgon and Argan, each in his own way exemplifies the 
fashionable pursuit of a fad—good manners, good devotion and a well-
nursed pancreas. Since the gratification cannot come from within the 
household, Orgon brings in a lodger and Jourdain and Argan import a 
bevy of instructors, doctors and pharmacists. Yet, if one leaves the 
opinionated world of the Jourdains, he can perhaps see that the invasion 
of sociability has both a positive and negative value. Although 
sociability poses a threat to family identity, it also, paradoxically, 
helps to delineate and define the household. Because the invaders tend 
to alienate the father from household obligations, the family can
become fragmented and compromised. On the other hand, a completely isolated household, as Arnolphe would have it, is undesirable, incestual and contrary to the bourgeois prerogative of a sound alliance of two wealthy houses through marriage; the desired consequences would be wealth transfer and perpetuation of the line. Sociability is beneficial to Elmire and Ariste of L'Ecole des Maris who both enjoy its opportunity to entertain and exchange ideas about the world. Alceste considered sociability an enemy; this "enemy" was one of the cornerstones of seventeenth century préciosité. Too much sociability, however, could usher in a Tartuffe, a Trissotin or a Dorante.

The concept of household strengthened towards the end of Molière's career. As the author began to invest his plays with a more complex set of family relations, sociability and household took on greater roles and meaning. In Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, Molière treats society as spectacle in a salon that receives both bourgeois tutors and the leisured noble estate. The outside element has taken over the household so extensively that the family is conspicuously absent from the first two acts. Yet, in later scenes, one remarks the contest between sociability and household, each trying to come out ahead of the other. Both Nicole and Madame Jourdain (HOUSEHOLD) equate Jourdain's quest (SOCIABILITY) with disorder: "Toutes vos compagnies font tant de désordre céans, que ce mot est assez pour me mettre en mauvaise humeur" (III, ii). "Ce mot" is compagnie or the household infiltrators. "Céans" is one of several indications of the sacred inner domain of the household that the women wish to honor. According to the female element, Jourdain is not selective enough as to what company he should invite:
Jourdain: Ne dois-je point pour toi fermer ma porte à tout le monde?

Nicole: Vous devriez au moins la fermer à certaines gens.

(III, ii)

Monsieur Jourdain, George Dandin and Monsieur de la Souche are each in his own way attracted to the glamor of the aristocracy. Although Arnolphe merely adopts a noble title, Dandin gets little more than "de la Dandinière" for marrying the Sotenville's daughter. Jourdain, however, has much deeper aspirations in that he would both emulate aristocratic tastes and entertain his noble "peers." The first two acts are thus devoted to his aim of educating himself in the arts of a gentleman. To accomplish this feat, he turns half of his household into a conservatory.

The third act sets off the clash between Madame Jourdain and the "noble" pair of Jourdain and Dorante. Like Dandin and Sotenville, the exchange of money for name is the basis of the entente between Jourdain and the count, the bourgeois once again being the dupe of the aristocracy. Jourdain will graciously loan money to Dorante in order to ingratiate himself with his new "brother." However, like Monsieur de Sotenville, Dorante is not willing to recognize his dupe as a fellow nobleman. Whereas Jourdain is in a no man's land between the third estate and nobility, his wife is never in doubt as to the rightful social and economic sphere of the household. Here, the rational female element opposes the male segment, blind to the true nature of one aspect of the aristocracy personified in Dorante.

When, in the fourth act, Jourdain entertains the aristocracy, he is not only accomplishing his second goal of applying his lessons
to "high society," but he is continuing his efforts to establish the supremacy of sociability over family life in his household. His wife will discover that Covielle and Cléonte use sociability to further the ends of the family by promoting the Mammamouchi ceremony. Jourdain then has left the salons of seventeenth century would-be aristocratic life to enter the more thrilling world of Turks and Paladins. For Jourdain, the exotic ceremony far surpasses the gentlemanly arts of philosophy and introducing oneself to a marquise, and is a fitting conclusion to his travels in the land of make-believe.

Sexist opposition or the deployment of forces into male and female camps is the case for the households of both Le Tartuffe and Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme. On one side is the male authoritative function of family compromiser. On the other, the female "preserver" instinct consisting in women, children and servants who move toward a more distinct and concrete representation of the family. It is the role of the female camp to detect and chase from the household the frauds and parasites, society's ill members posing a threat to family integrity. In Les Femmes Savantes sociability and household presence are again keynotes in the power struggle between men and women, husband and wife. This time, the women are unreasonable and blind to the truth, a novel twist; yet many of the former ingredients are still present: binary opposition, sociability's parasite and family crisis at the denouement.

In Le Malade Imaginaire, the action takes place within the household—a point which has prompted one critic to remark, "La demeure d'Argan est bien close." Although it is true that Argan keeps his daughter under close surveillance and that his apartment is worlds
away from Jourdain's salon, the continual entry and exit of doctors and notaries does not attest to a sealed off existence. Argan suffers from a good case of narcissism like many of the fathers in Molière's later plays. His physical well-being is ministered to by the invasion of medics and the household attentions of his wife. Béline, for her own selfish reasons, essays to convince her husband to send both daughters off to a convent. She colludes openly with husband and notary on how to deprive the children of their lawful inheritance share. Each time she coos to Argan, it is with the hope that each breath will be his last. Argan's household is thus beset with a double threat both exterior and interior, the medical world and Béline's machinations. Narcissistic father and hideous step-mother leave but little hope for a stable family. Molière's creation of the sprightly Toinette offsets the double deficiency of the parents. Toinette exposes the step-mother while the uncle Béralde takes up the slack to scare off the Diafoirus pair and other medics; both contribute in stemming the woes of harmful sociability in the household.

The Bourgeois Family as Collective Unit

The analysis of family structure in Molière's comedies can shed new light on the long-standing argument over whether Molière was defending or attacking the bourgeois element of his society. Critics who would point out Molière's "anti-bourgeois" attitude, draw the reader's attention to the raft of ridiculous bourgeois father-head figures. However, if one chooses to examine not the individual bourgeois patriarchs but rather the family or group, the picture
changes. At the end of Le Tartuffe, royal intervention recognizes the family's innocence and the imposter's fraud. Tartuffe's capture assures Mariane and Dumas happy marriages and the rightful transmission of the patrimony. It seems that in family comedies Molière is concerned not only with providing good comic substance to the audience but also in providing for the family's welfare. Only in one comedy will there be a forced marriage and yet it is so constructed that Sganarelle of Le Mariage Forcé gets what he deserves. If the identity and happiness of the bourgeois household are compromised by sociability, those exterior elements are purged either by a family member's trickery or by happenstance.

In George Dandin and Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, the author mocks not only the bourgeois but the aristocrats as well. Dorante profits from Jourdain's naïveté by borrowing and spending the family's money on lavish banquets. In a similar way, Tartuffe and Sotenville cling to their hosts like leeches. Clearly, "noble" sociability is threatening the family's well-being. It would seem that Molière has elected to find foibles in both bourgeois and aristocratic characters in order to fetch laughter; he is not aiming to discredit exclusively one particular social stratum. Moreover, it does not follow that an unfavorable view of one stubborn bourgeois patriarch would cast aspersions on the entire family striving to ensure its own happiness. Underneath Madame Jourdain's jabs and Dorine's refreshingly earthy humor lies the serious concern of the future economic and social disposition of the household. The female element of the bourgeois family greatly helps in defeating the image of a ridiculous household. Enlightened female characters, be they
Agnès or Isabelle archetypes, contrast the father's pompous unreasonableness with their own air of dignity and their sensible nature.

Madness was considered one of the roots of family disorganization and could possibly lead to social disorder and a threat to the state's stability. If a demented father abuses those family powers delegated him by the state, then both the family and the monarchy itself suffers, and both the patriarch and the supreme powers are to be held accountable. The victim, the family, is certainly not to blame. Thus, one can perhaps see Molière's exposure of the dangers inherent in too much patriarchal authority as a subtle attack on the monarchy—the family cell, of course, being the basic unit of the power structure commanded by Louis XIV, a patriarch himself. In any case, Molière's satire of the single male or female does not imply a collective "poke" at the bourgeois family unit, victim of an abuse of power.

Molière and the Eighteenth Century Concept of Household

Le Tartuffe, a three generation family play, contains a wealth of power and advisory relationships. By situating parent-child, husband-wife and advisory relations within the household, the student of Molière will come to see the family as a filter which both accepts and rejects the sociable activities of the world. The family, like Elmire and Madame Jourdain, is a preserver. Curiously enough, it is not always at odds with sociability. Sociability can thus both muddle the family's identity and oblige the household to band together to fight a common obstacle; the outside world is also necessary to perpetuate alliances between houses. Phillipe Ariès, the family historian, has remarked:
Yet this seventeenth century family was not the modern family: it was distinguished from the latter by the enormous mass of sociability which it retained. Where the family existed, that is to say in the big houses, it was a centre of social relations, the capital of a little complex and graduated society under the command of the pater-familias.

The modern family, on the contrary, cuts itself off from the world and opposes to society the isolated group of parents and children. All the energy of the group is expended on helping the children to rise in the world individually and without any collective ambition: the children rather than the family.¹¹

The seventeenth century placed an emphasis on sociability rather than privacy. Although the family of the century existed as a reality, "it did not exist as a concept."¹²

How do Molière's domestic comedies relate to this definition?

Clearly, the sociability of Le Tartuffe and later plays is a seventeenth century recreation. Yet Ariès indicates that another characteristic of the modern family—taking shape in the eighteenth century—is the preference of the children's welfare to the transmission of property. Thus, the Molière criterion of marriage by free consent favors the children and is more in line with the eighteenth century notion of family.

In Molière's last comedies one is struck by the glaring paradox of rampant sociability coexistent with a viable concept of household and of family solidarity. This double presence is contrary to Ariès' conclusion that sociability and the concept of family were incompatible. Thus, one has the feeling that Molière's bourgeois comedies show a special universe all their own. In the first two acts of Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, privacy scarcely existed; the house was open at all hours
to callers and tutors. Yet, Madame Jourdain supports the growing concept of family despite the invaders—a notion initiated in *Le Tartuffe* and developed in later plays.

Molière's domestic comedies thereby belong to their own age and their own world—in between two centuries of transitional family values. Indeed, family solidarity, the concern for the children's welfare and the Molière criterion of free-consent marriage seem to be closer to the eighteenth than the seventeenth century. Secondly, the eighteenth century's emphasis on privacy and individualism with its denial of "open house" brimming over with masters and servants fails to agree with the myriad of family relationships in several of Molière's domestic comedies. However, Molière is often faithful to his century in the depicting of précieuses, savantes, and the allure of society.

Thus, family structures in Molière's comedies combine elements from both seventeenth century and eighteenth century modern households. The playwright is at the crossroads of two ages in which the household will become more insular and independent of the outside world. While not forsaking the sociable inclinations of the household members, Molière has skillfully blended a host of power and advisory relationships into a tightly knit family unit that anticipates the intimacy of the eighteenth century foyer.

**Family Structure Analysis: In Retrospect**

A brief look at the titles—*L'Avare*, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, *Le Malade Imaginaire*—explains why many of Molière's comedies lend themselves so well to character analysis. Indeed one can understandably be
tempted to discuss the psychological complexities of the monomanias
of Harpagen, Monsieur Jourdain, Argan and a host of other father figures
whose aberrant yet colorful behavior frequently eclipses the activities
of others.

However, this study has illustrated the value of group or family
structure analysis--i.e., indicating and discussing both power and advisory
relationships within the bourgeois households of twenty comedies. As
Molière's talents in composing effective comedy developed, so also did
the structure of the household and family. One milestone in the
evolution of family structure was the increase in the number and
importance of women's lines in Les Précieuses Ridicules--breaking with
the traditional patriarchy/suppressing/women roles of L'Etourdi and
Le Dépôt Amoureux. Thereafter, in the two Ecoles, an equilibrium of
sorts was reached between male and female roles. Molière continued to
invent many of his female characters with enlightened and crafty
personalities--similar to those of Agnès and Isabelle. Thus, modification
in the family structure did not come about through the patriarchy--
which remained relatively static and fixed in the role of unreasonable
and blind household head--but rather through the women. Molière thus
initiated binary opposition between female and male segments of the
family: mobile and enlightened versus fixed and reactionary.

In both husband/wife and father/child structures, the growth
of the woman was achieved to the detriment of the man's absolute
authority. Thus, Agnès' independence of Arnolphe was followed by
revolts by Mariane, Lucinde, Isidore and Harpagen's children. As the
father's behavior became either laughable or contemptible it moreover
became the woman's responsibility to keep the family together. In this sense, the mothers—Elmire and Madame Jourdain—are family preservers. Their strength develops in proportion to their husband's weakness and inability to manage the family.

The build-up in the importance given to women's roles and their intelligence was accompanied by the playwright's move from depicting widower-child structures in the early comedies to creating a larger, more complex family on stage. Molière experimented with both nuclear and extended families in order to incorporate nieces, aunts, uncles, in-laws and even a grandmother in his plays. Quite frequently, parent-child relations are secondary to the intrigue of other family members and servants and to the father's pursuit of his obsession. Thus, the change in women's roles, in the type of family and the concept of household determined the behavior of the family in Molière's comedies. The outcome of such a transition—defiance of family authority—produced a weakening of master-servant ties that anticipated not only the eighteenth century but its theatrical giant—Beaumarchais. Yet, perhaps Suzanne and Figaro are more likely to enjoy an equitable or non-power relationship than the myriad of lovers in Molière's comedies. Although Molière insisted on the criterion of free choice in marriage, one wonders how the marriages of the young people will fare. Structured into an authoritative environment, the girls are passed from paternal to marital control. One noteworthy example—Clitandre's disparaging comments about the education of women in *Les Femmes Savantes* are hardly reassuring; his century precludes him from being as liberated as Figaro. Nevertheless, the central impetus in the domestic comedies seems to be toward a modernization or uplifting in family relations: marriages for
love, the ridicule and defiance of traditional authority and a pervading wholesomeness that makes Molière's comedies eternally invigorating and alive. True, the flexibility of Molière's art certainly lies in his dynamic and creative genius. Yet it is interesting to ponder that perhaps in choosing the bourgeois family as a dramatic structural unit, Molière found the means to liberate himself from stifling aristocratic comedies and to renew the lively tradition of French farce through his entry into the untrammeled world of the bourgeois household.
APPENDIX
FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN "ARISTOCRATIC" PLAYS

Category I: PARENT–CHILD

Les Fâcheux  
La Princesse d'Elide  
Dom Juan  
Mélicerte a  
Les Amants Magnifiques  
La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas

Les Fâcheux  
La Princesse d'Elide  
Dom Juan  
Mélicerte a  
Les Amants Magnifiques  
La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas

Damis (uncle)  
Iphitas  
Dom Luis  
Lycarsis  
Aristione  
The Countess  
Orphis (niece)  
The Princess  
Dom Juan  
Myrtil  
Erphile  
The Count

Category II: HUSBAND–WIFE

L'Impromptu de Versailles  
Dom Juan  
Amphitryon b

Molière  
(Dr. Niccolo)  
Dom Juan  
Amphitryon

Mlle Molière  
Elvire  
Alcmène

Category III: SIBLINGS

Dom Juan  
Dom Garcia de Navarre c  
Psyché

Dom Juan  
Dom Garcia de Navarre c  
Psyché

Dom Carlos  
Dom Alphonse  
Aglaure

Dom Alone  
Elvire  
Cidippe Psyché

Category IV: COUSINS

La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes  
La Princesse d'Elide  
Le Misanthrope

Uranie  
The Princess  
Célimène

Elise  
Aglante  
Eliante

a- Lycarsis becomes more tolerant during the play  
b- Second husband and wife couple are domestic  
c- Dom Alphonse and Elvire are unaware of their relationship until the play's end. 203
NOTES

Introduction:


2 Philippe Ariès, Centuries of Childhood, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage Books, 1962). Ariès has discovered that the concept of childhood came into existence after the Middle Ages. In opposition to certain historians' view of the family as a weakened and broken-down structure, the author sees in the phenomenon a forceful and separate entity originating in the bourgeoisie of the ancien régime and reaching out afterwards into the working class (p. 10).

3 The excellent regional study by Pierre Goubert, Beauvais et les Beauvaisais de 1600 à 1730 (Paris: SEVPEN, 1960), treats the loi de coutume of Beauvais and furnishes statistical data on mean household size and marriages of wealthy bourgeois houses. A very readable and accurate account of parents and children in France under the ancien régime is Roland Mousnier, La Famille, l'enfant et l'éducation en France (Paris: CDU, 1975), a series of enlightening lectures that synthesizes both old and recent demographic data. In the past few years, two journals have devoted entire issues to articles on the family. XVIIe Siècle, No. 102-103 (1974), has yielded information on birth rates, father-son links, infant mortality tallies and marrying ages. Finally, Annales, Economies, Sociétés, Civilisation (juillet-octobre, 1972), contains articles dealing with the problem of the existence of nuclear versus extended families in seventeenth century France. It is interesting to add at this point that no single study has, as of yet, been devoted to a reconstruction of the seventeenth century bourgeois family in France.

4 Ariès, op. cit., p. 356.


6 Ibid., p. 9.

Ibid., p. 5.


9 Bourgeois were subject to the income tax; however, the noblesse de robe could exempt themselves. See Pierre Goubert, L'Ancien Régime: La société (Paris: Colin, 1969), I.


Ibid., p. 126.


Ibid., p. 974.

Ibid., p. 973.


François Lebrun, *Les Hommes et la mort en Anjou aux XVIIe et aux XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Mouton, 1971), p. 187. Professor Lebrun's figures are confirmed by another demographer, R. Mandrou, *La France aux XVIIe et aux XVIIIe siècles*, p. 96. Mandrou mentions that of the ten to fifteen births which were frequent in many families, only six or seven survived. In the seventeenth century the average life span did not exceed twenty-two or twenty-three years.


Ibid., p. 171.

See Jean-Louis Flandrin, "La Cellule familiale et l'oeuvre de procréation dans l'ancienne société," *XVIIe Siècle*, No. 102-103 (1974), p. 3. The father in ancient times could bring up, disinherit, sell or kill his children at will.

Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 354.


32 Ibid., p. 33.

33 Ibid., p. 37.

34 Ibid., p. 37.


36 Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 332.


39 It is of course Ariès' principal tenet that sociability and the concept of the family are incompatible and that one could only develop at the other one's expense.

40 Ourliac and Malafosse, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

41 Hunt, *Parents and Children in History*, p. 60.


43 Ibid., p. 116.

44 Ibid., p. 116.

45 Ourliac and Malafosse, *op. cit.*

46 The five major pieces of legislation:

1. Royal Edict of 1556
2. Ordonnance de Blois: 1579
3. Code Michau: 1629
4. Déclaration de 1639
5. Déclaration de 1697
Hunt, op. cit., p. 65.


Gousse, op. cit., p. 52.


For this idea, see especially Flandrin, "La Cellule familiale"; also see Gousse, op. cit., p. 53.


Ibid., p. 49.

Bertin, Les Mariages dans l'ancienne société, p. 603.

Pierre Goubert, Beauvais et les Beauvaisais, p. 322.

Ibid., p. 322.

Ibid., p. 323. There is no relationship between the Pocquelins of Goubert's work and the family of Molière.

Laslett, Household and Family in Past Time, pp. 61, 70. The MHS rarely exceeds 5.

Audiger cited in Georges Mongrédien, La Vie quotidienne sous Louis XIV, p. 60.

Castan, "Pere et fils en Languedoc à l'époque classique," p. 35.

Mousnier, La Famille, l'enfant et l'éducation en France et en Grande Bretagne, p. 156.
NOTES

Chapter I:

1La Pastorale Comique, of which we possess a small fragment, is the only one of thirty-three plays by Molière which does not contain two characters who are related. There are cousins in La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes and Le Misanthrope, an uncle-niece structure in Les Fâcheux where the uncle takes on the role of guardian much like Arnolphe and a brother-sister relationship between Dom Alphonse and Elvire in Dom Gariè de Navarre—an undeveloped structure since it is not revealed until the play's end. Perhaps the most curious relationship is the one between Molière-mari and Mlle. Molière, his wife, in L'Impromptu de Versailles. Molière plays the authoritative and unreasonable husband, "Taisez-vous ma femme, vous êtes une bête." Karolyn Waterson, Molière et l'autorité: Structures sociales, structures comiques (Lexington: French Forum, 1976), p. 41, observes that Molière the playwright pokes fun at Molière-mari, "Molière-mari se rend de plus en plus risible par son incapacité à détruire les arguments de sa femme." A list of the family relationships in the twelve plays not studied is furnished in the appendix.

2Just as so much of the action in Corneille's comedies takes place outdoors. La Galerie du Palais and La Place Royale contain little "concept of household."

3Argan, Cathos and Magdelon and Monsieur Jourdain all demonstrate a need for society. The household can never be so protective as to forbid any commerce with the outside world or it will become a prison—Arnorlpe's attempt to isolate Agnès failed.


6One wonders about the dépaysement, the setting of the play in Sicily. Certainly, as Jouanny in Œuvres complètes de Molière, II (Paris: Garnier, 1962), p. 87, states, the setting is achieved to provide a symbolic simplification of Mascarille, Arnolphe, Horace and Agnès in an exotic setting. However, Isidore is a slave literally and figuratively. The far reaches of such a revelation of woman's condition may not have "struck home" during the seventeenth century but today's reader can certainly appreciate its implications.

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Ibid., pp. 29-30.

Once again, we are indebted to Peter Laslett for his invention of family ideograms.

Note that in L'Etourdi, the widower-children structure is unknown until just before the end of the play. Célie turns out to be Trufaldin's daughter—not his slave. The discovery of father-daughter relationships towards play's end occurs also in Le Dépit Amoureux, L'Avare and Les Fourberies de Scapin. Obviously, father-daughter confrontations in these plays are minimal and occur in the final scenes.

Lucrèce and Béline are assumed to be household members.

Sometimes we don't see secondary households but we are aware that they exist. For example, Horace lives with his father in a conjugal family unit. Obviously, the list does not include these possible households that we do not see.

Extra-household relations will be discussed in chapter 4.

Madame Pernelle and Gorgibus (Le Barbouillé) are the only grandparents—neither is a member of the primary household.

La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas also has a mother's role in an aristocratic comedy.

This explanation is borne out by the early farce La Jalousie du Barbouillé in which children are kept off the stage. The central tensions between man and wife were no doubt sufficient matter to Molière whose developing talents would later lead to the more complicated structures of Le Tartuffe.

Louison of course. One must also remember the pack of crying brats in Monsieur de Pourceaugnac and the young son of the Countess of Escarbagnas (II, vii).

The format obviously does not apply to La Jalousie du Barbouillé and George Dandin where a younger household's conflicts are visible. Although the two Ecoles and Le Sicilien express a master-guardian relationship, they nevertheless demonstrate the threat of a forced marriage, the existence of rival lovers and culminate in a marriage heedless of the guardian's disapproval. Les Précieuses Ridicules contains father-child structures and rivals but no marriage arrangement.

Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 163 gives a more general formula of New Latin Comedy that shows Molière's indebtedness to his ancestors: "What normally happens is that a young man wants a young woman, that his desire is resisted by some opposition, usually paternal and that near the end of the play some twist in the plot enables him to have his will."


21. Valère thinks he has married Lucile and not Ascagne, who is masquerading as a boy.


23. In Molière, Oeuvres complètes, p. 936, Note 1930, Jouanny cites the loi de coutume of Paris whereby Argan could bequeath 1/3 of the estate to Béline by giving this portion to a third party in the will. In this way, the wife could inherit indirectly.

24. Note that love's triumph over parental oppression does not appear exclusively in Molière's comedies and occurs quite often in the theater of his predecessors. Mornet in Molière (Paris: Boivir, 1943), p. 124 remarks: Trompés ou ramenés à de meilleurs sentiments, les parents doivent consentir, c'est la loi de la comédie que Molière a suivie comme les autres." Thus the "Molière Imperative" could also be called the theatrical imperative.


26. "Aristo-bourgeois" marriages are seen in George Dandin and Le Sicilien. Note also that the two wards of L'Ecole des Maris are of noble blood and that in Les Fourberies de Scapin there are two aristo-bourgeois marriages after the discovery of Valère's and Mariane's noble ancestry.

27. Fathers excelled in locking up daughters in L'Etourdi, Le Médecin Malgré Lui, the two Ecoles, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac and Le Malade Imaginaire.


   Quelles que soient les exceptions qui sont variées et loin d'être négligeables, la famille conjugale devient la règle en France à partir du XIVe siècle.

NOTES

Chapter II:


2 L'Ecole des Maris has two sisters--each of whom resides in a separate household.


4 Scott Plummer in an unpublished Rice University diss. Transactions, Game and Scripts in Molière's Theater: A Selective Transational Interpretation (1974), pp. 70-80, applies the Eric Berne game of "uproar" with successful results to several of Molière plays. In Les Precieuses Ridicules, the paternal outburst of anger comes about due to filial disobedience.


6 Several critics have mentioned the impact of woman's rights on preciosity. In Molière, Oeuvres complètes, ed. Couton, p. 262, the editor maintains that Molière saw in Cathos' and Magdelon's efforts to emancipate and enrichen themselves only snobism and intoxication for escapist notions contained in Mlle. de Scudéry's novels. One can certainly sense an empty space in women's family life of the seventeenth century and see préciosité as an attempt even by Cathos and Magdelon to fill that void and compensate for their helplessness and dependence.

One should also consult the basic and thorough study of the movement, Roger Lathuillère, La Préciosité: Etude historique et linguistique (Geneva: Droz, 1966). Lathuillère studies the phenomenon of preciosity from a variety of social causes among which are the rise of the bourgeoisie, the ideal of the galant homme and the role that women played in salons. He concluded that the précieux was an ardent defender of women's rights in seventeenth century France (p. 675).

In Molière, Le Misanthrope, ed. E. Lop and A. Sauvage (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1963), the editors contend that coquetry and prudery were useful means available to disadvantaged women to survive "les vices du temps"--a male-dominated power structure.

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"*L'Ecole des Femmes* est une manière de correctif aux *Précieuses Ridicules* avec son effort pour traiter sérieusement un problème dont *Les Précieuses Ridicules* n'avaient vu que l'aspect derisoire." The *précieuses'* frustrations also come to surface in the personnage of Isabelle of *L'Ecole des Maris*.

Molière, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Couton, p. 297. Professor Couton sees special merit in *Sganarelle ou le Cocu Imaginaire* in that it is the sketch of two essential themes—"Le thème de la jeune fille qui risque de devenir une malmariée, le thème de l'éducation des femmes par lequel déjà s'annoncent les deux Ecoles." Both themes are apparent in *Les Précieuses Ridicules*. As early as 1659, Molière had touched upon an essential ingredient of many of his later comedies—family dissension or the conflict of old versus modern.


The combined archetypes, moreover, eliminate the formation of a new conjugal family unit and thus counter the productive process of family alliances and the strengthening of the estate so imperative to powerful bourgeois houses.

Francis Lawrence, "Molière and the Comedy of Unreason," *Tulane Studies in Romance Languages and Literatures* (1968) #2, p. 79 sees Ariste as the Sartrean Man since he has remained open to choice and has allowed the same freedom to Léonore. Sganarelle, on the other hand, insists on defining himself in the role of the uncompromising old man.


Isabelle has apparently told Sganarelle about Valère—a confession that must have taken place between Acts I and II.

Hubert, *op. cit.*, p. 53.


Lawrence, *op. cit.*, p. 100, indicates the futility behind Arnolphe's actions in preventing a marriage that had been planned by the powers that be. "There is hardly comfort for the devotee of the rational," he comments.

The sixth male figure, Arnolphe, has been stripped of his power over Agnès and must leave the scene since he is no longer a patriarch and part of the power group.

The seven plays illustrating parent-child relationships that have been looked at are Le Médecin Volant, L'Étourdi, Le Dépit Amoureux, Les Précieuses Ridicules, l'Ecole des Mari, L'Ecole des Femmes and Sganarelle ou Le Cocu Imaginaire.

Plummer, Transactions, Games and Scripts, p. 18, makes note of Eric Berne's differentiation of child behavioral types—the natural child (rebellious or self-indulgent) versus the adapted child (given to compliance or withdrawal, more likely to yield to parental pressures). Thus in Le Tartuffe, the daughter is adaptive and there is a greater need for a maid-servant "to sustain dramatic tension between father and daughter." Sons, too, may illustrate adapted or natural behavior.

Adapted: Thomas Diafoirus; the two sons of Les Fourberies de Scapin.

Natural: Damis; Harpagon's Cléante.

It is reasonable to expect the colorless daughter to be predominant in large families where the more helpless the child, the greater the part which family members and servants play in aiding her. The significance of the roles of Dorine and Béralde increases at the expense of Mariane's and Angélique's dependence.

Even Ariste's use of the phrase "un peu de liberté" is a tempered observation from an "honnête homme." The question whether women can have too much liberty in society and the household is taken up in Les Femmes Savantes. Although Angélique's conduct is humorous and a just retribution for Sganarelle's chauvinist ideas, the status of her upcoming marriage—like that of the Dandins"—demonstrates the clash of austere and fun-seeking mentalities and the hopelessness of such a union. Ariste's marriage with Isabelle seems to be the most promising one in Molière's bourgeois theater.

P. F. Saintonge, "Themes and Variations," L'Esprit Créateur, No. 6 (1966), pp. 145-155, concludes that Le Médecin Malgré Lui's variation on the standard theme of parent-child disagreement over the marriage issue is second in importance to the domestic quarreling of Sganarelle and his wife. One does however conceive the distinct image of a household when Sganarelle is being brought into Géronte's house.

See Molière, Oeuvres complètes, ed. Jouanny, p. 899, note 1386. Judd Hubert, Molière and the Comedy of Intellect, p. 198, states that in Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, "moral and psychological precautions are reduced to a minimum."
25 Julie's role as meneur du jeu is reminiscent of the parts played by Toinette and Elmire in their exposure scenes of Béline and Tartuffe.


27 It should be noted in the family diagrams that the dotted lines point to the couples in love whereas the names in parentheses denote characters whose family identities remain hidden until the denouement.

28 In Le Tartuffe, an earlier play, Orgon (vers 1293) feels a momentary pang of paternal tenderness but overcomes it. In L'Avaré (V, v) Harpagon shows no quarter.

29 Mauron's thesis of "le blondin qui berne le barbon" is well documented in the incident where Harpagon accuses Valère of stealing both the cassette and his daughter. The marriage legislation of the period, previously discussed, of course gave Harpagon free rein in prosecuting Valère as a suborneur—as one who has engaged himself in a contract without paternal approval.

See also James Doolittle, "Bad Writing in L'Avaré," L'Esprit Créateur, Vol. VI, No. 3 (Fall, 1966) pp. 197-207 who sees in the Elise-Valère relationship acts closer to Harpagon's "autre disgrace" than to an "innocente amour." The writer sees evidence that the two have slept together; the contract signing then could amount to the two putting "word into deed without benefit of notary and clergy." In this context, Elise may be even more lucidly confronting her condition when she says, "Tous les hommes sont semblables par les paroles"—she may know cases of women seduced or abandoned by their lover.

30 This example develops Magné's interesting idea of domination through speech monopoly, op. cit. In Le Médecin Malgré Lui as well as L'Amour Médecin, "dominer, c'est parler." In the former play, it is the father, where in the latter it is the daughter who is the dominant one. In both stated sequences the key to the identity of dominant and submissive participants is the identification of the character who has a verbal monopoly over the other and who prevents the other from getting a word in edgewise.

31 In Le Tartuffe, Mariane utters a similar complaint "Contre un père absolu que veux-tu que je fasse?" (II, iii, 589).


33 Some critic's share this view. See especially Molière Oeuvres complètes, ed. Jouanny, p. 940.
34 Toinette, too, can be seen as a female character incarnating both the sensitive and crafty dimensions of the Isabelle and Agnès archetypes.

35 It should be remembered that in Les Femmes Savantes Henriette's last words to her mother are "Souffrez que je résiste à votre volonté." Maternal will has triumphed despite a few oversights. Thus, Chrysale's words that close the play—"Et faites le contrat ainsi que je l'ai dit"—seem to have little substance alongside the imperial presence of his wife.

36 Molière, Oeuvres complètes, ed. Couton, p. 977. Chrysale is really not that far removed from Arnolphe in his reducing woman's lot to domestic activities. Clitandre himself disparages women's educational ambitions (215-236)

37 For example, Philaminte's plans for a female academy are laudable from today's vantage point:

Car enfin je me sens un étrange dépit  
Du tort que l'on nous fait du côté de l'esprit,  
Et je veux nous venger, toutes tant que nous sommes.  
De cette indigne classe où nous rangent les hommes.  

(II, ii, 851-855)

The collective use of "we," the sentiment of vengeance, the theme of man's definition of woman and his relegating her to an inferior status reappear in the words of today's feminist writers.

38 Charles Mauron in Des Métaphores obsédantes au mythe personnel. Introduction à la psychocritique (Paris: Corti, 1963) explores the relationships between father and son in Molière's plays and succeeds in showing how they embody the myth of voleur and volé—the young man and the patriarch—in Latin comedies. The prize or treasure can be either gold or a young woman. Whereas an incestuous relationship can be inferred from the guardian-ward structure of the two Écoles Mauron explains that a more satisfactory oedipal analysis is gleaned from L'Avare: amorous rivalry between father and son and parricide. Parricide of course has been reduced to Cléante's wish for Harpagon's death, "on s'étonne après cela que les fils souhaitent qu'ils meurent" (II, i). The following are Mauron's archetypal traits of the father-son myth:

1. Un personnage masculin, relativement âgé, d'humeur bourgeoise et domestique (fixé à sa maison) fortuné et possessif-vériéique (naïf, crédule) est partagé entre la peur d'être volé et le désir d'acquérir de nouveaux biens dont l'espoir le flatte (considération, jeune femme).

2. Il devient la victime des personnages plus jeunes—mobiles, vifs—... Le voleur est souvent introduit dans la maison, où il a tendance à régner en maître.

3. Berné, le premier personnage se voit atteint ou menacé dans son amour, ses biens, sa personne même. (p. 271)
The above three traits identify the fixed status of the household head, the mobility and diversity of the challenger—be he ardent suitor, scoundrel or servant—and the temporary or permanent victory of the voleur. The greatest word of caution is the male oriented tone of such a quest. There is more to family politics than old man against young son. Daughters such as Agnès, Elise and Angélique of Le Malade Imaginaire are clearly more than treasures or objectives. Although the masculine element of L'Avaré, Le Tartuffe and L'Ecole des Femmes shows a decided father-son rivalry, this dissertation has shown that in order to look thoroughly at family structure, women's roles should also be considered and that occasionally women succeed in escaping from traditional male definitions. The archetypes of enlightened and crafty daughter then take their place among those of the old and young man.

39 The rebellious son can at times be dealt with more harshly than the unwilling daughter. There are larger sums at stake—disinheritance, of course being the grave consequence for the entire family's security.

40 Other family members have expressed impatience for the speedy death of a close one—notably Béline of Le Malade Imaginaire and Angélique in Le Mariage Forcé.

41 In effect the Deal—money for the girl—prevents two unpopular marriages: Harpagon-Mariane and Cléante—"certaine veuve."

NOTES

Chapter III:

1 Jacques Guicharnaud, Molière, une aventure théâtrale (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), p. 42, concludes "la comédie ou une partie de la comédie repose sur la contradiction entre leur impuissance de fait et leur pouvoir de droit." Guicharnaud sees Orgon, George Dandin and Chrysale stripped of their power. Indeed all the Molièresque father heads are powerful by right and not by might. This loss of power is especially noticeable when there is a wife.


4 In La Jalousie du Barbuillé, the title role refers to his wife's duties among which "avoir soin . . . des enfants" figures. Since children are not seen on stage, this preliminary farce is classified as a childless family structure.

5 Scott Plummer, Transactions Games and Scripts in Molière's Theater: A Selective Transactional Interpretation (Diss. Rice University, 1974), pp. 89-96, points out that the game of "courtroom" is played in George Dandin: "The entire play revolves around the attempt of Dandin (plaintiff) to convince his in-laws (judge) that his wife Angélique (defendant) is guilty of adultery or at least of conspiracy to commit adultery." "Courtroom" is also played in La Jalousie du Barbuillé, complete with husband, in-laws and wife filling the appropriate legal roles and the famous lock-out scene or the game "NIGYSOB"—"Now, I got you, you son-of-a-bitch"—an Eric Berne game that Mr. Plummer has skillfully applied to George Dandin, Le Tartuffe and other plays.


7 Molière's theatrical use of the misplaced portrait, like his use of Mascarille in L'Etourdi, has succeeded in limiting confrontations between man/wife and parent/child. The power struggle is attenuated through a portrait and a servant as an intermediary. Later, Scapin will have the same attenuating function.
Lionel Gossman, *Men and Masks: A Study of Molière* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1963), p. 154, sees George Dandin as a brutal tyrant who is frustrated by his powerlessness in the family: "He can't conceive of true equality and love."

Gossman, *op. cit.*, p. 151. Gossman refers to the dialogue between the young aristocrat Clitandre and the older M. de Sotenville during which the young galant is not impressed by the baron's recital of the siege of Montauban—an old military campaign of the 1620's: "Clitandre has only ironical contempt for Sotenville" (p. 151).


Plummer, *Transactions, Games and Scripts in Molière's Theater*, points out the courtroom atmosphere in George Dandin.


Gossman, *op. cit.*, p. 155. One must remember in *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* Eraste's words: "Ce n'est que M. votre père dont je suis amoureux et c'est lui que j'épouse" (III, vii).

Ibid., p. 162. The critic maintains that the identity complex of the country peasant marrying into the gentry indicates his struggle to be not with Angélique but with her social position—her parents.

Mention is made of Hyacinte's dying mother in *Les Fourberies de Scapin* (I, ii) as well as reference to Mariane's mother in *L'Avare* (I, ii; IV, i; V, v; V, vi). However, neither character is ever seen on stage. Aside from the domestic plays, there are two aristocratic plays with mother roles—*La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas* and *Les Amants Magnifiques*. Of course, Madame Pernelle is Orgon's mother.


Ibid., pp. 67-68.


26 Moreover, the letter has the same function as Monsieur Loyal—the bearer of bad news in *Le Tartuffe* (V, iv).

27 Hubert, *Molière and the Comedy of Intellect*, p. 243.

28 For additional verses expressing feminist ideas in *Les Femmes Savantes*, consult 830-856, 856-860, 866-870.

29 Two "Bernesian" games which are certainly relevant here are "courtroom" and "NIGYSOB." See Plummer, *Transactions Games and Scripts in Molière's Theater* and note 4 of this chapter.
NOTES

Chapter IV:

1 It should be remembered that L'Ecole des Maris has two sisters in separate households.

2 The master's appeal to his servant for aid is shown in both L'Etourdi and Les Fourberies de Scapin. Servant and master relations (Mascarille/Lélie, Scapin/Octave, Toinette/Anjélique) are less evident. Servants and maidservants act as "big brother" and "big sister."

3 Throughout his domestic repertory, Molière occasionally saw fit to reduce or eliminate sibling roles by giving them to either a male or female servant.

4 Like Nicole of Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme and Claudine of George Dandin, Marinette is in love with the servant of her mistress' boyfriend. Thus, her motives are also based on interest.

5 In V, v Frosine reveals to Ascagne something that she has just discovered—the good news that Ascagne is really Albert's daughter and part of the family. In this manner, roles are reversed; Ascagne is the confidante and Frosine the revealer of the big secret.

6 Whereas it is true that Elmire is not really a confidante to her children, she is the meueur du jeu in the unmask Tartuffe scene. Ariste of Les Femmes Savantes and Toinette of Le Malade Imaginaire both concoct schemes to reveal the "Tartuffe" of their own family and offer guidance and moral support to Chrysale and Angélique.

7 A penetrating discussion of the fraternal relationship of Orgon and Tartuffe can be found in Lionel Gossman, Men and Masks: A Study of Molière (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1963) where the author concludes that Orgon "creates," "buys," and seduces Tartuffe. Thus, the couple has a symbiotic relationship; Orgon exploits Tartuffe as the imposter would plunder the fatherhead for all his worth. Tartuffe is Orgon's alter ego—a brother through whom the father would project his absolute authority and divine right: "The value of Tartuffe is corroborated for Orgon by the fear that he inspires in his family" (pp. 111-112). Gossman sees in the Orgon/Tartuffe rapport a "fundamental structure of human relations in modern society"—worshipper and idol.

8 I, vi; II, i; II, iii; II, iv; II, viii; III, ii; III, v; III, vi; III, viii.
Arnolphe and George Dandin also glean information for their own designs. Toinette is the first female servant to be used in this information gathering capacity. She also resorts to outside help in the personnage of the uncle—Béralde. She exhorts him, "N'abandonnez pas, s'il vous plaît, les intérêts de votre nièce" (III, ii). Even though she has brought herself up to be on a sister-sister basis with Angélique, she realizes the additional punch that male guidance on such a high level can deliver.

In L'Avaré, Froscine evolves from a jovial mercenary to a person both sensitive to the young people's dilemma and frustrated by Harpagon's stinginess. She is more of an intermediary to Mariane's mother than an advisor to Mariane. In Monsieur de Pourcæugnac Nérine and Sbrigani are professional swindlers. Julie is strong enough not to need a maidservant and gets action rather than advice from this sleazy pair.

It is not certain whether Alcidas and Dorimène are co-resident. Alcidas may be living in the caserne with his fellow soldiers. The same uncertainty applies to Adraste and Clémène of Le Sicilien.

Ibid.

Lionel Gossman, Men and Masks, p. 122.

Judd Hubert, Molière and the Comedy of Intellect (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962). Hubert has entitled his chapter on Le Malade Imaginaire—"The Doctor's Curse."
NOTES

Conclusion:

1 Jacques Guicharznaud, Molière une aventure théâtrale (Paris; Gallimard, 1963), p. 158.

2 Ibid., p. 158.

3 In Sganarelle ou Le Cocu Imaginaire, Sganarelle's wife begins the string of malentendus by observing her husband from a window. In Molière, Oeuvres complètes, ed. Robert Jouanny (Paris: Garnier, 1962), p. 882, note 57, the editor points out the scenic indications of Mahelot for L'Étourdi, "Théâtre est des maisons et deux portes sur le devant avec leurs fenêtres." In a later comedy, Le Sicilien, Adraste and his henchmen fail to get by the open door of Dom Pèdre's residence.

4 In Le Médecin Volant and Les Précieuses Ridicules the father is also an uncle. An early uncle role appears in L'Ecole des Femmes although this structure is only revealed at play's end. In two comedies a parent's sister (child's aunt) is mentioned. In Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme Jourdain sends his wife to her sister so that he may enjoy his banquet in peace. In Le Malade Imaginaire Toinette mentions that an old aunt had given her and Angélique the opportunity to go to a comedy where they met Cléante for the first time.

5 The male component would thus include Philaminte and Armande of Les Femmes Savantes—authoritative, near-sighted and stubborn. Similarly, since many servants help liberate the daughter from the father's tyranny, they are to be placed in the female contingent.

6 The tableau effect will be used later in L'Avare (III, i).

7 Marcel Gutwirth, Molière ou l'invention comique (Paris: Minard, 1966).

8 Molière, Oeuvres complètes, ed. Jouanny, p. 753, Jouanny remarks, "Nulle ouverture dans cette comédie domestique, qui a choisi le plus fermé des milieux, le logis de quelque bourgeois de cette rue Richelieu. . . ." It is precisely the purpose of this thesis to show how vulnerable and open the "closed" bourgeois family actually is in Molière's theater.


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12. Ibid., pp. 405–406.
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