

# Empathy and Narcissism in the Work of Molière

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**Empathy and Narcissism in the Work of Molière****Elise Gabrielle Passamani****St. John's College, Oxford****D.Phil. Modern Languages****Trinity Term 2014****Abstract**

The aim of this thesis is to explore the comic art of Molière through the lens of empathy and narcissism, and reciprocally, to show that Molière nourishes Western thought about these phenomena, which can be viewed as opposite ends of a continuum. Every personality has some of each, but the unbalanced egoist has excessive self-love and cannot put himself in another's place. The *narcissist* is omnipresent in Molière's theatre, but has been heretofore unidentified as such in criticism. This work attempts to fill this gap, and accordingly, my corpus encompasses his 33 extant plays.

Furthermore, these psychological concepts are inherently theatrical, especially with respect to whether or not spectators recognize themselves in characters on stage. There is a dialectic relation between *reconnaissance* and empathy or antipathy, and, therefore, laughter.

Hence, empathy and narcissism provide a way of looking at characters on stage and at the interaction between the dramatic action and the audience. To explore the former, I investigate endogenous words Molière uses to convey empathy and narcissism; how he portrays empathizers and narcissists visually through their adherence to and breaking of social codes; and how cognition influences their ability to change. For the latter, I demonstrate how early modern *querelles* surrounding Molière's plays involve these notions; and how his metatheatrical discourses reveal

that Molière transports his spectators 'hors de soi': a state that mirrors romantic love and provides pleasure.

Taken in this framework, I argue that Molière's work can be seen as anti-narcissistic; if his spectators knew themselves in the mirror he held up, laughing was a means of precluding blind empathy. Thus, employing tools from modern psychology and neuroscience and notions from the seventeenth century, this thesis evaluates how Molière's characters provide us, today, with a means for better understanding the place of narcissism in our occidental world.

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The aim of this thesis is to explore the comic art of Molière through the lens of empathy and narcissism, and reciprocally, to show that Molière nourishes Western thought about these phenomena, which can be viewed as opposite ends of a continuum. As it is constructed in modern psychology, Narcissistic Personality Disorder is 'a pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behaviour), need for admiration, and lack of empathy, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts'.<sup>1</sup> Every well-adjusted personality has some empathy and narcissism, but the unbalanced egoist has excessive self-love and is unable to put himself in someone else's place and react appropriately. The *narcissist* is omnipresent in Molière's theatre, but has been heretofore unidentified as such in criticism. This work attempts to fill this gap, and accordingly, my corpus encompasses his 33 extant plays.

Furthermore, these psychological concepts are both inherently theatrical in nature, especially with respect to whether or not spectators recognize themselves in characters on stage. Bergson writes that laughter appeals to pure intelligence rather than emotion: 'Je ne veux pas dire que nous ne puissions rire d'une personne qui nous inspire de la pitié, par exemple, ou même de l'affection: seulement alors, pour

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<sup>1</sup> *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 2013), p. 669.

quelques instants, il faudra oublier cette affection, faire taire cette pitié'.<sup>2</sup> Thus, laughing at someone is a kind of suspension of empathy. In the seventeenth century, Boileau wrote that comedy can be instructive through laughter, owing to an *effet de miroir*. He observes, 'Chacun, peint avec art dans ce nouveau miroir, | S'y vit avec plaisir, ou crut ne s'y point voir'.<sup>3</sup> Again, spectators laugh if their empathy is suspended. There is a dialectic relation between *reconnaissance* and empathy or antipathy, and, therefore, laughter. And in Ovid's myth, Narcissus is confronted with the mirror question: he falls in love with his image reflected in water, but it would be incorrect to say that he fell in love with himself, because he did not know the image was his own.

Empathy and narcissism provide a way of looking at characters on stage and the kinetic interaction between the dramatic action and the audience. The problems I attempt to solve include whether or not these two psychological concepts were relevant in seventeenth-century France, and specifically, to Molière's work and public; how Molière expresses them verbally and visually on stage; which of Molière's characters are the most empathetic, and which are the most narcissistic; how his characters think, and whether or not their cognition affects their capacity to empathize and change; and what kind of pleasure Molière affords the spectator through laughter and musical entertainments.

The progression of this thesis moves from a first chapter investigating the early modern *querelles* surrounding four of Molière's most fiercely contested plays (*Le Misanthrope*, *L'École des femmes*, *Le Tartuffe*, and *Dom Juan*), finding that both empathy and narcissism feature prominently in these arguments; to a second chapter

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<sup>2</sup> Henri Bergson, *Le Rire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Nicolas Boileau, *L'Art poétique* [1674], ed. by Jean-Pierre Collinet (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), III, 353-4.

exploring words Molière employs that convey the sense of empathy and narcissism in an enlarged sample of eight plays. In seventeenth-century France, a *narcisse* was defined as a flower named for ‘la metamorphose qui fut faite en cette fleur d’un beau garçon qui s’appelloit ainsi, & qui se noya estant amoureux de luy-même, & voulant embrasser son image qu’il voyoit dans l’eau’.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it was important to excavate Molière’s lexis on this subject, which reveals the dual meanings of the words *intérêt*, *amitié*, and *amour*.

The focus of the third chapter is the physical appearances, attire, and gestures of Molière’s most pronounced empathizers and narcissists, showing how these attributes indicate to the audience with whom they should be in sympathy; he also communicates visually which characters adhere to social codes of conduct and which ones break them. Furthermore, this chapter also highlights that those marked with high levels of empathy possess internal strength, while those characterized by extreme narcissism are in fact quite vulnerable. The fourth chapter looks at the different ways that Molière’s empathizers and narcissists think, using their abilities for *imagination* and *réflexion*. It then explores to what degree they are able to exercise ‘theory of mind’ or ‘mindreading’, which is the capacity humans have to confer mental states on each other, and a concept closely related to empathy. Although narcissists may be adept mindreaders, they are unable to love others. This renders them brittle and resistant, if not impervious, to change.

Finally, the last chapter considers Molière’s metatheatrical discourses, looking at the way he shows actors preparing to perform and spectators reacting to the stage and to each other. Through the effects of laughter and music, Molière transports his spectators ‘hors de soi’: a state that mirrors the transformative effect of romantic love

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<sup>4</sup> Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel* (Rotterdam-La-Haye: Arnout & Leers, 1690), in *Gallica* <<http://gallica.bnf.fr>> [accessed 2 February 2010]

and provides a particular kind of theatrical pleasure. Thus, even if the worst of narcissists are unable to be moved, those that are less narcissistic are coaxed into a condition of heightened empathy by being taken ‘hors de soi’.

Contemporary psychology identifies a multitude of variations of narcissism, and indeed, Molière’s work displays a full scale of different kinds of narcissists. An original feature of this thesis lies in my basis for judging where Molière’s characters are located on the empathy-narcissism spectrum. Apart from my analyses of quarrels, vocabulary, appearances and codes, cognition, and metatheatre, my method makes recourse to an unusual source. Namely, I performed an exhaustive character analysis of 269 personages from Molière’s complete theatre, using three separate psychometric questionnaires: the Narcissistic Personality Inventory,<sup>5</sup> the Empathy Quotient,<sup>6</sup> and the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder.<sup>7</sup>

Through this analysis, I ranked and tabulated these characters and identified two special groups. One of them features characters with high levels of both empathy and narcissism (‘narcissistic empathizers’). The second includes the three characters in Molière’s theatre with the highest scores on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (‘super narcissists’). The seven characters that compose these two cohorts combined are all highly intelligent and they engage in, to varying degrees, antisocial behaviour. However, the ‘narcissistic empathizers’ are characters with whom the audience may readily sympathize because they help bring about the ‘happy endings’ in their

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<sup>5</sup> Robert N. Raskin and Calvin S. Hall, ‘A Narcissistic Personality Inventory’, *Psychological Reports*, 45 (1979), 590.

<sup>6</sup> Simon Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy: A New Theory of Human Cruelty* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), pp. 129-134.

<sup>7</sup> *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn, pp. 669-70.

respective plays, while the ‘super narcissists’ are dangerous in an unmitigated manner, and an ultimate authority is required put a stop to their pernicious actions.

Other significant findings relate to the breakdown of narcissists between the sexes. It is thought that the majority of narcissists are male,<sup>8</sup> and this is supported by my sample of ‘super narcissists’, which includes two male characters (the titular characters of *Don Juan* and *Le Tartuffe*) and one female (Vénus from *Psyché*). However, the fact that, in the end, the men are imprisoned or killed off, while the woman is immortal, implies that the influence of female narcissists, even if there are fewer of them than there are male narcissists, is not to be taken lightly.

Running contrary to the school of critical thought promoted in the latter half of the twentieth century by René Bray and W.G. Moore, my analysis emphasizes the idea that Molière’s understanding of psychology is important for his particular creation of pleasure, because he draws the viewers out of themselves (‘hors de soi’). Viewed in this framework, Molière’s work can be seen as anti-narcissistic; if his spectators recognized and knew themselves in the mirror he held up, laughing was a means of pulling them out of blind empathy. Then, considering the tension between empathy and narcissism, I plumb how they relate to the idea of comedy as a social corrective. Thus, making use of concepts from the fields of contemporary psychology and neuroscience, as well as notions from the seventeenth century, this thesis evaluates how Molière’s characters are divided from this point of view and how his work can provide us, today, with a means for better understanding the place of narcissism in our occidental world.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 671.

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## Introduction

### 1. A Topic

At present, much psychological research has at its heart questions surrounding narcissism and empathy. And the study of literature can also be helpful in this realm of inquiry, which is why, in this thesis, I shall probe questions about narcissism and empathy in the work of one of the most classical of French authors, Molière. My corpus includes all of Molière's extant drama, which, encompassing early *farces*, *grandes comédies*, and *comédies-ballets*, presents an expansive range of empathetic and narcissistic characters. My aim is to argue that, through comedy, Molière coaxes us to emulate empathizers and coaches us in how to deal with narcissists. On a larger level, this thesis asserts that a study on the plays written and performed by Molière shows how narcissism and empathy as constructs, even though recently coined, are not new; and that by reading works from centuries past with the tools of the present, literary studies can help psychologists and psychiatrists sharpen—and locate lacunae in—their own instruments of analysis. To wit, this thesis seeks to be a part of a larger movement towards bridging the ballyhooed 'two cultures'<sup>1</sup> rift between the humanities and the sciences and social sciences,<sup>2</sup> which has been exacerbated in recent years by significant cuts in support for the humanities, largely in the fields of languages and literatures.

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<sup>1</sup> C.P. Snow, *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1959), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, the sub-field of Literary Darwinism is one that seeks to merge scientific understanding of the world with the humanities. Writing about C.P. Snow, Joseph Carroll, one of the originators of this approach, observes, 'As it happens, few historians of science are also trained analysts of rhetoric and composition, and few literary scholars have been sufficiently receptive to Darwin's subject matter to give adequate attention to the rhetorical and literary characteristics of the *Origin*. One consequence of this gap between what C.P. Snow called 'the Two Cultures' is that the splendid literary quality of the *Origin* has never received its due meed of praise'. See Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* [1859], ed. by Joseph Carroll (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2003), p. 45.

My choice to use narcissism and empathy as lenses through which to investigate Molière's comic art is influenced by the fact that both psychological phenomena are inherently theatrical and related to what transpires in a spectator watching a dramatic work unfold on stage.

Writing in 1898 about auto-eroticism, Havelock Ellis proposed the term 'narcissism' when describing the 'tendency for the sexual emotions to be lost and almost entirely absorbed in self-admiration' as 'Narcissus-like'.<sup>3</sup> The term 'empathy', on the other hand, comes from the German word *Einfühlung* meaning 'feeling into', which was introduced by Robert Vischer in 1873 and further developed by Theodor Lipps in 1903.<sup>4</sup>

To begin a discussion about narcissism, it is appropriate to look to Freud. Even before the publication of his seminal essay 'On Narcissism', he wrote, 'Narcissus, according to the Greek legend, was a youth who preferred his own reflection to everything else and who was changed into the lovely flower of that name'.<sup>5</sup> In the subsequent 1914 essay, Freud describes how focusing on the self—in this instance, the body in pain—turns the individual away from other-directed love. He writes,

It is universally known, and we take it as a matter of course, that a person who is tormented by organic pain and discomfort gives up his interest in the things of the external world, in so far as they do not concern his suffering. Closer observation teaches us that he also withdraws *libidinal* interest from his love-objects: so long as he suffers, he ceases to love [...] We find it so natural

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<sup>3</sup> Robert N. Raskin and Howard Terry, 'A Principal-Components Analysis of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory and Further Evidence of Its Construct Validity', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 5 (1988), 890-902 (p. 890).

<sup>4</sup> Ellen Dissanayake, *Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes From and Why* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), p. 142. Also see Christiane Montag, Jürgen Gallinat, and Andreas Heinz, 'Theodor Lipps and the Concept of Empathy: 1851-1914', *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 165, 10 (2008), 1261.

<sup>5</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood' [1910], in *The Freud Reader*, ed. by Peter Gay (London: Vintage, 1995), pp. 443-81 (pp. 462-3).

because we are certain that in the same situation we should behave in just the same way.<sup>6</sup>

Seemingly ironically, this last sentence is also an emblematic expression of empathy: in the observation of suffering, we often project ourselves into the sufferer's place. Thus, Freud shows the intertwined nature of empathy and narcissism, and that they are, in a sense, two sides of the same coin. Meanwhile, discoveries in psychology and neuroscience can also aid us in better understanding early modern observations made about Molière's audience and give us a new perspective on the dynamic between the actors and spectators, as well as the psychological forces at work within the audience itself.

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## 2. *État présent*

### Dramatic Aesthetics

In the middle of the last century, a seismic shift in focus occurred in Molière studies, instigated by W.G. Moore with his book *Molière: A New Criticism* (1949) and expanded and strengthened by René Bray in *Molière, homme de théâtre* (1954). Pointedly, Bray sought to move Molière criticism away from biography and moralising and towards a full recognition of the fact that—as a writer, actor, and director—his principal objective in his artistic production was to please his audience by making them laugh. He writes of Molière, 'tous ses talents concouraient au même but: plaire, plaire en faisant rire'.<sup>7</sup> Admittedly, Moore discouraged the kind of study I am engaged in with this research. In concurrence with Bray, he writes,

[W]e should give 'psychology' a rest in explanations of Molière's work. In most of the textbooks it occupies a large place [...] Who said that we must think of these famous rogues and fools as real people? It is an assumption,

<sup>6</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'On Narcissism: An Introduction' [1914], in *Essential Papers on Narcissism*, ed. by Andrew P. Morrison (New York: New York University Press, 1986), pp. 17-43 (p. 25).

<sup>7</sup> René Bray, *Molière, homme de théâtre* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1954), p. 162.

which has never been proved. The text indeed suggests something quite different. We know why the text was written: to provoke enjoyment by suggesting ridiculous ideas and postures. Is it not possible to do this without profound and accurate psychology? Some years ago the Abbé Bremond made a strong plea that Racine should not be thought of as primarily a psychologist but as a poet.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, like Racine, Molière was no psychologist. However, this does not preclude the potential for his work to pinpoint essential truths about human psychology.<sup>9</sup> After all, is it not possible for a text—even a theatrical one written, as Moore and Bray assert, for the express purpose of generating mirth—to contain and communicate meaning beyond the playwright’s professional goals? And is it not equally possible to ‘provoke enjoyment’ through the kind of recognition that leads to empathy? Furthermore, as previously mentioned, empathy and narcissism are both tied to theatrical representation. For instance, an empathetic actor is focused on fully embodying a role, whilst a narcissist treats everyone around him as his public.<sup>10</sup> Besides, narcissism is often humorous, which Freud himself acknowledges, writing, ‘The way in which a lover’s feelings, however strong, are banished by bodily ailments, and suddenly replaced by complete indifference, is a theme which has been exploited by comic writers to an appropriate extent’.<sup>11</sup> Having a clear understanding of human psychology, especially its foibles, may be a great asset to even the most professionally single-minded *homme de théâtre*.

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<sup>8</sup> W.G. Moore, *Molière: A New Criticism* [1949] (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 138.

<sup>9</sup> Indeed, other critics *have* noted psychological truth in Molière’s theatre. Writing about the titular *Avare* just a year before the publication of Moore’s watershed book, Paul Bénichou notes, ‘tout ce qu’il voit, dit-il lui-même, lui semble son voleur. Harpagon joint ainsi l’extrême stylisation de la caricature à la vérité psychologique la plus directe. Molière a donné en lui la formule abstraite d’une mentalité réelle, qu’on peut nommer bourgeoise, en désignant par ce mot, d’accord avec tout le XVIIe siècle, une forme d’existence morale inférieure, impuissante à réaliser le beau caractère humain’. See Paul Bénichou, *Morales du grand siècle* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1948), p. 242.

<sup>10</sup> Simon Baron-Cohen proffers this description of a particular narcissistic patient: ‘He is oblivious to how other people listening to him might feel. It is as if they are there to be his audience, listening to how great he is, and their role is to agree with him and admire him’. See Simon Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy: A New Theory of Human Cruelty* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), p. 60.

<sup>11</sup> Freud, ‘On Narcissism’, p. 25.

Larry Norman's lucid book *The Public Mirror* provides interesting commentary on the complex issue of representation in Molière's satire. For instance, he writes,

Is the theater audience truly so fascinated with itself that it would endlessly watch its social interactions projected on the stage? Would the audience of *La Critique*'s depiction of an audience in turn wish to see itself projected on stage? Is the cycle of mirroring endlessly captivating? The answer is quite arguably 'yes' for this mid-seventeenth-century public.<sup>12</sup>

This fascinating assertion leads to questions about the composition of this public and about the differences between different spectator binaries, whether male and female, noble and bourgeois, or the 'Cour' and the 'Ville'. In other words, Norman raises questions that reside on the border between anthropology and sociology.

Anthropology can be linked with the very fact that, as David Mamet writes, performers relate empathy directly to theatrical experience, asserting, 'The actor does not need to "become" the character. The phrase, in fact, has no meaning. There *is* no character'.<sup>13</sup> Taken in this view, acting is very much like empathy; it does not involve literally becoming another person, but rather, an extension of one's imagination towards that elusive state of 'feeling into' someone else's experience.

The edition of Molière's complete works I use is that of Georges Forestier and Claude Bourqui, which was published in 2010 and provides original texts and is useful for considering laughter, but with recourse to Georges Couton's edition, as well, for texts not included in the former.<sup>14</sup>

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### Elements of Early Modern Psychology

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<sup>12</sup> Larry F. Norman, *The Public Mirror* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 47.

<sup>13</sup> David Mamet, *True and False: Heresy and Common Sense for the Actor* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> See Molière, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Georges Forestier and Claude Bourqui, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 2010). Also, see Molière, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Georges Couton, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).

The study of *passions de l'âme* in the early modern period is well-trod in academe. Jean Rohou writes of seventeenth-century France, 'La morale et la littérature de cette époque sont principalement consacrées à l'analyse et à la mise en scène des passions. Mais en fait, comme dit Corbinelli, "il n'y a véritablement qu'une passion qui est l'amour-propre"' .<sup>15</sup> For example, the concept of *amour-propre* was explored at length by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.<sup>16</sup> In his authoritative work on the 'relations entre médecine et mal d'amour' in Molière's theatre, based on the 'medicine of the time', Patrick Dandrey affirms this focus on *amour-propre*, whilst bringing it explicitly into the medical sphere, describing how during the *âge classique*, 'l'imaginaire médical de la pathologie amoureuse continuera d'y affleurer discrètement à la surface du langage courant et de l'expression littéraire'.<sup>17</sup> Dandrey has written at length about the emergence of twisted, obsessive love as a sickness. Speaking of 'cette fureur d'amour-propre', he notes,

Son antithèse et son antidote, dès lors, ne sauraient être que l'amour pur et généreux des amants assortis et galants: à l'amour obsessionnel de soi fondé sur le désir inauthentique dévié en chimère s'oppose ainsi l'amour généreux de l'autre fondé sur un désir sans mélange et favorisant une meilleure connaissance de soi et du monde. Agnès et Horace, une fois encore, face à Arnolphe...<sup>18</sup>

He therefore distinguishes between two kinds of *amour*, an *amour de soi* and an *amour généreux*, highlighting the interconnectedness of narcissism and empathy, as did Freud. However, deviating from Dandrey's excavations on love, I seek to locate Molière's varied obsessives, driven by their *passions*, under the aegis of narcissism; to my knowledge, this is the first study to do so. Furthermore, whether or not there is

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<sup>15</sup> Jean Rohou, *Le XVIIe siècle, une révolution de la condition humaine* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 2002), p. 410.

<sup>16</sup> I will discuss Rousseau's views of *amour-propre* in the first chapter.

<sup>17</sup> Patrick Dandrey, *La Médecine et la maladie dans l'œuvre de Molière*, 2 vols (Paris: Klincksieck, 1998), I, p. 459.

<sup>18</sup> Patrick Dandrey, *Molière ou l'esthétique du ridicule* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1992), p. 370.

an *antidote* for *amour-propre*, either *chez* Molière or in reality, is a question that remains unsettled.

...

### Elements of Modern Psychology

Describing what she calls ‘Pleistocene psychology’, Ellen Dissanayake writes,

Freud’s imaginative construction was presciently correct in recognizing that civilization—the stratified, hierarchical, settled, populous life that agriculture made possible—became increasingly inimical to human psychology as it had developed over millennia for a hunter-gatherer life.<sup>19</sup>

She continues, ‘*for the most part* human problems today are caused by the mismatch between evolved Pleistocene psychology and the demands and deficiencies of a contemporary milieu that is far different from that in which such a psychology evolved’.<sup>20</sup> It is reasonable to consider that France in the so-called *âge classique* was, in fact, closer to the present day than it is to the Pleistocene, which began millions of year ago. Therefore, we *can* sympathize with the psychological maladies of Molière’s characters in that they are incongruous in their own un-Pleistocene landscape, much as we are ourselves. Furthermore, this cross-temporal similarity is borne out by the fact that, as the psychiatrist Glen Gabbard writes, ‘narcissistic personality disorder is not a monolithic entity but a spectrum of subtypes’.<sup>21</sup> Narcissism in the twenty-first century takes a multiplicity of forms, as it did on Molière’s early modern stage.

In a line of thinking that takes Mamet’s view a step further, Julia Kristeva suggests that empathy—even in love—is unattainable; she poses the question, ‘*Deux amours ne sont-ils pas essentiellement individuels et donc incommensurables,*

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<sup>19</sup> Ellen Dissanayake, ‘*Fons et Origo: A Darwinian View of Selfobject Theory and the Arts*’, *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 3, 26 (2006), 309-25 (p. 317).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

<sup>21</sup> Glen O. Gabbard, ‘Transference and Countertransference: Developments in the Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorder’, *Psychiatric Annals*, 39, 3 (2009), 129-36 (p. 130-1).

condamnant ainsi les partenaires à ne se rencontrer qu'à l'infini?'<sup>22</sup> However, this experience, when one's own emotions approach the boundaries of those of his lover, becomes more complex when we consider, for example, the discovery of mirror neurons in rhesus macaques.<sup>23</sup> Brian Boyd explains them neatly:

Mirror neurons, whose function was discovered only in the early 1990s, fire when we see others act or express emotion as if we were making the same action, and allow us through a kind of automatic inner imitation to understand their intentions and attune ourselves to their feelings.<sup>24</sup>

This offers some biological evidence that empathy is not entirely implausible.

And, in light of these difficulties, it is useful to add that Simon Baron-Cohen, the Cambridge neuroscientist and autism researcher, has suggested that role-playing<sup>25</sup> is a way of developing empathy in those who have little or none (types ranging from narcissists to those with autism<sup>26</sup>), and role-playing is a kind of acting. Not everyone can act on stage before a live audience, but reading a work of dramatic fiction and imagining oneself as a character therein is an exercise anyone can attempt.

With regard to the criticism that by using modern psychological tools for understanding the human mind and spirit, one is imposing a twenty-first-century

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<sup>22</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Histoires d'amour* (Paris: Éditions Denoël, 1983), p. 11.

<sup>23</sup> It is important to note that there is much debate over the significance of mirror neurons. For instance, Pinker affords them little significance. For his explanation, see Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: The Decline of Violence in History and Its Causes* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), pp. 576-7.

<sup>24</sup> Brian Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories: Evolution, Cognition, and Fiction* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 103-4.

<sup>25</sup> He writes, 'Counselling and other psychological therapies such as role-playing techniques purport to be aiming to encourage empathy, and it would be valuable to have systematic studies to show if these are working'. See Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy*, p. 120.

<sup>26</sup> Freud and Kristeva both recognize the connection between narcissism and autism, states which are characterized by a lack of empathy. Freud writes, 'The contrast between social and narcissistic—Bleuler would perhaps call them 'autistic'—mental acts therefore falls wholly within the domain of Individual Psychology, and is not well calculated to differentiate it from a Social or Group Psychology'. See Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, trans. by James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1949), p. 2. However, Kristeva distinguishes more sharply between narcissism and autism: 'L'auto-érotique n'est cependant pas un autistique: il trouve des objets, mais ce sont des objets de haine [...] L'auto-érotique qui se plaint ou se vante de ne pouvoir aimer, a peur de devenir fou: schizo ou catatonique...'. See Kristeva, pp. 49-50.

worldview and perspective on imaginative creations from the seventeenth century,<sup>27</sup> one might argue that when we read and watch these plays, that is what we do in our own minds, both consciously (sometimes) and unconsciously (all the time). By making this thesis not only an *inter-play* but an *intra-play* study, one does provide Molière's characters with endogenous, psychological points of reference that sprang from the same time and place and imagination: each other. So if we explore Don Juan and *Psyché*'s Vénus with respect to each other, even using a modern theoretical framework, there is an early modern control. Locating Molière's characters along continua of empathy and narcissism sets them up to be known and considered in comparison to one another, not just as isolated personalities.

Interestingly, the anthropologist Sarah Blaffer Hrdy cautions, 'Documenting the emergence of a personality deficient in empathy—what we often mean by "sociopathic"—is problematic. Long-lived and multifaceted, humans are difficult to study, and there are daunting ethical constraints (which is as it should be)'.<sup>28</sup> However, through the study of fiction, the literary analyst is able to avoid the challenging moral concerns that surround living and breathing patients altogether.

The story of Narcissus, the 2000-year-old source myth of our conception of narcissism, has been a wellspring not only for academic study and psychoanalytic

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<sup>27</sup> Amy Wygant writes, 'narcissism seems potentially to be an anachronistic imposition on this moment, and an environment of narcissism would seem to be particularly difficult to establish in any satisfactory way. The once-trendy-sounding *Culture of Narcissism* is pop psychology at best. But things become more satisfactorily complicated when we realize that the question has arisen for scholars: does narcissism move through time as well, was it invented at a particular moment, and is it too an event which has a history? Kristeva argued that it did. The relatively late appearance of Ovid's story of Narcissus, there being no Greek elaboration of the tale, and its historical coincidence with Christianity's generalized injunction that the believer mirror Christ, signaled, she claimed, the appearance of what Ovid indeed called a "new madness" with which the properly modern subject pays for interiority. This question of the historicity of narcissism is bound up with that of psychoanalysis in general, and deserves to be investigated at length, but elsewhere'. See Amy Wygant, *Medea, Magic, and Modernity in France: Stages and Histories, 1553-1797* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), p. 127.

<sup>28</sup> Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, *Mother Nature: Maternal Instincts and How They Shape the Human Species* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999), p. 527.

theory, but also for art and literature, inspiring writers from Rousseau to Oscar Wilde.<sup>29</sup> While acknowledging the dominance of Ovid's telling of the story in his famous *Metamorphoses*, Denis Knoepfler<sup>30</sup> traces Narcissus's various Greek iterations, including those by Ovid's approximate contemporaries Conon and Pausanias, placing the character in historical and geographic context, while Ezio Pellizer<sup>31</sup> analyses the symbolism in the widespread versions in literature and in painting. In her expansive writing about love and Ovid's account, Kristeva views Narcissus as essential to understanding subjectivity in the Western world, explaining:

Narcisse nous séduit et s'impose comme moteur du subjectivisme occidental, et ce n'est pas seulement en raison de sa présence, explicite ou allusive, dans les *Ennéades*. La banalité du personnage (le jeune homme de Thespies n'a rien d'héroïque) mais tout aussi bien la démente de son aventure (Ovide parle d'une *novitas furoris*, d'une nouvelle démente) font de lui un cas limite, certes, mais un cas général. Ni Dionysos ni Christ, mais tragique et immortel par métamorphose florale, cet amoureux de lui-même nous est étrangement proche dans sa puérité quotidienne. Il nous gêne cependant, dégageant un malaise subtil, un inconfort moite et froid. Comme si ce début de nouvelle ère, l'ère chrétienne qui devait nous conduire à assumer notre humanité à travers la souffrance grandiose du Christ, insinuait parallèlement, non pas sur les hauteurs sacrificielles du Calvaire, mais dans les terrains vagues, humides et marécageux de l'expérience humaine, que l'intériorité, cette Psyché devenue psychisme, se paie par... une nouvelle démente. Humaine, trop humaine...<sup>32</sup>

Although her observation that Narcissus gives us 'un malaise subtil, un inconfort moite et froid' would most likely resonate with many moderns, Kristeva's overall point contradicts the idea that humanity is newly narcissistic, and furthermore, the fact that Narcissus does make us uncomfortable points to some level of empathy. It shows that we do identify with him, in spite of—or because of—his banality. Hence, she suggests that the *démence* of narcissism has been with us at least as long as Christ.

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<sup>29</sup> Rousseau's play *Narcisse ou l'Amant de lui-même* was first published in 1753, and Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was first published in 1890.

<sup>30</sup> Denis Knoepfler, *La Patrie de Narcisse* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2010).

<sup>31</sup> Ezio Pellizer, *Le Mythe de Narcisse* [2003], trans. by Jean Bouffartigue (Paris: Belin, 2010).

<sup>32</sup> Kristeva, pp. 146-7.

### 3. Broader Indications

In view of this, it is necessary to take into consideration the larger implications of this subject matter. In a 1960 addendum to *Molière: A New Criticism*, Moore comments on a year he spent teaching at an American university. Of this time abroad, he writes, ‘It has also suggested to me that Molière, perhaps of all great French writers is accessible to the American student’.<sup>33</sup> Over fifty years later, his observation rings true in an even more sweeping cultural and theatrical context. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, out of the 76 plays that were produced the most frequently in the United States—excluding works by Shakespeare—there is only one play that predates the nineteenth century, and it is *Le Tartuffe*.<sup>34</sup> More than any other early modern playwright, Molière is very much a living presence in the American zeitgeist.<sup>35</sup>

Concomitantly, in recent years, it has been alleged that mankind, especially its younger generations, is now more narcissistic than ever. For example, in 2006, Jean Twenge published her bestselling book *Generation Me*, in which she presents an analysis of college students’ results on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory, arguing that young people in the United States have been growing more narcissistic for decades.<sup>36</sup> Also, social scientists and even politicians claim that empathy is a resource that must be cultivated. In fact, the current President of the United States has lamented that we suffer from an ‘empathy deficit’<sup>37</sup> in the West.

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<sup>33</sup> Moore, *Molière: A New Criticism*, p. 8.

<sup>34</sup> ‘Top 10 Most-Produced Plays’, in *American Theatre* <<http://www.tcg.org/publications/at/attopten.cfm>> [accessed 5 November 2013]. Also see Terry Teachout, ‘America’s Favorite Plays’, *Wall Street Journal*, 9 January 2010, section W, p. 12.

<sup>35</sup> For instance, an amateur production of *Le Tartuffe* was produced in June 2013 in the gardens of the Headquarters of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, DC, performed by a cast of government employees.

<sup>36</sup> One possible way of measuring levels of narcissism and empathy across generations, and indeed, across centuries, would be to perform a questionnaire study of characters in dramatic literature by a wide range of occidental authors.

<sup>37</sup> On 16 June 2006, then-Senator Obama delivered a commencement address in which he described an ‘empathy deficit’. See Barack Obama, ‘Obama Challenges Grads to Cultivate Empathy’, *Northwestern*

Molière lived and worked at the ultimate nexus of entertainment and political power. Urging his muse to thank the king, Molière writes in the *Remerciement au roi* that she should appear at the Louvre dressed as a marquis; he states of the king, ‘Il connaîtra votre visage, | Malgré votre déguisement’ (71-2). He then describes the wordless understanding between his muse and the king thus: ‘Dès que vous ouvrirez la bouche, | Pour lui parler de grâce, et de bienfait, | Il comprendra d’abord ce que vous voudrez dire’ (95-7). Virginia Scott, in her unabashedly imaginative biography of Molière, writes,

Two things stand out in this clever and graceful bit of courtly writing. One is the picture of Molière quietly waiting to be recognized by the king who knows his face. The other is the assumption underlying the fictional event of the ‘compliment’ that the king is too occupied with the real business of ruling to take time for ceremony, just as Molière is too absorbed with the real business of entertaining the king to take the time to express his thanks in person. All that is necessary between them is a glance of understanding.<sup>38</sup>

Scott’s interpretation is, essentially, a flash of empathy in the context between the playwright and the monarch. To draw a comparison between the governments of Louis XIV and the contemporary United States is a huge leap; Stendhal opposes such a parallel explicitly, writing,

Les jeux de la cour, si regrettés par les nobles, sous le nom de légitimité, n’étaient si attachants que par la cristallisation<sup>39</sup> qu’ils provoquaient. Il n’y avait pas de courtisan qui ne rêvât la fortune rapide d’un Luynes ou d’un Lauzun, et de femme aimable qui ne vît en perspective le duché de M<sup>me</sup> de Polignac. Aucun gouvernement raisonnable ne peut redonner cette cristallisation. Rien n’est anti-imagination comme le gouvernement des États-Unis d’Amérique.<sup>40</sup>

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*University News*, 19 June 2006 <[www.northwestern.edu/newscenter/stories/2006/06/barack.html](http://www.northwestern.edu/newscenter/stories/2006/06/barack.html)> [accessed 7 December 2013]

<sup>38</sup> Virginia Scott, *Molière: A Theatrical Life*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) p. 143.

<sup>39</sup> According to Stendhal, *cristallisation* is ‘l’opération de l’esprit, qui tire de tout ce qui se présente la découverte que l’objet aimé a de nouvelles perfections’. See Stendhal, *De l’amour* [1822], ed. by Henri Martineau (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1959), p. 9.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

When one considers the role imagination plays in empathy, one wonders whether or not it is preferable to have a government composed of persons with such a capacity, and this thesis proceeds with cognizance of the similarities and distinctions between these two eras.

Returning to the ‘two cultures’ conflict, it is useful to cite Heinz Kohut, who writes, ‘it is one of the specific contributions of psychoanalysis to have transformed the intuitive empathy of artists and poets into the observational tool of a trained scientific investigator’.<sup>41</sup> And yet, the impasse between arts and sciences is compounded by a surprising distrust of pre-modern literary interpretations of human nature. For instance, primatologist Frans de Waal is specifically dismissive of writing that predates *On the Origin of Species*; he states of Rousseau’s *Le Contrat social*, ‘this way of framing the issue is a leftover from pre-Darwinian days, based on a totally erroneous image of our species’, and he concludes that it is a post-Darwinian ‘reality that ought to be taken as a starting point for any discussion about human society, not the reveries of centuries past’.<sup>42</sup> Thus, this work aims to ameliorate not only the arts and sciences division, but a temporal division, as well. Although evolutionary theory does deserve serious consideration for understanding human nature, it is obviously wrong to depreciate the work of writers who lived before Darwin simply for that fact. Indeed, Carroll writes, ‘Darwin’s moral psychology is founded on the principle not of egoistic competition among isolable units in a social group, but on the principle of evolved social sympathy’.<sup>43</sup> Truly, empathy and narcissism are at the nexus of a literary study that seeks to take a more scientific understanding of humankind into account. In a more conciliatory mode, Brian Boyd has written, ‘It is high time [...] to

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<sup>41</sup> Heinz Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self: A Systematic Approach to the Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 303.

<sup>42</sup> Frans de Waal, *The Age of Empathy* (London: Souvenir Press, 2009), p. 20-1.

<sup>43</sup> Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, p. 45.

see what literature and psychology can now offer each other',<sup>44</sup> which is what I aim to do.

...

#### 4. Methodology

To do so, this thesis makes use of contemporary scientific and psychological research to provide a fresh structure for understanding how Molière's characters compare to one another. Through close reading of the plays, I chose 269 characters from whom we hear enough spoken dialogue and witness enough action to be able to analyse their personalities. They range from title characters to supporting ones that only appear during single scenes. Employing the Empathy Quotient<sup>45</sup> and the Narcissistic Personality Inventory<sup>46</sup> questionnaires,<sup>47</sup> I confer on each character numerical scores, rating his empathy and narcissism, respectively. These scores are interesting in and of themselves in that they relate a broad measure of how empathetic and narcissistic each specific character is. Moreover, the accumulation of these scores reveals a spectrum, showing how the characters line up next to each other within each play and within Molière's entire theatre.<sup>48</sup> A third measure uses the criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder as outlined by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental*

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<sup>44</sup> Brian Boyd, 'The Psychologist', *The American Scholar*, 25 August 2011  
<<http://theamericanscholar.org/the-psychologist/#.VDADs0vUdBU>> [accessed 7 November 2011]

<sup>45</sup> Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy*, pp. 129-34.

<sup>46</sup> Robert N. Raskin and Calvin S. Hall, 'A Narcissistic Personality Inventory', *Psychological Reports*, 45 (1979), 590. Also see Raskin and Terry.

<sup>47</sup> Some of the questionnaire items are aimed specifically at modern audiences; when this was the case, I would simply replace the item with a statement that would have been possible in the seventeenth century. For instance, item 33 on the Empathy Quotient states, 'I usually stay emotionally detached when watching a film'. I replaced this with: 'I usually stay emotionally detached when watching a play'. See Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy*, p. 133.

<sup>48</sup> Indeed, when Raskin and Hall originally constructed the Narcissistic Personality Inventory in 1979, they noted, 'The inventory is not necessarily a measure of a personality *disorder*, although future research may show that persons diagnosed as having a narcissistic personality disorder score high on the inventory. For the present, it should be regarded as a measure of the degree to which individuals differ in a trait we have labeled "narcissism"'. See Raskin and Hall.

*Disorders*, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> editions.<sup>49</sup> This checklist draws a line between those characters that are afflicted with malignant narcissism and those that are not. The use of these three measures of empathy and narcissism—which when combined include 89 separate items—to evaluate 269 characters yields 23,941 individual personality assessments. It is a slow process that demands careful rereading and consideration. After evaluating each of these 269 characters and calculating their scores, I created tables with those scores ranked from highest to lowest, both within each play individually (see Appendix 7) and for all of Molière’s plays combined (see Appendix 8).

One risk inherent to this method is in limiting how to look at the data for such a large group. Thus, with the data from all 269 characters, I calculated the standard deviation<sup>50</sup> for each psychological measure (the standard deviations are included in Appendix 8). All characters with scores more than one standard deviation above the mean on the Empathy Quotient, I deem ‘empathizers’, and those more than two standard deviations above the mean, ‘super empathizers’. On the narcissism scales, I will call ‘narcissists’ all characters with scores above five on the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* criteria, as well as those characters with scores more than one standard deviation above the mean on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory. There are three characters situated more than two standard deviations above the mean on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory—Tartuffe in *Le Tartuffe*, Don Juan in *Don Juan*, and Vénus in *Psyché*—and I will call those ‘super narcissists’.

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<sup>49</sup> The fifth edition of the *Manual* was published in May 2013, causing a great deal of uproar over changes and additions of new mental disorders; however, the diagnostic criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder were unchanged between the fourth and fifth editions. See *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 2013), pp. 669-72.

<sup>50</sup> For the standard deviation formula, see Thomas H.W. Wonnacott and Ronald J. Wonnacott, *Introductory Statistics*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn (Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1990), pp. 41-3.

A simultaneous strength and weakness in using these scores as the basis for judging which characters are more empathetic and which ones are more narcissistic is that they are all based on the understanding and, admittedly, the biases of the scorer. But the same is true for an actor approaching a part. For instance, Maurice Descotes writes of Elmire in *Le Tartuffe*, ‘le rôle est assez imprécis pour que, du texte, on puisse tirer à peu près ce que l’on voudra. En fait, sur ce point, *tout* dépend de la comédienne—et de ses partenaires (un Orgon trop stupide, comme un Tartuffe trop brillant, détermine le visage d’Elmire)’.<sup>51</sup> In this sense, the literary analyst is engaged in an activity not unlike an actor preparing a role. Using questionnaires requires an act of empathy on the part of the literary researcher. Mental health professionals administer the Empathy Quotient and Narcissistic Personality Inventory to patients who fill them out for themselves, but their use with imaginary characters in dramatic texts requires the student of literature to imagine each role as he responds to the questionnaire in place of a clinician. Additionally, performing this type of work on the plays of an author as major as Molière is constructive. While testing a new framework through which to approach the texts, it is helpful when read by others who also have a high familiarity with the texts examined; thus, the reader is encouraged to challenge the scorer’s interpretations. And he will do so according to the contexts he knows or in which he finds himself.

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## 5. Blueprint

But to use these analyses, the first step was to make sure that the question is relevant in Molière’s case, and with what evidence. Thus, running contrary to the concurrent, late-nineteenth-century geneses of both terms, I will argue in the first part of my

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<sup>51</sup> Maurice Descotes, *Les Grands rôles du théâtre de Molière* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1960), p. 177.

thesis that empathy and narcissism are in fact both important forces in Molière's quarrels, and that the playwright's vocabulary enriches our understanding of what these concepts signified in seventeenth-century French literary culture. More specifically, the first chapter of this work reveals how empathy and narcissism are at the core of major early modern disputes surrounding four of Molière's best-known plays: *Le Misanthrope*, *L'École des femmes*, *Le Tartuffe*, and *Don Juan*. Close observation of his harshest contemporary critics shows them engaged in both empathy through identification as well as professional jealousy and *amour-propre*. The second chapter plumbs words Molière uses to convey empathy and narcissism, relying on the three major French dictionaries of the seventeenth century. Focusing on the various meanings of the words *intérêt*, *amitié*, and *amour*, I explore a sample of eight plays, including the four mentioned above with the addition of *Le Médecin volant*, *Le Médecin malgré lui*, *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, and *Le Malade imaginaire*. In the early stages of my research, it seemed that separating treatments of empathy and narcissism into different chapters would be a logical way to proceed. However, my work on Molière's quarrels and lexis shows the inseparable quality of these phenomena, and thus severing them would be counterproductive. This is why I examine them side-by-side in the three subsequent chapters, which employ the findings of my psychometric questionnaire analysis as a foundation.

In the third chapter, I investigate the physical appearances of Molière's most empathetic and narcissistic characters, showing how he conveys their traits to the spectator *visually*, since theatre is a visual medium. Largely, this manifests itself through characters' adherence to—or breaking of—various codes of behaviour. The fourth chapter examines the way Molière's variously empathetic and narcissistic characters think. As it is posited by contemporary psychology and neuroscience,

cognition and mindreading are important components of empathy. I then pose the question: can the narcissistic character change? And if so, is this metamorphosis enacted through thinking or feeling? Certainly, there are situations in which thinking, by making one adhere to a code of conduct, can stand in for empathy. However, Freud offers more hope for change in the form of love, writing, ‘a person in love is humble. A person who loves has, so to speak, forfeited a part of his narcissism, and it can only be replaced by his being loved. In all these respects self-regard seems to remain related to the narcissistic element in love’.<sup>52</sup> And empathy as identification is directly related to pleasure in spectatorship. To this end, in the final chapter, I will consider how Molière expresses these psychological traits with music, dance, metatheatre, and spectatorship, inquiring whether or not the performing arts, from the point of view of actors and the audience, can, through encouraging empathy and romantic love, create a narcissism cure.

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<sup>52</sup> Freud, ‘On Narcissism’, p. 40.

## Chapter 1

### Self-Love and Sympathy: Two Major Issues in Molière's Quarrels

#### 1.1 Introduction

French literature during the *âge classique* was marked by plentiful quarrels, ranging from the *querelle du Cid* to the *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*. Amidst this atmosphere of polemic, Molière too found his work at the center of a number of heated debates. Three plays in particular, *L'École des femmes* (1662), *Le Tartuffe* (1664), and *Don Juan* (1665), were subject to harsh attacks during Molière's lifetime, as was another, *Le Misanthrope* (1666), during the following century.

The interaction between the comedies and the critics parallels the overall scope of this thesis; that is, to consider the role of narcissism and empathy in the fictions Molière created on stage and also in the exchange between the plays and the audience. These *querelles* provide an apt starting point for my project: a way to take the subject matter of these debates into account and discover where the question of narcissism fits in. They also provide a way to see a framework of the historical, social, and intellectual context of Molière's work, as well as an opportunity to assemble a compendium of endogenous words and ideas related to narcissism and empathy.

The quarrel surrounding *L'École des femmes* was spurred by writers and actors envious of Molière's success, notably those associated with the rival theatrical troupe of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. By contrast, the polemic surrounding *Le Tartuffe* erupted because the play was seen as an attack on religious devotion. Pierre Roullé and the Archbishop of Paris both wrote pamphlets brimming with outrage and ad

hominem attacks against the playwright. And in Molière's defence, an anonymous writer published the *Lettre sur la comédie de l'Imposteur*.

Similarly, *Don Juan* was execrated for the seductive immorality and atheism of its title character. One such critic was Barbier d'Aucour, the sieur de Rochemont, a lawyer who penned *Observations sur une comédie de Molière, intitulée, 'Le Festin de Pierre'* (1665). Another, Armand de Bourbon, the Prince de Conti, had been Molière's patron during his years of travelling in the provinces. Conti later eschewed the life of a courtier for one of religious devotion, and he published his broad attack on the theatre, *Traité de la comédie et des spectacles*, in 1666.

And then there is Rousseau. In his 1758 *Lettre à d'Alembert*, he asserts that Molière's theatre is 'une école de vices et de mauvaises mœurs'.<sup>1</sup> Rousseau wrote this *Lettre* in response to an article by d'Alembert in the *Encyclopédie*, in which he suggested that the city of Geneva, Rousseau's birthplace, should establish a theatre. When Rousseau discusses the deleterious content of plays, he focuses his argument on *Le Misanthrope*, reasoning that it must have a pernicious moral effect because it ridicules the protagonist, Alceste, a man Rousseau thought fundamentally decent. While the authors of the *querelles* of *L'École des femmes* and *Le Tartuffe* focus narrowly on those two plays respectively, Rochemont, Conti, and Rousseau attack Molière's art as a whole.

Although Molière's critics make different complaints, all of the *querelles* raise questions that lead to a discussion of narcissism and empathy, both with respect to what happens on stage and to how the audience reacts. Like Narcissus in Ovid's myth, narcissistic individuals are ignorant or in denial of their true selves; they can't face the knowledge of who they really are, so they build up grandiose, idealized

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Lettre à d'Alembert* [1758], ed. by Marc Buffat (Paris: Éditions Flammarion, 2003), p. 83.

fantasies.<sup>2</sup> A narcissist requires continuous external reassurance of his false self-image, and one of his defining characteristics is his inability to feel empathy, which implies both putting himself in someone else's place and having an appropriate emotional response. In varying degrees, Arnolphe, Orgon, Tartuffe, Don Juan, and even Alceste all exhibit narcissistic traits.

I've chosen to consider the plays thematically rather than chronologically. While Alceste and Arnolphe's narcissistic behaviours are manifested by their social flaws—their respective obsessions with sincerity and cuckoldry—Tartuffe and Don Juan's religious hypocrisy is rooted in their sinful *amour-propre*. My progression will thus be from simpler cases of narcissistic types to the more complex, full-blown narcissists, starting with Alceste, followed by Arnolphe, Orgon, and Tartuffe, and finishing with Don Juan. Another reason why I will begin with *Le Misanthrope*, rather than *L'École des femmes*, is that its quarrel is distinguished from the other three in that Molière, long dead when Rousseau launched his attack, was unable to defend himself, whereas he vigorously responded to those who criticized his work during his lifetime. My discussion of *Le Tartuffe* will come third, because it forms a categorical bridge between social and religious compulsions, with Orgon as an example of the former and Tartuffe of the latter. This progression gives a foretaste of how Molière's characters are ranked in my questionnaire analysis in my later chapters. Some questions raised by the *querelles* include what it means to be an *honnête homme*; how it is possible for a character to be at once sympathetic and ridiculous; the nature of

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<sup>2</sup> Furetière notes that the flower *narcisse* garnered its name from 'la metamorphose qui fut faite en cette fleur d'un beau garçon qui s'appelloit ainsi, & qui se noya estant amoureux de luy-même, & volant embrasser son image qu'il voyoit dans l'eau'. Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel* (Rotterdam-La-Haye: Arnout & Leers, 1690), in *Gallica* <<http://gallica.bnf.fr>> [accessed 2 February 2010]. Throughout this thesis, I have used modern spellings when the best editions available have done so.

friendship; and the potential for ridicule to either degrade or elevate individuals and society.

In the general introduction, I summarized the contemporary understanding of narcissism, Narcissistic Personality Disorder, and empathy, and my overall intention is to create a dialectic between notions from the seventeenth century (*amour-propre*, *sympathie*, for example) and the concepts we use today to describe these personality traits. Therefore, the goal of this chapter is not to give detailed analyses of these plays, nor to present their full historical context, which I will address in greater depth in my second chapter, with recourse to other seventeenth-century authors and dictionaries. Even though in subsequent chapters I will make use of concepts from psychoanalysis and contemporary psychology as a framework for looking at the words and actions of characters on stage and the relationship between the stage and the audience, my aim here is to show how questions that pertain to empathy and narcissism were present in debates stirred by critical texts from Molière's own time.

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### 1.2 *Honnête homme* or *Amour-propre*?

An intelligent and wealthy young nobleman who attracts women with ease, Molière's Alceste has all the external trappings of a perfect gentleman. But unfortunately for him—and virtually all those who encounter him—Alceste's character, temperament, and behaviour do not match his enviable physical and circumstantial gifts. The play's subtitle, *L'Atrabilaire amoureux*, expresses the contrast between Alceste's potential and true selves; the noun *atrabilaire* betrays an imbalanced, melancholic personality, while the adjective *amoureux* bespeaks the situation of love, and thus, the question of one's ability or inability to empathize. However, the actual title of the play leaves little doubt as to which side of this spectrum Alceste favours. Unlike a *philanthrope*,

who is inclined to love all men, a *misanthrope* loves no one, not even himself, which is entirely consistent with the inner life of a narcissist, who, rather than loving his true self, loves an image that he sees reflected in other people's eyes. The theologian Pierre Nicole delineates a paradox of *amour-propre* that is relevant to Alceste's misanthropy, writing, 'L'homme veut se voir, parce qu'il est vain. Il évite de se voir; parce qu'étant vain, il ne peut souffrir la vûe de ses défauts & de ses miseres [...] il ne voit au-lieu de lui-même, que le vain fantôme qu'il s'en est formé'.<sup>3</sup> Nicole's 'vain fantôme' is analogous to the narcissist's false self-image.

In protesting the idea of establishing a theatre in Geneva, Rousseau made Alceste a central part of his argument, and his judgment of Alceste's characterization is not generous. In the *Lettre à d'Alembert*, he holds up *Le Misanthrope* as an example of the harm a play can cause society, arguing that it is wrong for Molière to mock a man such as Alceste. He acknowledges Molière's talent at making people laugh ('Il fait rire, il est vrai'<sup>4</sup>), but at the same time, he implies that Molière inadvertently wrote Alceste's character as an *honnête homme* rather than an actual misanthrope. Rousseau writes, 'Il n'a donc point prétendu former un honnête homme',<sup>5</sup> but he claims that Molière failed in his intentions in constructing Alceste's character, stating, 'On pourrait dire qu'il a joué dans Alceste, non la vertu, mais un véritable défaut, qui est la haine des hommes. À cela je répons qu'il n'est pas vrai qu'il ait donné cette haine à son personnage'.<sup>6</sup> Further along, Rousseau explains this mistaken characterization, claiming, 'Quoique Molière fit des pièces répréhensibles, il était personnellement honnête homme', and then adding, 'Molière a mis dans la

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<sup>3</sup> Pierre Nicole, *De la connaissance de soy-même*, in *Essais de morale* [1671], 4 vols (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1733-71), III, p. 209, in *Gallica* <<http://gallica.bnf.fr>> [accessed 19 January 2015]

<sup>4</sup> Rousseau, p. 84.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

bouche d'Alceste un si grand nombre de ses propres maximes que plusieurs ont cru qu'il s'était voulu peindre lui-même'.<sup>7</sup> Thus, according to Rousseau's interpretation of the play, Alceste is an *honnête homme* and it is unacceptable for Molière to parade such a character around on stage as the object of mockery.

Rousseau clearly esteems Alceste and is meticulous in pointing out his more admirable traits. He calls him, 'un homme droit, sincère, estimable'.<sup>8</sup> He then gets to the crux of the matter, 'quoique Alceste ait des défauts réels dont on n'a pas tort de rire, on sent pourtant au fond du cœur un respect pour lui dont on ne peut se défendre'.<sup>9</sup> The vehemence of Rousseau's reaction to *Le Misanthrope* suggests that he himself identifies with Alceste, leading him to the character's defence. The feeling of respect he describes having for him 'au fond du cœur' could be interpreted as sympathy. In fact, from the start of his critique, Rousseau sets up a parallel between himself and Alceste. He alludes to the foolish protagonists in the comedies *George Dandin* and *L'Avare*, but then says, 'passons tout d'un coup à celle qu'on reconnaît unanimement pour son chef-d'œuvre: je veux dire, *Le Misanthrope*'.<sup>10</sup> By emphasizing the unity of public opinion about Molière's work, using the pronoun 'on' and adverb 'unanimement', he includes himself with the rest of the audience, but then he spends most of his critique showing how he is not, in fact, in agreement with this 'on'. His opinion stands apart from everyone else's. This resembles the way that Alceste sets himself apart from humanity. Rousseau's criticisms of *Le Misanthrope*

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

and insistence that Alceste is an *honnête homme* raise two important questions. First of all, what is an *honnête homme*? And is Alceste, in fact, an example of one?<sup>11</sup>

Interestingly, Rousseau brings up the subject of *amour-propre*, which presents a third question. He writes that the misanthrope's hatred of humanity 'le détache de lui-même pour fixer toute son attention sur le genre humain. Cette habitude élève, agrandit ses idées, détruit en lui les inclinations basses qui nourrissent et concentrent l'amour-propre'.<sup>12</sup> He views Alceste's scorn for humankind as lifting him above the possibility of *amour-propre*. But he describes Alceste as truly being set apart from and superior to other people, which is a classically narcissistic attitude. One could argue that Alceste's insistence on belittling others reveals his arrogance, another attribute related to *amour-propre*. Also, Rousseau does not ask what Alceste's purported superiority renders him. Isn't an *honnête homme* still an *homme*? Alceste's grandiosity makes it difficult for the audience to identify with him, in turn making him an easier target for ridicule. Contrary to Rousseau, it seems that Molière's characterization of Alceste was very much intentional; the intention was for him to be ridiculous, and it is Alceste's narcissistic traits that make him so. Thus, I've added two important endogenous concepts to my compendium: *honnête homme* and *amour-propre*. Clearly, *amour-propre* is related to some aspects of what we call 'narcissism' today, while *honnête homme* constituted an ideal of social behaviour in seventeenth-century France.

La Rochefoucauld writes a great deal about *amour-propre* in his *Maximes*, which were published in 1665, just a year before the premiere of *Le Misanthrope*, and one of his most piercing observations is pertinent to Rousseau's assertion. He notes,

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<sup>11</sup> Another question is, what was Rousseau's motivation in this? In large part, he was anxious to change his own image, and attacking *galanterie* was a way to make this change clear. For more, see Alain Viala, *La France galante* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2008), pp. 467-72.

<sup>12</sup> Rousseau, p. 89.

‘La fidélité qui paraît en la plupart des hommes n’est qu’une invention de l’amour-propre pour attirer la confiance. C’est un moyen de nous élever au-dessus des autres’.<sup>13</sup> It is striking that both Rousseau and La Rochefoucauld make use of the same verb, ‘élever’. Even though La Rochefoucauld is not referring to Alceste, the idea that *amour-propre* leads to placing oneself above others does apply to him.

The *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française*<sup>14</sup> defines an *honneste homme* specifically: ‘*Homme d’honneur* [...] comprend encore toutes les qualitez agreables qu’un homme peut avoir dans la vie civile [...] ne veut dire autre chose que galant homme, homme de bonne conversation, de bonne compagnie’.<sup>15</sup> This highlights the term’s social aspect, but it also encompasses a moral one. Indeed, the same dictionary offers as its primary definition of the adjective *honneste*, ‘Vertueux, conforme à l’honneur & à la vertu’. With respect to the social dimension, Alain Viala draws a distinction between men who are *honnête* and *galant*, writing that ‘L’honnête homme [...] manifeste un souci de plaire au monarque. Le galant homme, qui est un modèle plus fin, vise à plaire à tous’.<sup>16</sup> By contrast, Rousseau’s notion of an *honnête homme* seems more based on the misanthrope’s desire to be completely sincere with everyone rather than on his social comportment. But does Alceste live up to either description?

In spite of the passion of Rousseau’s argument, it is obvious that Alceste does not comport himself as an *honnête homme*. Throughout the play, Alceste consistently expresses an intense desire to physically distance himself from humanity. As many critics have noticed, dramatically speaking, he is obsessed with his desire to flee the stage, which translates to a desire to flee the social community. In the opening scene,

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<sup>13</sup> François de La Rochefoucauld, *Maximes* [1665], ed. by Jacques Truchet (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1977), p. 67.

<sup>14</sup> I will return to seventeenth-century dictionaries in the following chapter.

<sup>15</sup> Académie française, *Dictionnaire* [1694] in *Dictionnaires d’autrefois*, *The ARTFL Project* <<http://artfl-project.uchicago.edu/>> [accessed 3 February 2010]

<sup>16</sup> Viala, *La France galante*, p. 188.

he tells Philinte, ‘Et, parfois, il me prend des mouvements soudains, | De fuir, dans un Désert, l’approche des Humains’ (I, i, 143-4). In Act V, scene i, he repeats to his friend, ‘Et je veux me tirer du Commerce des Hommes’ (1486). And the very last lines he speaks are, ‘Je vais sortir d’un Gouffre où triomphent les vices; | Et chercher sur la Terre, un endroit écarté, | Où d’être Homme d’honneur, on ait la liberté’ (V, iv, 1804-6). Since he is so desperate to escape from other people and isolate himself, it would seem that he loves no one.

Alceste’s soaring ideals are first tested, in Act I, scene ii, when Oronte asks him what he thinks of his poem. Rather than being direct and forthcoming, Alceste dithers and shies away from expressing his true thoughts, until he reaches the point where he explodes. Drawing a comparison between Alceste and Oronte, Viala writes, ‘Alceste et Oronte sont deux membres de cette catégorie sociale qu’on appelle les galants hommes. Mais sont-ils vraiment galants? Non. Car l’un en fait trop et l’autre... aussi mais dans l’autre sens’.<sup>17</sup> While Alceste’s backing down from his beliefs might have merely made him seem weak, he also comes across as unkind, since he does eventually tell Oronte his opinion. The result of his shirking is that he is neither courageous, nor socially graceful.

Perhaps the scene in which Alceste reveals the most about himself—especially how little he resembles an *honnête homme*—is Act II, scène iv, when he, Célimène, Philinte, and Éliante are joined by a pair of gossip-hungry marquis. Playing to her newly arrived guests, Célimène presents a series of eight scathing portraits of acquaintances, and Alceste criticizes the other courtiers for laughing at her jibes. But he only asks Célimène to stop after her eighth portrait, of ‘Damis’, of whom she observes, ‘Il se met au-dessus de tous les autres Gens’ (II, iv, 644). The marquis

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

Acaste enthusiastically responds, ‘Dieu me damne, voilà son Portrait véritable’ (II, iv, 649), and Clitandre assents, ‘Pour bien peindre les Gens, vous êtes admirable!’ (II, iv, 650). The fact that Alceste doesn’t utter a word during the seven preceding portraits, and only objects after this one, confirms that ‘Damis’ touched too close to home. Céli-mène’s comment is also strikingly similar to the maxim I quoted above from La Rochefoucauld; thus, Alceste is bothered by the description of a man afflicted by *amour-propre*. In a way, the interaction between these four characters closely mimics the interaction between Molière [Céli-mène, rendering lifelike portraits], his audience [Acaste and Clitandre, expressing praise], and his critics [Alceste, admonishing].

Later in the same scene, Céli-mène relates how Alceste actually enjoys holding the opposite opinion of everyone. She says,

Le Sentiment d’autrui, n’est jamais, pour lui plaire,  
Il prend, toujours, en main, l’opinion contraire;  
Et penserait paraître un Homme du commun,  
Si l’on voyait qu’il fût de l’avis de quelqu’un.  
(II, iv, 673-6)

Alceste readily affirms her appraisal, saying

C’est que jamais, morbleu, les Hommes n’ont raison,  
Que le Chagrin, contre eux, est toujours de Saison,  
Et que je vois qu’ils sont, sur toutes les Affaires,  
Loueurs impertinents, ou Censeurs téméraires.  
(II, iv, 687-90)

He is well aware of his behaviour, and feels that it is fully justified. This exchange reinforces his inflated sense of self; he does not want to seem ‘un Homme du commun’, and feels no shame in admitting it. Also, in his response, he openly acknowledges in a room full of people that he sorts all humans into two categories, flatterers and censors, and it is clear that he thinks he alone is neither. He thus reveals his lack of insight and his contempt for others.

In light of Viala's comment that an *honnête homme* is marked by 'un souci de plaire au monarque', according to Faret's 1630 treatise *L'Honnête homme*, it is significant that Alceste worries little about being pleasing to anyone. There is one moment where he takes the king into account explicitly, when the guard from the Maréchaux de France asks Alceste to go with him, on account of his having insulted Oronte's poetry. Alceste tells Philinte he will not recant, 'Hors qu'un Commandement exprès du Roi me vienne' (II, vi, 769). What happens next is revealing: a rare stage direction states that Alceste's next words are directed, 'À *Clitandre et Acaste, qui rient*' (II, vi). Alceste curses at them, 'Par la sangbleu, Messieurs, je ne croyais pas être | Si plaisant que je suis' (II, vi, 773-4). This exchange shows that even these *marquis ridicules* think his inflexible clinging to his aesthetic judgment is ridiculous.

This scene raises another notable aspect of Alceste's social interactions, which is his unrestrained use of profanity. Over the course of the play, he exclaims 'morbleu' eleven times, interspersed with the occasional 'parbleu' and 'sangbleu'. It exposes his nature as angry and aggressive, rather than showing the pleasing manners and consideration of the 'Homme d'honneur' (V, iv, 1806) he claims to aspire to be as he exits the stage at the end. Were he an *honnête homme*, he would not speak this way; but to the contrary, rage is common when a narcissist's *amour-propre* is wounded.

The presence of Philinte, Alceste's loyal friend and a genuine *honnête homme*, who is with him when the play begins and ends, is a mitigating force in one's impression of Alceste's narcissism. Although Alceste is often annoying and bad-mannered, Philinte's patience with him shows that he is not completely alone. Alceste claims to seek isolation, but the simple fact that Philinte and Éliante follow him at the

end implies some level of sociability and friendship that would be lacking in a more extremely afflicted narcissist. While he is no *honnête homme*, neither is he a monster.

In the *Art poétique*, Boileau asserts that ‘Un honnête homme, un fat, un jaloux, un bizarre’<sup>18</sup> are all equally excellent comic subjects. Regardless of who is correct about whether or not we may laugh at an *honnête homme*, Molière did write Alceste to be risible. In the first scene of *Le Misanthrope*, when talking with Philinte about his lawsuit, Alceste says,

Je verrai dans cette Plaiderie,  
Si les Hommes auront assez d’effronterie,  
Seront assez méchants, scélérats et pervers,  
Pour me faire injustice aux yeux de l’Univers’  
(I, i, 197-200)

Michael Hawcroft writes of this passage, ‘In dramaturgical terms, Molière is doing here what he did in the earlier part of the scene when Alceste was insisting on always speaking the truth to people. Molière is making him ride for a fall’.<sup>19</sup>

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### 1.3 The Audience and the *Ingénue*

It is interesting to think about how an audience might react to characters that, like Alceste, are afflicted with excessive self-love. Keeping in mind the question of whom the audience finds laughable, it is fitting to consider *L’École des femmes*. In the context of these polemics, this particular debate is remarkable because the main questions it raises do not revolve around the play’s most visible character; the authors of the *querelle de L’École des femmes* do not come to the defence of the male lead. In this quarrel, the female character is the focal point rather than the narcissistic male protagonist. The instigators, including Robinet, Donneau de Visé, and Boursault,

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<sup>18</sup> Nicolas Boileau, *L’Art poétique* [1674], ed. by Jean-Pierre Collinet (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), III, 364.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Hawcroft, *Molière: Reasoning with Fools* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 143.

waste little ink on Arnolphe, expending their energies instead on Agnès. Questions that arise from this *querelle* include, is it clear that Arnolphe is a narcissist? Who laughs at whom? Is the characterization of Agnès believable, and how can a character be both risible and sympathetic? Thus, after looking at the meaning of *amour-propre*, the primary question here is about the nature of laughter.

A man fixated on cuckoldry, Arnolphe resorts to a sinister experiment of social engineering to obtain a faithful wife. His (mis)education of Agnès shows him playing God—after teaching her ‘Les Maximes du mariage’ (III, ii), Arnolphe claims ‘Comme un morceau de cire entre mes mains elle est, | Et je lui puis donner la forme qui me plaît’ (III, iii, 810-1). There is hardly a more perfect example of delusions of grandeur than the power Arnolphe imagines he wields over his ward’s mind. It is curious that critics did not pay much attention to his behaviour, and it shows that they found it natural to laugh at him. And the criticisms he did receive are indirect, showing instead how a man ideally should be rather than assailing Arnolphe for specific wrongdoings.

In one such oblique attack, Arnolphe is criticized by being contrasted with empathetic men. In his *Panegyrique de l’École des femmes*, Robinet excoriates Arnolphe’s cruel example of marital relations in a surprising and original manner. Throughout this short play, young couples and their friends debate the merits of Molière’s comedy. In the final scene, the arrival of an Englishman reminds one of the men of an anecdote about the immense sympathy of English husbands for their wives: ‘l’on m’a dit qu’une femme accouchant si loin de son mari que vous puissiez imaginer, il sent comme elle toutes les douleurs de l’accouchement, se met au lit, et

fait toutes les cérémonies d'une accouchée'.<sup>20</sup> Hyperbolic as this may seem, Robinet compares Arnolphe with a husband who shares with his wife a bond of empathy so potent that he can practically feel her childbearing pains. The excessiveness of the example simply mirrors the excessiveness of Arnolphe's egoism. This vignette casts Arnolphe as the antithesis of an empathetic man.

With respect to the audience, this debate injects the idea of *amour-propre* into the way spectators react to a comedy and to each other. Laughter and applause (or their absence) are not mere signs of aesthetic pleasure, but rather, they can be defence mechanisms. Boileau describes this dynamic between stage and spectator, writing, 'Chacun, peint avec art dans ce nouveau miroir, | S'y vit avec plaisir, ou crut ne s'y point voir'.<sup>21</sup> One of the more entertaining plays that comprise this polemic is Donneau de Visé's *Zélinde*, which features conversations about whether or not it is reasonable for audiences to laugh at portraits of themselves. He calls into question the nature and honesty of laughter, observing that audience members laugh because they do recognize themselves in the vice-ridden characters on stage, and that their laughter is self-conscious and intended to help them save face. He makes the point that the laughter elicited from *L'École des femmes* is a defence mechanism. Two significant points raised by this polemical text are the observation that the public, rather than being unified, is divided, and the notion that laughter can be used as a form of combat—in this instance, as a disguise and means for self-preservation.

In the first scene of *Zélinde*, Argimont, a lace merchant, and his customer Oriane ponder why people subject themselves to Molière's plays. Oriane asks, 'n'est-ce pas une chose étrange, que des gens de qualité souffrent que l'on les joue en plein

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<sup>20</sup> Charles Robinet, *Panegyrique de l'École des femmes* [1664], in *Œuvres complètes* [Molière], ed. by Georges Couton, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), I, pp. 1068-93 (pp. 1090-1).

<sup>21</sup> Boileau, III, 353-4.

théâtre, et qu'ils aillent admirer les portraits de leurs actions les plus ridicules afin de donner de la réputation au fameux Élomire [...]?'<sup>22</sup> And Argimont responds,

[J]e crois qu'en agissant de la sorte, ils ne font que ce que la prudence leur conseille. Ils voient bien que l'on les joue; mais ils font bien de tenir cela au-dessous d'eux, et de ne pas témoigner qu'ils le connaissent [...] ceux qui se voient dépeindre, et qui en rient les premiers, tâchent de faire croire, par leurs applaudissements, que ce n'est pas d'eux que l'on parle.<sup>23</sup>

According to Argimont, the reactions of the spectators are just as much a performance—for one another—as what happens in the comedy itself. Their reactions of merriment are a way of saving face, of denying that they identify or empathize with the characters being ridiculed on stage. Laughing first is tantamount to an admission of guilt. In detaching themselves from the rest of the audience and setting themselves on a higher plane, Oriane and Argimont are metaphorically patting each other on the back and affirming their own superiority.

Molière addresses the self-conscious aspect of spectatorship in his own response to the *querelle*. In *La Critique de l'École des femmes*, Dorante queries the ridiculous Marquis,

Tu es donc, Marquis, de ces Messieurs du bel air, qui ne veulent pas que le Parterre ait du sens commun, et qui seraient fâchés d'avoir ri avec lui, fût-ce de la meilleure chose du monde? Je vis l'autre jour sur le Théâtre un de nos amis qui se rendit ridicule par là. (v)

Contrary to Donneau de Visé's assertion, Molière makes the point that it is those who do *not* laugh who are trying to distinguish themselves from the crowd and show that they are above the rest of the audience. Withholding laughter is thus an indication of *amour-propre*, and this kind of narcissistic behaviour makes one ridiculous, not only on stage, but also in real life. Molière further illustrates that the audience is divided between *honnêtes gens* who laugh with pleasure and *prétentieux* who do not

<sup>22</sup> Jean Donneau de Visé, *Zélinde* [1663], in *Œuvres complètes* [Molière], ed. by Georges Couton, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), I, pp. 1024-49 (p. 1025).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

appreciate his play; thus, the concept of the *honnête homme* reappears, and is used to emphasize laughter's potential as a weapon. Responding to Dorante, the Marquis says, 'Te voilà donc, Chevalier, le défenseur du Parterre? [...] Hay, hay, hay, hay, hay, hay' (v). With this parry, between these duelling spectators, Molière displays how laughter can be used as a method of defence, but that it, too, can be risible.

In the eighth scene of *Zélinde*, Aristide, who is the counterpart of the pretentious poet Lysidas in Molière's *Critique*, disparages the theatre-going experience of Molière's defenders, arguing, 'Ils aiment mieux se mirer dans les vivants miroirs d'Élomire que dans les leurs'.<sup>24</sup> Alleging that the spectators prefer to see themselves reflected on Molière's stage than in their actual mirrors suggests that the theatre aids the audience in ignoring their own true identities. It also implies an exhibitionistic tension, because on the one hand, the spectators laugh for the benefit of their peers, to show that they are not embarrassed by the comedy, but simultaneously, they *desire* to see their reflections presented before an admiring crowd. Watching Molière's comedy makes them uneasy, and yet, it gives them pleasure.

To wit, in another of Donneau de Visé's critical works, *Nouvelles nouvelles*, the author argues that laughter, rather than serving as a social corrective, merely facilitates group-think, because the spectators try to blend in with their peers. One of the characters, Ariste, says, 'chacun craint de passer pour ridicule, en n'approuvant pas ce qu'il entend approuver par un autre, chacun parle contre son sentiment, et aide de la sorte à se tromper soi-même'.<sup>25</sup> Again, he emphasizes that self-consciousness can impede wisdom. But on some level, he also supports Molière's argument that comedy can influence behaviour.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 1041.

<sup>25</sup> Jean Donneau de Visé, *Nouvelles nouvelles* [1663], in *Œuvres complètes* [Molière], ed. by Georges Forestier and Claude Bourqui, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), I, pp. 1091-8 (p. 1092).

Donneau de Visé also acknowledges Molière's ability to dramatize realistic characters. In *Nouvelles nouvelles*, Pallante states, 'jamais homme n'a su si naturellement décrire, ni représenter les actions humaines, et jamais homme n'a su si bien faire son profit des conseils d'autrui'.<sup>26</sup> However, while complimenting Molière's art, he insults him for using real people's stories as source material. He claims that, bafflingly, an increasing number of *gens de qualité* give their memoirs to Molière in the hope of seeing themselves on his stage, which seems to emphasize their *amour-propre*. This again underscores the desire of spectators to view themselves, and the pleasure they undoubtedly feel at the sight.

Similarly, Boursault highlights the self-consciousness of audiences in his text *Le Portrait du peintre*, whose title alone is a play on the *miroir* aspect of the theatre. Scene ii shows Damis, a young nobleman, bantering with a *comte*, who warns him about Molière's portraiture:

Quoique des spectateurs tous les traits y paraissent,  
Plus ils sont ressemblants, moins ils se reconnaissent:  
Ce qu'on a fait pour eux leur paraît pour autrui,  
Et tel y rit souvent de voir rire de lui.<sup>27</sup>

Notably, his comment is almost word for word what Boileau would write ten years later. Boursault creates an image of spectators not only watching the comedy unfolding on stage, but watching each other and deriving entertainment from their peers' reactions. Arguably, they are so blinded by their egoism, that they fail to see their own flaws in Molière's mirror. Hence, they laugh at one another's lack of self-awareness.

And yet, the one thing most of Molière's defenders and detractors alike seem to recognize is his great talent at *portraits*, or at creating characters that they

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 1095.

<sup>27</sup> Edme Boursault, *Le Portrait du peintre* [1663], in *Œuvres complètes* [Molière], ed. by Georges Couton, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), I, pp. 1050-67 (p. 1053).

recognize from their own experience. While he thinks *L'École des femmes* is a terrible play, Donneau de Visé admits it has lovely elements; he concedes, 'ce sont des portraits de la nature qui peuvent passer pour originaux'.<sup>28</sup> He then adds that he thinks this about all the characters, writing, 'Ces endroits ne se rencontrent pas seulement dans ce que joue Agnès; mais dans les rôles de tous ceux qui jouent à cette pièce'.<sup>29</sup>

That said, Agnès is, in a sense, the star of the quarrel over *L'École des femmes*. Critics relished mocking her simpleminded comments, most notably 'Le petit chat est mort' (II, v, 461) and the racy 'Le' (II, v, 572) incident. In his *Observations*, Rochemont writes, 'La naïveté malicieuse de son Agnès, a plus corrompu de Vierges que les Écrits les plus licencieux'.<sup>30</sup> The oxymoron 'naïveté malicieuse' crystallizes one seemingly reasonable objection to Agnès's character development, that is to say, her miraculous transformation from dolt to sympathetic heroine who fights against her personal status quo. Molière's critics think such a change in one day is implausible, which begs the question, is Agnès believable? And how is it that we laugh at her stupidity, but then also feel sympathy for her plight?

Rochemont's implication that Agnès's innocence is false goes hand in hand with Donneau de Visé's judgment. Condemning the *ingénue*'s metamorphosis, Zélinde remarks incredulously, 'je ne suis pas du nombre de celles qui se laissent duper par le jeu [...] Est-il possible qu'il y ait des gens qui ne s'aperçoivent pas qu'il n'y a rien de plus inégal que le rôle d'Agnès et que l'esprit lui vient en vingt-quatre heures?'.<sup>31</sup> While Zélinde flatters herself, in a way supporting Molière's claim that those spectators who resist the pleasure of comedy think they are better than everyone

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<sup>28</sup> Donneau de Visé, *Nouvelles nouvelles*, p. 1097.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> B.A., Sieur de Rochemont, *Observations sur une comédie de Molière intitulée Le Festin de Pierre* [1665], in *Œuvres complètes* [Molière], ed. by Georges Forestier and Claude Bourqui, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), II, pp. 1212-21 (p. 1214).

<sup>31</sup> Donneau de Visé, *Zélinde*, p. 1043.

else, she does ask a legitimate question. While Zélinde finds that Agnès is not *vraisemblable*, Rochemont sees her as insidious and two-faced.

The moment when Agnès hinges between our derision and sympathy occurs when she describes her feelings for Horace to Arnolphe. She says, ‘toutes les fois que je l’entends parler, | La douceur me chatouille, et là-dedans remue | Certain je ne sais quoi, dont je suis tout émue’ (II, v, 562-4). Her observation is striking in its candour, but also for the choice of words. In the previous act, Horace also uses the term *je ne sais quoi* to describe Agnès to Arnolphe. In Horace’s eyes, she possesses, ‘Un air tout engageant, je ne sais quoi de tendre, | Dont il n’est point de cœur qui se puisse défendre’ (I, iv, 323-4).

The coupling of their descriptions of what has struck them is an example of empathy; the repeated *je ne sais quoi* shows that each feels what the other is feeling. Richard Scholar points this out, writing, ‘Molière places forms of the *je-ne-sais-quoi* in the mouths of the two lovers in *L’École des femmes* to suggest that, despite their different social positions and schooling, both have fallen victim to the same stroke of passion’.<sup>32</sup> Agnès and Horace share the same emotions, even if it is impossible to define them with words. That she chooses to say *je ne sais quoi* rather than *amour* perhaps simply shows her innocence—Agnès has clearly never been in love before, so it may be that she just doesn’t recognize her feelings for what they are. But I think rather that they both say *je ne sais quoi* because it is not specifically love that has set them ablaze, but rather a feeling of sympathy and respect that is love’s forerunner. The repetition of *je ne sais quoi* and the change in Agnès show the power inherent in the deep mutual concern of empathy. And it is her transformation that makes it possible for the audience to feel sympathy for her, even though at first they laugh at

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<sup>32</sup> Richard Scholar, *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe: Encounters with a Certain Something* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 179.

her expense. In short, the *je ne sais quoi* that she feels is empathy, which drives her metamorphosis and renders her capable of eliciting the public's compassion. Thus, in this polemic, there is both laughter at the ridiculous, against Arnolphe and Agnès in her ignorance, and the smile of sympathy with Agnès as she becomes more empathetic.

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#### 1.4 The Mirror of the *Faux dévot*

Of these four comedies, none had as long and tumultuous a genesis as *Le Tartuffe*. It was first performed at Versailles on 12 May 1664, during the *fête* of the 'Plaisirs de l'île enchantée', and public performances were promptly banned by the king. Molière rewrote it with a different title (*L'Imposteur*) and different title character (Panulphe), and this iteration was performed once, on 5 August 1667. Finally, the king gave permission for a third version—the only one in existence today—to be performed and published in 1669.

Some critics found the play abhorrent because its protagonist, the *faux dévot*, is seemingly indistinguishable from the truly pious. It is perhaps unsurprising that the authors of the two main pamphlets attacking *Le Tartuffe* were clergymen. Pierre Roullé, a *curé*, calls Molière, 'un Démon vêtu de chair et habillé en homme',<sup>33</sup> who he claims 'va à ruiner la Religion Catholique, en blâmant et jouant sa plus religieuse et sainte pratique, qui est la conduite et direction des Âmes et des familles par de sages Guides et Conducteurs pieux'.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, the Archbishop of Paris writes, 'sous prétexte de condamner l'hypocrisie, ou la fausse dévotion, elle donne lieu d'en

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<sup>33</sup> Pierre Roullé, *Le Roi glorieux au monde* [1664], in *Œuvres complètes* [Molière], ed. by Georges Forestier and Claude Bourqui, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), II, pp. 1165-7 (p. 1166).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

accuser indifféremment tous ceux qui font profession de la plus solide piété'.<sup>35</sup>

Molière defends himself in the first *Placet*, addressed to the king, wherein he claims that the suppression of the 1664 version shows the play's success in revealing fake piety. In other words, those who attacked the play did so because Tartuffe's hypocrisy touched them too closely. He writes, 'les Originaux enfin ont fait supprimer la Copie'.<sup>36</sup> This implies that those who condemn his play are themselves hypocrites. Even though Molière claims to have done everything possible to distinguish Tartuffe from the truly devout, the critics insist that he cast a shadow of hypocrisy over all religious advisors.

What is ironic about the objections that Roullé and the Archbishop make is that, in the comedy itself, virtually *everyone* can see through Tartuffe's artifice. They may not realize the extent of his deceit until he tries to steal Orgon's house, but the vast majority of the characters, regardless of age, gender, and social class, ranging from Dorine the servant to the king himself, can detect his fakery. Essentially, Tartuffe is the very picture of excessive self-love. Molière hints at his deceitfulness before he even speaks a word; in Act III, scene ii, when Tartuffe enters the scene with his lackey, there is a stage direction that reads, '*apercevant Dorine*', after which Tartuffe says, 'Laurent, serrez ma Haire, avec ma Discipline' (853). The moment he sees Dorine, he dons his mask and makes an ostentatious show of piety. Everything he does is calculated to maintain and promote his image as a *dévo*t. Aside from the silly grandmother, Madame Pernelle, Orgon is the only one who is entirely taken in by Tartuffe's saint-act. Given the critics' concern that people cannot tell the difference between true and false devotion, the important character to consider is

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<sup>35</sup> Archevêque de Paris, *Ordonnance* [1664], in *Œuvres complètes* [Molière], ed. by Georges Forestier and Claude Bourqui, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), II, pp. 1168-9 (p. 1168).

<sup>36</sup> Molière, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Georges Forestier and Claude Bourqui, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), II, p. 192.

therefore Orgon. This quarrel leads one to ask, what is it about Orgon that makes him so easily duped?

Orgon's bond with Tartuffe is based, not in understanding and sympathy, but on mutual admiration. Orgon is drawn to the hypocrite precisely because they are so alike and because each gets something from the other, namely flattery. Orgon's descriptions of and interactions with Tartuffe show that he sees the *faux dévot* as an extension of himself.

At first blush, the relationship between Orgon and Tartuffe seems entirely one-sided. Orgon is enthralled by Tartuffe. He takes him into his home, feeds him, dotes on him, and plots for him to marry his daughter. Molière conveys Orgon's passion for Tartuffe in Act I, scene iv, when Orgon first appears on stage. Having spent two days away from his home, he asks Dorine to tell him what transpired in his absence. Dorine reports that his wife, Elmire, was ill, but the only person Orgon wants to hear about is Tartuffe. She explains that Tartuffe is in excellent health, and has eaten and slept well, and Orgon sighs repeatedly, 'Le pauvre Homme!' (235), as though he hasn't heard a word Dorine has said. The fact that he treats Tartuffe with the consideration and sympathy that he ought to give to his young wife hilariously exposes the depth of his obsession with his new friend.

In the second scene of Act I, Dorine tells Cléante about the relationship between the two men. Her narrative is revealing because, while she easily sees through Tartuffe's false front, she fails to read her master's demeanor quite as well. When speaking of the hypocrite, she says, 'Lui qui connaît sa dupe, et qui veut en jouir, | Par cent dehors fardés, a l'art de l'éblouir' (199-200). She succinctly identifies his disingenuous exterior. But when describing Orgon, she observes, 'Il l'appelle son Frère, et l'aime dans son âme | Cent fois plus qu'il ne fait Mère, Fils, Fille, et Femme'

(185-6). While Orgon does make a show of great sympathy for Tartuffe, Dorine has failed to see the true nature of his esteem.

One can infer that Orgon's love for Tartuffe is not real from the simple fact that he knows nothing about him. In Act I, scene v, Orgon tells Cléante how he met Tartuffe. Orgon insists, 'vous seriez charmé de le connaître' (270), and then, searching for the words to describe this enchanting person, says, 'C'est un Homme... qui ... ha... un Homme... un Homme enfin' (I, v, 272). He's so entranced by Tartuffe's self-righteous piety that he doesn't bother to seek more information. That Tartuffe is so unknown to Orgon means that he is a blank slate: Orgon can imagine him to be whatever he desires. In fact, he can only worship Tartuffe as long as he is ignorant of him. He has a particular image of him in his mind, that of the pitiful, sighing *dévo*t kissing the ground at church and attracting attention from everyone around him. The friendship Orgon extends to Tartuffe is not formed on anything real, but on the fact that taking care of a poor pious man makes Orgon feel good about himself.

When Orgon and Tartuffe finally appear on stage together in Act III, they address each other as 'mon Frère'. And each is deluded by his own *amour-propre*: Orgon while he is under Tartuffe's spell, and Tartuffe when he thinks that Elmire has succumbed to his advances, although she initially rejects him. As she prepares to trick Tartuffe, Elmire remarks sagaciously, 'on est aisément dupé par ce qu'on aime, | Et l'amour-propre, engage à se tromper soi-même' (IV, iii, 1357-8). While she could easily be talking about her husband, she is speaking of the *faux dévo*t, whose self-love, in the context of his false piety, takes on the added meaning of sin—man's original sin, even. In light of the dynamic between Tartuffe and Orgon, the worries expressed in the *querelle* documents seem misplaced. While the characters in the play

are generally capable of distinguishing cases of hypocrisy like Tartuffe's, it is Orgon, the hypocrite's mirror-image and enabler, who seems more easily misunderstood.

The assault on *Le Tartuffe* gave Molière the opportunity to articulate a philosophy of theatre and of human nature. In the play's *Préface*, he writes, 'C'est une grande atteinte aux vices, que de les exposer à la risée de tout le monde. On souffre aisément des répréhensions; mais on ne souffre point la raillerie. On veut bien être méchant; mais on ne veut point être ridicule'.<sup>37</sup> His assertion is supported by a third text in the quarrel, the *Lettre sur la comédie de l'Imposteur*. Published anonymously after the one performance of the play's 1667 version, this *Lettre* comes to Molière's defence. The first half gives a detailed account of the plot, and the second half offers two reflections about why the play should not be suppressed. In the first reflection, the author suggests that the theatre is a perfectly reasonable venue for discussing religion. In the second, he argues that laughing at a fictional character like Tartuffe may actually prove helpful to spectators when dealing with such disingenuous people in real life.

According to the anonymous author, the act of spectatorship, at least for female viewers, can teach them how to react when propositioned by men like the hypocrite. The lesson is that the proper reaction to such a *galanterie* is to find it laughable; the writer states, 'Je veux dire qu'une femme qui sera pressée par les mêmes raisons que Panulphe emploie, ne peut s'empêcher d'abord de les trouver ridicules, et n'a garde de faire réflexion sur la différence qu'il y a entre l'homme qui lui parle et Panulphe'.<sup>38</sup> The author of the *Lettre* describes how the memory of the scenes between Elmire and Panulphe can instruct a woman who finds herself in a

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>38</sup> Anonymous, *Lettre sur la comédie de l'Imposteur* [1667], in *Œuvres complètes* [Molière], ed. by Georges Forestier and Claude Bourqui, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), II, pp. 1170-99 (p. 1194).

similar situation to laugh at her seducer. He asserts that the impact of having laughed at situations observed on stage remains with spectators indefinitely. Then, the author relates laughter directly to man's pride; he writes,

[C]omme ces deux sentiments [la joie et le mépris] sont fondés sur les deux plus anciennes et plus essentielles maladies du genre humain, l'orgueil et la complaisance dans les maux d'autrui, il n'est pas étrange que le sentiment du Ridicule soit si fort, et qu'il ravisse l'âme comme il fait; elle qui se défiant à bon droit de sa propre excellence depuis le péché d'origine, cherche de tous côtés avec avidité de quoi la persuader aux autres et à soi-même par des comparaisons qui lui soient avantageuses, c'est-à-dire par la considération des défauts d'autrui.<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, the power of laughter is rooted in our pride. In the eighteenth century, Rousseau echoes this statement about the fundamentals of human nature—pride and complacency about the wrongdoings of others—in the *Lettre à d'Alembert*. He notes of Alceste, 'Ce n'est donc pas des hommes qu'il est ennemi, mais de la méchanceté des uns et du support que cette méchanceté trouve dans les autres. S'il n'y avait ni fripons, ni flatteurs, il aimerait tout le monde'.<sup>40</sup> The difference between these two *Lettres* is that the one about *Le Tartuffe* recognizes human nature for what it is and accepts it, while Rousseau refuses to accept it (just like Alceste). Thus, I have added to my compendium two more endogenous terms: *orgueil* and *complaisance dans les maux d'autrui*, which implies indifference, scorn, and perhaps even sadism. And *orgueil* is a mortal sin, which is certainly illustrated in Tartuffe's case, if not in Orgon's.<sup>41</sup>

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### 1.5 The Lone *Libertin*

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 1198.

<sup>40</sup> Rousseau, p. 87.

<sup>41</sup> The fall of Lucifer and his *orgueil* are described in the Bible in this manner: 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! | For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: | I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. | Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit' (Isaiah 14: 12-5).

Don Juan presents us with a startling parallel to the mythological youth who fell in love with his reflected image. But in this play, laughter does not create an impenetrable boundary between sympathetic characters and those who are firmly entrenched in their narcissism. Don Juan's unabashed atheism earned Molière bitter condemnations from contemporaries, notably Rochemont and the Prince de Conti. They are appalled by the audience's laughter, which once again raises the question of how the spectators react. From the outset, Molière sets up the audience to laugh with his libertine and to take pleasure in his escapades. Rochemont queries stingingly:

[M]ais qui peut supporter la hardiesse d'un Farceur, qui fait plaisanterie de la Religion, qui tient École du Libertinage, et qui rend la Majesté de Dieu le jouet d'un Maître et d'un Valet de Théâtre, d'un Athée qui s'en rit, et d'un Valet plus impie que son Maître qui en fait rire les autres.<sup>42</sup>

His criticism is similar to Conti's, who writes in his *Traité*,

Y a-t'il une Escole d'atheisme plus ouverte que le Festin de Pierre, ou apres avoir fait dire toutes les impietez les plus horribles à un athée, qui a beaucoup d'esprit, l'Auteur confie la cause de Dieu à un valet, à qui il fait dire, pour la soutenir, toutes les impertinences du monde; & il pretend justifier à la fin sa Comedie si pleine de blasphèmes, à la faveur d'une fusée qu'il fait le Ministre ridicule de la vengeance Divine.<sup>43</sup>

In these passages, Rochemont and Conti present the crux of their objections to *Don Juan*: Sganarelle is the defender of God and religion in the play and he is also a bumbling fool. Thus, the questions raised here are strongly linked to those from the *querelle de l'École des femmes*—namely, who laughs at whom?—as well as to those raised by *Le Tartuffe*—in particular, should we draw a line between legitimate and illegitimate humour, depending on which type of character is elevated and which is demeaned? Don Juan gets the better of Sganarelle and others, which invites the audience to laugh with him, in spite of his sins. Thus, Molière prods the audience into

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<sup>42</sup> Rochemont, p. 1213.

<sup>43</sup> Armand de Bourbon, Prince de Conti, *Traité de la comédie et des spectacles* [1666], ed. by Karl Vollmöller (Heilbronn: Verlag von Gebr. Henninger, 1881), p. 32.

viewing religion as a joke. But the focus on laughter in these polemical texts begs the question, who does the audience really laugh at in this play? And more pointedly, do they laugh *with* Don Juan, or *at* him? Does the audience always favour him? I think the answer is no, and that Molière ridicules Don Juan through his extravagantly narcissistic behaviour.

In *Molière: Dramaturge libertin*, Anthony McKenna dismisses the narcissistic content of *Don Juan*, writing,

Tout ce qu'on a eu et qu'on a encore aujourd'hui tendance à sous-entendre par le terme libertinage: séduction, infidélité, licence de mœurs..., tout cela n'est qu'enfantillage narcissique à ses yeux [les yeux de Molière], une réduction frivole et appauvrissante de la véritable portée anti-chrétienne de la philosophie libertine.<sup>44</sup>

However, his womanizing behaviour—for example, his marrying Elvire and then deserting her—instead of being mere *enfantillage*, is a manifestation of his *amour-propre*, or even of truly malignant narcissism, which is in turn a reflection of the fall of man and the original sin of pride. Also, dramaturgically, Don Juan's *amour-propre* indicates to the audience that, although they often laugh with him, they need not feel sympathy for him.

When *amour-propre* is not merely social excess, there is an important distinction to be made between healthy self-love and extreme *amour-propre*, which I will address in detail in the following chapter. Viala expresses this when he writes,

‘[L]’amour de soi’, en son sens fondamental, c’est le désir, que dis-je le désir, désir est déjà trop sophistiqué et second et complexe, c’est le besoin de conserver la vie [...] et en elle-même elle [une mobilisation de l’énergie] n’est en effet ni bonne ni mauvaise, elle est vitale, point.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Anthony McKenna, *Molière: Dramaturge libertin* (Paris: Champion Classiques, 2005), p. 8.

<sup>45</sup> Viala, *Lettre à Rousseau sur l'intérêt littéraire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2005), pp. 42-3.

Without this fundamental self-love, we lack confidence, but when it becomes excessive, as in Don Juan's case, it leads to every sort of misbehaviour and can prove fatal.

The aspect of Don Juan's *amour-propre* that is most immediately brought to the fore by his compulsion for sexual conquest is his isolation. '[L]'épouseur du genre humain' (II, iv), he claims to want to be the husband and lover of everyone, which of course means that he truly loves and is truly intimate with no one. Arguably, his seductive charm makes him irresistible, but his narcissism makes him unobtainable.

Beyond that, it is interesting to see that, more so than Alceste, Arnolphe, and Orgon (or even Tartuffe), Don Juan is alone. He does not have a *raisonneur*, a Philinte, a Chrysalde, or a Cléante to prop up his ego. In fact, the focus of the criticisms of *Don Juan* is the relationship between the atheist master and feeble valet, which is significant on a variety of levels, all related to Don Juan's narcissism. As a narcissist, he needs to have his grandeur continuously reaffirmed by others. And, as Conti and Rochemont are quick to point out, Sganarelle is an idiot; therefore, he is utterly insufficient as a reflection of his master's grandiosity. Don Juan's isolation offers an explanation for what drives him to seduce and deceive so many women. Like an addict, he needs a fix; the drug he requires is attention, adoration, and affirmation of his magnificence. And this is why he cannot stay with any one woman—with real intimacy, she would come to really know him and she would be incapable of continuously giving him the validation he craves. Not only would her delight at seeing him fade, but she would become critical.

From the start of the play, Molière sets the audience up to laugh *with* Don Juan. When he and Sganarelle first appear on stage together, Don Juan defends his

numerous liaisons in a lengthy speech. The following lines show what it is that he values most in his romantic encounters. He tells Sganarelle,

[O]n goûte une douceur extrême à réduire, par cent hommages, le cœur d'une jeune beauté [...] à forcer pied à pied toutes les petites résistances qu'elle nous oppose, à vaincre les scrupules dont elle se fait un honneur et la mener doucement où nous avons envie de la faire venir. (I, ii)

In the second half of the monologue, he rhapsodizes about the pleasure of being a 'maître', the charms of 'une conquête à faire', and his 'ambition des conquérants'. He finishes by stating, 'et comme Alexandre je souhaiterais qu'il y eût d'autres mondes pour y pouvoir étendre mes conquêtes amoureuses'. Don Juan reveals that the greatest satisfaction he derives from his sexual exploits is neither physical pleasure nor possession, but rather a confirmation of the wonder of himself. What he envisions is a megalomaniacal fantasy; through seduction, he pictures himself as a triumphant conqueror. And the more Sganarelle tries to argue, the more risible he becomes. The best he can offer is, 'une autre fois je mettrai mes raisonnements par écrit, pour disputer avec vous' (I, ii).

Similarly, in Act II, we laugh with Don Juan at Pierrot, the buffoonish peasant whose intended is wooed by the atheist. In scene iii, when Pierrot attempts to stand up to Don Juan, the latter slaps him repeatedly. What makes Don Juan all the more dangerous is that, although he does not empathize with the women he seduces, he reads their feelings with expert precision. In Act II, scene iv, when Charlotte and Mathurine confront him about his promises of marriage, he comes out on top because he manipulates them dexterously. Don Juan recognizes how the young women are feeling, and yet, rather than responding with honesty, he lies to both. He appeals to their vanities, telling each one that she is the most beautiful and that the other is crazy. Had they not fallen for his flattery, let alone revelled in it, the audience might have felt sympathy for them. But their foolish pride puts the audience even more in, if not

exactly sympathy, a connivance<sup>46</sup> with Don Juan. And connivance is a dramaturgical way of attracting the audience to a character's point of view.

Molière bolsters Don Juan's self-love when he and Sganarelle appear on stage disguised as a peasant and a doctor, respectively, in order to hide from Elvire's brothers. Don Juan mocks Sganarelle's costume, calling it 'ridicule' (III, i). In the first half of their exchange, Sganarelle tells Don Juan that peasants have approached him to ask for medical advice and that he has eagerly given it to them. Don Juan responds that he doesn't see any reason why Sganarelle shouldn't dispense medical advice, because doctors 'n'ont pas plus de part que toi aux guérisons des malades, et tout leur art est pure grimace'. While Sganarelle acknowledges that there is a difference between this persona and his real self, Don Juan dismisses the difference as non-existent. In the second half of the scene, Sganarelle attempts to probe Don Juan about his true self. Don Juan boils his own belief system down to: 'Je crois que deux et deux font quatre, Sganarelle et que quatre et quatre font huit' (III, i). The valet tries to force his master to think about himself as he really is, rather than just loving his image reflected in the adoring eyes of his conquests. But since Sganarelle is inept with words, Don Juan is unmoved.

Similarly, in Act III, scene iii—which interestingly, is the central scene of the central act, and could potentially be a turning point for Don Juan—the audience is given a chance to see how Don Juan reacts when he hears himself described by others. Don Juan risks his life to rescue a man from a band of thieves; it is as though he imagines himself in the victim's position and his sense of honour stands in for empathy. But this moment of Don Juan putting himself in someone else's place rapidly yields another example of his narcissism. The man turns out to be Elvire's

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<sup>46</sup> I prefer to use 'connivance' here rather than 'complicity', because in French, 'connivance' is more neutral. 'Complicity' would align me with Rochemont.

brother, Don Carlos, who is pursuing his sister's seducer. Don Carlos says of Don Juan, 'je l'ai seulement ouï dépeindre à mon frère; mais la Renommée n'en dit pas force bien, et c'est un homme dont la vie...'. At this moment, Don Juan interrupts Don Carlos, for he cannot bear to see himself as others—especially others of high social rank—see him. By the end of the play, Don Juan's behaviour is unaltered, but he is determined to fool people into thinking he has changed, in order to continue his deceitful ways without restraint.

*Don Juan* and the debate surrounding it reveal even further how narcissism and empathy can be linked to spectatorship. And Don Juan offers Molière's spectators an example of extreme *amour-propre*; he is ultimately rigid, resistant to change, and ridiculous. But more than that, this play creates a connection—between the spectator and the libertine; as the Jansenist critics pointed out, even the fatal divine action seems to be nothing more than a *fusée ridicule*. Thus, *Don Juan* raises the question of the possibility of connivance, if not sympathy or empathy, with a malignant narcissist.

...

## 1.6 Conclusion

This glance at Molière's quarrels shows how his plays and the criticisms they received contain the seeds for a study based on the concepts of narcissism and empathy. A study that encompasses not only the impressive and wide-ranging psychological makeup of Molière's fictional characters, but also the dynamics that existed between the stage and the audience, and between the theatrical world and public life more broadly in early modern France.

At one point in *Le Misanthrope*, as Alceste argues with perfidious Célimène, he bemoans, 'ce fatal Amour, né de vos traîtres yeux!' (IV, iii, 1384) His outburst conveys the tension between narcissism and empathy. For while Alceste outwardly

claims to be in love with Célimène, his behaviour shows that what he sees in her is his own reflection. Indeed, he does discover a ‘fatal Amour’ in her eyes—just not the kind about which he fantasizes.

This tension is also present in the experience of spectatorship. In his *Traité*, Conti argues that spectators are drawn to the theatre for the pleasure of seeing something of themselves on stage. He reasons that they attend plays for ‘le plaisir d’y voir peintes des passions semblables aux siennes: car nôtre amour propre est si delicat, que nous aimons à voir les portraits de nos passions aussi bien que ceux de nos personnes’.<sup>47</sup> According to Conti, spectators take pleasure in identifying with characters on stage, because of their *amour-propre*. He raises the issues of desire and pleasure, which came up in my discussion of audiences and the *querelle de l’École des femmes*. Audiences are flattered and enjoy recognizing their doubles in the theatre. This is fitting, since the Narcissus myth is suffused with the idea of pleasure and desire. But at the same time, Viala writes of audiences,

Et si le spectateur ou le lecteur se projette ainsi dans la situation (‘la place’) d’un personnage, parfois même il se met dans sa peau comme on dit, et il y a identification (la voici, lecteur, et vous Rousseau, vous employez même ce mot à l’occasion), voire empathie.<sup>48</sup>

These points highlight how, in identifying with characters in a comedy, the spectator’s *amour-propre* and empathy are both engaged. Fictional characters and real spectators alike encounter this full spectrum of feelings in the theatre.

Thus, when looked at through the prism of empathy and narcissism, the quarrels surrounding these four comedies bring up questions related to theatrical aesthetics, the character and comportment of individuals, the interactions between individuals and society, and human nature more broadly. Concepts that have arisen

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<sup>47</sup> Conti, p. 14.

<sup>48</sup> Viala, *Lettre à Rousseau sur l’intérêt littéraire*, p. 26.

over the course of my discussion include *honnêteté*, *amour-propre*, the *je-ne-sais-quoi*, *orgueil*, and *complaisance*; and these all stir up questions that I will seek to address in the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

One question brought up by these *querelles* is that of mirror images, which can be applied both to the relationship between narcissists and other characters on stage and to spectatorship. And one of the most unexpected parallels that appears amongst these quarrels is that Donneau de Visé and Conti each use the word *esprit* to describe Agnès and Don Juan, respectively. This pairing is surprising in that Agnès and Don Juan are arguably the most sympathetic and narcissistic characters I have written about here. They are at opposite ends of the spectrum, and yet the polemics use the same term to express her enlightened state and his baleful allure. This comparison brings up, not only the question of the meaning of *esprit*, but also the gender divide between Molière's characters. The majority of Molière's most plainly narcissistic characters are men—in fact, it is important to acknowledge that Molière played many of them himself—but are his most empathetic characters women? How exactly are narcissism and empathy manifested differently between the sexes?

W.D. Howarth writes that, at the end of Molière's comedies, the narcissistic protagonists,

[R]emain intransigent outsiders, the impenitent egoists that they have been shown to be throughout the five acts of the play. They are in a sense the imaginary scapegoats of society, and by laughing at them in the social microcosm of the theatre the individuals composing the audience are enabled [...] to regain their proper perspective: that is, to preserve a healthy view of the relationship between the individual and society.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> W.D. Howarth, *Molière: A Playwright and His Audience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 256.

Howarth suggests a basic interconnectedness between empathy and narcissism, society, and laughter. The idea of ‘impenitence’ captures the refusal of Molière’s narcissists to look at their inner selves honestly or to change.

Ultimately though, Howarth’s point is at odds with Rousseau’s view of the theatre. The binary of empathy and narcissism is essential to this conflict, of whether the arts can remedy mankind’s narcissistic nature by encouraging empathy, or whether they are doomed to exacerbate it. By considering Molière’s plays with a contemporary understanding of human behaviour, we can seek common ground between seventeenth-century France and our own modern *société de spectacle*.

**Chapter 2**  
**Molière's Polysemic Lexis:**  
*Intérêt, Amitié, Amour*

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that the ideas of empathy and narcissism were central and recurring themes in the most heated quarrels instigated by Molière's plays.

However, the terms I chose to reflect empathy and narcissism for the title, sympathy and self-love—or *sympathie* and *amour de soi*—are not words that Molière uses frequently. The word *narcisse* appears only three times in his complete works, twice in *Le Médecin volant* and once in *Pastorale comique*.<sup>1</sup> Furetière defines *narcisse* as a flower that took its name from a beautiful boy, 'qui se noya estant amoureux de luy-même'. In contrast, Richelet mentions the myth first and the flower second, stating: 'Nom d'un beau garçon qui se voiant dans une fontaine devînt amoureux de lui même & fut changé en une fleur qui porte son nom. Voyez *les Metamorphoses d'Ovide*'.<sup>2</sup> Even though Furetière and Richelet both connect *narcisse* with the notion of self-love, Molière made such spare—although not quite innocent—use of the word that it is not immediately serviceable in showing how he portrays narcissism on stage. Thus, we need to look to other terms to put these ideas in the right context.

My aim in this chapter is to deepen the context of my research by examining specific words that Molière employed, as well as words that were used more broadly at the time to describe human nature, that are related to modern constructs of empathy and narcissism. I compiled such endogenous terms, including *amour-propre*, *orgueil*, the *je-ne-sais-quoi*, and *complaisance*, in my examination of the *querelles* and will continue expanding this collection of words. In turn, this compendium of vocabulary

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<sup>1</sup> In *Pastorale comique*, three magicians sing the following lyric, 'Il passe en beauté feu Narcisse | Qui fut un blondin accompli' (ii). In *Le Médecin volant*, Sganarelle presents himself to Gorgibus as his own twin, claiming his name is, 'Narcisse, Monsieur, pour vous rendre service' (xi).

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Richelet, *Dictionnaire* (Geneva: Herman, 1680), in *Gallica* <<http://gallica.bnf.fr>> [accessed 30 November 2009]

gives rise to similar words, a number of which are amply evident on Molière's stage. For instance, words that are central to a discussion of the meaning of *amour-propre* include *intérêt*, *amour*, and even *amitié*, which Molière sometimes applies as a synonym for *amour*.

At the heart of the *querelles* against Molière were accusations that various salient features of his plays had multiple meanings. From Agnès's 'Le' to Tartuffe's very identity as a *dévo*t, critics argued that Molière meant one thing, and when he had the opportunity to respond, he argued that he meant another. Indeed, in Molière's use of *intérêt*, *amitié*, and *amour*, each word has at least two different meanings, and interestingly, each of these meanings reflects either empathy at one extreme, or narcissism at the other.

That words can have a variety of definitions may seem like such an obvious point as to be unimportant. However, an insufficient level of attention paid to the myriad meanings of even the tiniest of words can be risky. Since the subject matter of this thesis is dramatic texts, which, although we most often study them on paper, are intended to be given voice by actors, both word choice and utterance have a singular importance.<sup>3</sup> Even though narcissism and empathy are at two ends of a spectrum, there is a great deal of overlap in the diction Molière chooses to express these concepts. It is remarkable that the same words can be used to express such opposing states of being.

In addition to *intérêt*, *amitié*, and *amour*, I will also focus on variants of these words such as *intéresser*, *s'intéresser*, *ami*, and *amour-propre*. I counted and tabulated the number of times each word in my endogenous lexis appears in the four plays I treated in the previous chapter, *Le Misanthrope*, *L'École des femmes*, *Le Tartuffe*, and

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<sup>3</sup> With respect to the unuttered text in the plays, the stage directions make no mention of either *intérêt* or *amitié*. *Amour*, however, appears in one stage direction in *Le Malade imaginaire*, when Cléante poses as Angélique's music teacher. It says that: 'CLÉANTE sous le nom d'un Berger, explique à sa Maîtresse son amour depuis leur rencontre' (II, v).

*Don Juan*, as well as four additional plays (see Appendix 1<sup>4</sup>). I have added *Le Médecin volant*<sup>5</sup>, *Le Médecin malgré lui*, *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, and *Le Malade imaginaire* to provide additional points of comparison with the ways the playwright employs *intérêt*, *amitié*, and *amour*, but principally because the four plays subjected to *querelles* are all *grandes comédies*. Adding farces and *comédies-ballets* to this sample forms a more complete cross-section of his work. My intention is not to create a full inventory of Molière's words—this has already been done by Hubert de Phalèse<sup>6</sup>—but rather to excavate a new lexical example.

My method is to consider each use of *intérêt*, *amitié*, and *amour*, and the meaning imparted by speaker and context, and to form a compendium of the other words Molière employed in conjunction with them. In doing so, my aim is to develop a greater sense of which words Molière selects to convey empathy and narcissism. Many of the same words from my initial lexis appear frequently, while others are absent, and there are words that appear with *intérêt*, *amitié*, and *amour* that I did not encounter at all in my examination of the *querelles*.

After taking into account how Molière constructs dual definitions of *intérêt*, *amitié*, and *amour*, I will consult other sources from the period, most notably the three major French dictionaries from the seventeenth century, Pierre Richelet's *Dictionnaire* (1680), Antoine Furetière's *Dictionnaire universel* (1690), and the first edition (1694) of the *Dictionnaire* produced by the Académie française, in addition to texts that explore the passions, including *Les Caractères des passions* (1640-62) by the medical doctor-philosopher Marin Cureau de la Chambre, *De l'usage des passions* (1641) by the Augustinian theologian Jean-François Senault, and *Les Passions de l'âme* (1649) by

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<sup>4</sup> In Appendix 1, I have bolded the words that occur the most frequently and italicized the words that occur the least.

<sup>5</sup> This farce is also the only work in my eight-play cross-section in which the words *intérêt*, *intéresser*, and *amitié* do not appear.

<sup>6</sup> 'Hubert de Phalèse' is the *nom de plume* of a research group founded by Henri Béhar that focuses on the application of information technology to literature. See Hubert de Phalèse, *Les Mots de Molière* (Paris: Nizet, 1992).

René Descartes.<sup>7</sup> Taking note of the frequency with which these words appear on Molière's stage and of the lexical groups surrounding them, and analysing the similarities and differences between the playwright's definitions with those of his contemporaries, will provide a means for examining the balance between empathy and narcissism in the plays. It also creates an opening for investigating how the plays engage with audiences and give them pleasure—whether it is by appealing to the spectators' sympathy or to their vanity.

The progression of my discussion, as in the previous chapter, will be thematic rather than chronological. I begin with *intérêt*, because, compared with *amitié* and *amour*, it is more neutral. It does not automatically imply a relationship with another person (which both *amitié* and *amour* do to a greater degree), but rather, feelings that are existential in nature.<sup>8</sup> I will then move forward to a discussion of *amitié* and sympathetic *amour*, and then to *amour* and *amour-propre*. Hence, I proceed from simpler to more inherently complicated constructs. Also, this order is logical given the frequency of these words in the plays concerned (see Appendix 1). Out of all eight plays, *intérêt*, *intéresser*, and *s'intéresser* appear 58 times; *ami*, *amitié*, and *amiquie* appear a total of 121 times; and *amour* and its variants (*amant*, *aimable*, *aimer*, *amour de soi-même*, *amour-propre*, *mamie*, and *mamour*<sup>9</sup>) appear 451 times. Thus, my discussion moves from less-frequently-spoken words towards words that largely infuse the plays.

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<sup>7</sup> It is worth acknowledging that, writing about the seventeenth-century *moralistes*, Parmentier cautions against taking word definitions from the period too seriously: 'ces ouvrages paraissent à l'époque où se développent les premiers grands dictionnaires [...] Cette coïncidence est incontestable, mais il importe de considérer que ces définitions sont presque toujours de fausses définitions'. Bérengère Parmentier, *Le Siècle des moralistes* (Paris: Édition du Seuil, 2000), p. 284.

<sup>8</sup> Describing Molière's 'fâcheux', Dandrey observes: 'il ne saurait y avoir de fâcheux solitaire: il faut être deux au moins, et parfois trois, pour que l'un devienne le fâcheux de l'autre, ou des autres'. By the same token, it is arguable that there could not be an *ami* or *amoureux solitaire* (aside from, of course, a narcissist), whereas *intérêt* is at base a solitary, individual matter. Patrick Dandrey, *Molière ou l'esthétique du ridicule*, p. 53.

<sup>9</sup> According to Furetière, *m'amour* and *m'amie* are 'Termes de cageolierie familiere, qui sont abregez de *mon amour* & de *mon amie*. Ils ne sont en usage que dans le Burlesque & dans les chansons'.

Therefore, rather than imposing modern constructs on the past, I trace how these notions spring from the very language Molière used. For subsequent chapters, having explored the various empathetic and narcissistic significations of Molière's vocabulary will give me a practicable set of tools for closely examining specific characters and their actions. This investigation also gives rise to issues that are related to empathy and narcissism, including social class, gender, and the dynamic relationship between the stage and the spectator.

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## 2.2 *Intérêt*

Even a desultory glance at Molière's vocabulary (see Appendix 1) reveals that *intérêt* is not among his most frequently used words. On its own, *intérêt* appears a total of 45 times, trailing behind not only terms that express emotional states like *amour* (which appears alone 150 times) and *ami* (which is spoken 91 times), but also words that indicate social qualities, such as *honneur* (which on its own appears 112 times) and *esprit* (with 102 appearances). But in spite of this, *intérêt* is a concept that carried a great deal of significance during the seventeenth century, and it does occur more frequently than a variety of other important terms, including ones that are more visceral in nature, such as *désir* (which appears 23 times), and *aveuglement* (which appears 6 times). At the far end of the spectrum, *bienveillance* appears only once in all eight plays, and *compassion* and *générosité* are never uttered.

In essence, *intérêt* is neither a good nor a bad trait, but simply the will to survive. Indeed, Furetière's first definition for *intérêt* is, 'Ce qu'on a affection de conserver ou d'acquérir, ce qui nous importe soit dans nostre personne, soit dans nos biens. Le premier de nos *Interests*, c'est nostre conservation'.<sup>10</sup> Thus, *intérêt* is a

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<sup>10</sup> As defined by Furetière, *intérêt* is harmonious with the views put forth by the burgeoning field of evolutionary psychology. Dissanayake writes: 'To critics of contemporary evolutionary psychology, the term self-interest is similarly pejorative, suggesting a callous and unregenerate lack of concern for others. Insofar as the purpose of life for any organism is to survive and reproduce, the choices that humans make

fundamental, interior drive. For Molière, whether it denotes a positive *sympathie* or a negative *amour de soi* depends on the context and the other words spoken.

To this end, a more detailed look (Appendix 2e) shows the frequency of *intérêt* and its verbal and adjectival forms, and that the play with the most mentions of *intérêt* and its variants is *Le Tartuffe*, with 16 appearances. One can see, looking at the numbers for *Le Tartuffe* in Appendix 1, that there are two other words that appear most frequently in this play: they are the verb *souffrir*, with 26 mentions (see Appendix 2d), and the noun *orgueil*, with 8 mentions. Thus, a connection is established between *intérêt* and *orgueil*, and *intérêt* and *souffrir*, which is an essential component of an understanding of empathy.<sup>11</sup> Overall, *souffrir* is another word that appears frequently; in the eight plays, it is spoken 104 times in total. This association of *intérêt* with *souffrir* and *orgueil* demarcates the two directions in which *intérêt* can move us, towards sympathy for suffering or sinful pride.

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### 2.2.1 Positive *Intérêt*

When Molière uses *intérêt* in a positive, empathetic manner—relating to sympathy for the suffering for others—he most often involves it in a scene wherein codes of social behaviour, friendship, and love are at stake. Two striking examples of the interplay between *intérêt* and social codes occur in *Don Juan* and *Le Malade imaginaire*, in which the word is spoken respectively by Don Juan and by Angélique’s lover, Cléante. The former instance takes place when Don Carlos thanks Don Juan for rescuing him

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generally have to do (whether recognized as such or not) with what is perceived to be in one’s interest: They pertain to matters such as satisfying one’s own needs and appetites for nourishment, care, safety, and acceptance by and regard by one’s associates [...] Over evolutionary time, individuals who were not equipped to look out for these interests did not survive or reproduce and left no descendants with similar diffidence about their personal welfare’. Dissanayake, ‘*Fons et Origo*’, p. 310.

<sup>11</sup> One must clarify, however, that suffering is not the only human experience that stirs empathy. Harris confronts this assumption, citing the research of Suzanne Keen: ‘[The] implicit emphasis on suffering is significant; as Suzanne Keen has recently remarked, discussions of empathy can also occur for “positive feelings of happiness, satisfaction, elation, triumph, and sexual arousal”’. Joseph Harris, ‘Introduction: Identification Before Freud’, *Nottingham French Studies*, 47, 3 (2008), 1-12 (p. 9). Also, Suzanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 5.

from a band of thieves. Don Carlos implores, ‘que je vous rends grâce d’une action si généreuse et que...’ (III, iii), to which Don Juan replies, ‘Je n’ai rien fait, Monsieur, que vous n’eussiez fait à ma place, notre propre honneur est intéressé dans de pareilles aventures’. In this moment, the adjective *intéressé* means ‘involved’, ‘concerned’, and ‘at risk’. Don Juan’s response suggests a reciprocal dynamic between the two men that is born of their comparable social status; he is fully confident that Don Carlos would have come to his own aid had their fortunes been reversed. Thus, the fact of being *intéressé* for the sake of his *honneur* drove him to commit an act of courage. Curiously, as Appendix 2b shows, *honneur* and related words appear more frequently in *Don Juan* than in any of the other plays (42 times), with the noun *honneur* itself being spoken 27 times. This intimates that it is prudent to take *honneur* into account in interpreting the language in this play.

In addition to this, Don Juan’s response puts the adjective *généreux* in opposition to both *honneur* and *intéressé*. Consequently, the formula Molière constructs in this scene is that *intérêt* tempered by *honneur*, rather than by *générosité*, has the power to move even the most selfish of men to good deeds, which indicates a kind of empathy. Correspondingly, in the following scene, when Don Carlos tells his brother that they should refrain from killing Don Juan, Don Alonso retorts, ‘Ah l’étrange faiblesse, et l’aveuglement effroyable de hasarder ainsi les intérêts de son honneur pour la ridicule pensée d’une obligation chimérique!’ (III, iv). This complaint reinforces the connection Molière draws between *intérêt* and *honneur*, except that in this instance *intérêt* tempered by *honneur* is overpowered by the influence of *aveuglement*. Even though *intérêt* is still a positive force in this exchange, it is fallible when impeded by a sense of indebtedness. Intriguingly, as with *honneur*, the group of words surrounding *aveuglement* (including *aveugle*, *aveuglement*, and *aveugler*) also occur the most often in *Don Juan* (see Appendix 2h). Hence, with *Don Juan*, Molière

creates a correlation between sympathetic *intérêt* and *honneur*, and a conflict between *intérêt* and *aveuglement*.

Likewise, the playwright reaffirms this pattern of *intérêt* leading to an act of *générosité* in *Le Malade imaginaire*, when Cléante regales Argan's family with the tale of a shepherd and shepherdess falling in love. The shepherd protects the shepherdess from another man's abuse, and he elucidates the impulse behind this action, saying, 'D'abord il prend les intérêts d'un sexe à qui tous les hommes doivent hommage' (II, v). The shepherd's *intérêt* is therefore instigated by a concern for and sense of *devoir* towards women in general. Although Cléante's use of *intérêt* does also invoke a code of behaviour, like Don Juan's, it is an example not only of *honneur*, but also of *galanterie*. Another trait shared by these two scenes is that the *intérêt* felt by both Don Juan and Cléante's shepherd was galvanized into action by the observation of human suffering. This highlights the bond I noted in *Le Tartuffe* in the frequency of *intérêt* and the verb *souffrir*.

With respect to *Le Tartuffe*, in which the noun *intérêt* is spoken 15 times (which is more than in any of the other plays; see Appendix 2e), the word appears in a sympathetic context when Dorine and Elmire implore Orgon to be wary of the *faux dévot*. Dorine fights to dissuade him from marrying his daughter to Tartuffe, with the avowal, 'Je n'en parle, Monsieur, que pour votre intérêt' (II, ii, 543). Furthermore, Elmire urges him to see Tartuffe's deceitfulness, arguing, 'Ce sont vos intérêts' (IV, iv, 1385). As Orgon's servant and wife, their fundamental wellbeing is intimately tied to his not being fleeced by Tartuffe. *Intérêt* touches the very existence of these characters, because when they speak of his *intérêt*, they are in fact speaking of their own, as well. With Orgon and these women, *intérêt* functions as a form of empathy. Even though Orgon's affection for Tartuffe masks the true nature of their relationship, the interests

he shares with Dorine and Elmire motivate the women to protect him and force him out of his self-imposed blindness.

Friendship and romantic love are also contexts in which Molière makes positive use of *intérêt*. In *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, Dorante uses the verb forms of *intérêt* in a manner that evokes the concern of a friend. First, he tells Dorimène that they should aid Cléonte, reasoning, ‘C’est un fort galant Homme, et qui mérite que l’on s’intéresse pour lui’ (V, ii). Once again, as with the fictional shepherd in *Le Malade imaginaire*, *galanterie* inspires *intérêt*. Then Dorante urges Madame Jourdain to allow her daughter to marry the son of the ‘Grand Turc’, telling her, ‘C’est l’amitié que nous avons pour vous, qui nous fait intéresser dans vos avantages’ (V, vi), thereupon revealing *amitié* to be a wellspring of positive *intérêt*. Furthermore, in *Le Misanthrope*, *intérêt* appears in an expression of sincere affection. Éliante speaks of it when she and Philinte discuss Alceste and Célimène’s mismatched temperaments. Philinte suggests that Alceste would be better suited to Éliante, and she admits that she would have him if her perfidious cousin chose someone else, saying, ‘Je ne m’oppose point à toute sa tendresse; | Au contraire, mon Cœur pour elle, s’intéresse’ (IV, i, 1193-4). Thus, *cœur* and *tendresse* are also implicated with sympathetic *intérêt*. I will discuss these words in greater detail in subsequent sections of this chapter. Nevertheless, how does Molière’s use of *intérêt*, *honneur*, *généreux*, and *aveuglement* compare to definitions from his contemporaries?

The first definition Richelet offers for *intérêt* is of interest in the monetary sense; he writes, ‘Ce qu’on doit faute de païment d’une somme certaine’. However, the second definition in Richelet is, ‘Parti d’une personne, part chose qui regarde nos intérêts [sic], nos avantages’. Accordingly, he emphasizes *intérêt* as personal advantage, which could be seen as negative and self-centred, but as in the cases of Dorine and Elmire, is shared with Orgon and therefore akin to empathy. Richelet

defines *intresser* as, ‘Vouloir qu’on prenne part. Engager par intérêt’, and *s’intresser* as, ‘Prendre les intérêts d’une personne. Prendre sa part à quelque chose’. This last entry also draws attention to a mutual concern with another person. Again, this is consonant with the way the women in *Le Tartuffe* speak of *intérêt*. Moreover, Richelet also includes an entry for the adjective *interessé*, which he defines as, ‘Qui aime fort ses intérêts’; he thus introduces the verb *aimer* to this lexical group.

As previously stated, Furetière’s primary definition for *intérêt* is ‘conservation’, thus the protection of oneself. In his second entry, he extends this meaning of protection beyond the self, writing that *intérêt* ‘se dit aussi de la part qu’on prend en quelque chose, de sa deffence qu’on entreprend, de la protection qu’on luy donne’. Even though he specifies ‘chose’ instead of ‘personne’, this definition does correspond with Don Juan and the shepherd’s deeds, in that they both perform acts of ‘deffence’ and ‘protection’ for another human being.

The dictionary of the Académie française is the only one to confirm explicitly the link in Molière’s diction between *intérêt* and *honneur*. According to this reference, *intérêt* means, ‘Ce qui importe, ce qui convient en quelque maniere que ce soit, ou à l’honneur, ou à l’utilité, ou à la satisfaction de quelqu’un’. In addition, this entry draws the concept of *satisfaction* into the discussion of *intérêt*. Surprisingly, as with *honneur* and *aveuglement*, *satisfaction* and related words (the verb *satisfaire* and adjective *satisfait*), also appear the most often in *Don Juan* (see Appendix 2g). Next, the Académie notes, ‘On dit encore, *Prendre interest à une affaire, à une personne*, pour dire, L’affectionner, en prendre soin, se mettre en peine de la faire réussir’, which has a positive connotation; Dorine’s and Elmire’s shared desire to see Orgon prevail over Tartuffe is illustrative of this notion. Finally, the Académie says of *intérêt*, ‘On dit aussi, *Prendre interest à la joye, à l’affliction de quelqu’un* [...] pour dire, En estre touché, y estre sensible’. Although it does not specifically bring up the idea of

suffering, the phrase ‘l’affliction de quelqu’un’ certainly does imply *souffrance*, and therefore recalls Don Juan and the shepherd bearing witness to the respective suffering of Don Carlos and the shepherdess. Furthermore, this formulation is arresting because of the parallel structure it creates between *joye* and *affliction*. This emphasizes the idea that in order to share in another person’s feelings, those feelings need not be pain and suffering, but could equally be enjoyment and pleasure.<sup>12</sup>

For the verb *interessier*, the Académie gives the definitions, ‘Donner part à quelqu’un en quelque chose d’utile, faire qu’il y trouve du profit’; ‘Faire préjudice’; and ‘Emouvoir, toucher de quelque passion’. The combined effect of the first and third definitions in this entry approaches the idea of empathy, in that it involves being moved emotionally (‘Emouvoir’) and then having an appropriate reaction and acting on someone’s behalf (‘Donner part à quelqu’un’). This entry also inserts the word *passion* into the aggregation of vocabulary surrounding *intérêt*. Furetière does so as well in a subsidiary definition of *intéresser*, in which he writes that this verb, ‘se dit aussi en Morale de l’émotion des passions’. While drawing *compassion* (which, as I mentioned, is not uttered once in these eight plays) into the lexicon of *intérêt*, he gives as examples, ‘Un bon Orateur doit *Intéresser* les Juges, les Esmouvoir à colere, à la compassion. on s’*interesse* dans les spectacles’.<sup>13</sup> He reveals the specific relevance of *intérêt* to dramatic art, by means of stirring the passions, and he connects the theatre explicitly to *compassion*, which Descartes does as well.

Although he does not use the word *intérêt* in this passage, Cureau de la Chambre writes lucidly about a similar drive, which he calls a ‘secrete connoissance’.

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<sup>12</sup> See above at n. 11.

<sup>13</sup> In the *querelle de l’École des femmes*, the connection between *intérêt* and the theatre arises when Donneau de Visé applies the adjective *intéressé* to Molière’s audience: ‘tous ceux qui lui donnent des mémoires veulent voir s’il s’en sert bien [...] ce qui fait croire justement que la quantité d’auditeurs intéressés qui vont voir ces pièces les font réussir’. However, these spectators are interested, not in the intrigue of the play, but in themselves. Donneau de Visé, *Nouvelles nouvelles*, p. 1095.

He twice uses the same word as Furetière, ‘conservation’, and explains how a kind of inborn knowledge spurs mankind into action:

C’est une vérité bien assurée qu’il y a en nous une secrete connoissance des choses qui servent à nostre conservation; Et il est vray-semblable que cette connoissance se fait par le moyen de quelques idées que la Nature a imprimées au fonds de l’ame, & qui estans comme cachées, & ensevelies dans ses abysmes, s’excitent & se relèvent à l’abord de celles que les sens y apportent, & causent apres dans l’appetit l’Amour ou la haine, le desir ou l’aversion. Or comme il n’y a que deux choses qui servent à nostre conservation, la recherche du bien & la fuite du mal, il est bien certain que la nature pense plustost à chercher le bien qu’à s’esloigner du mal.<sup>14</sup>

Describing this *connaissance* as an instinct, Cureau de la Chambre claims it is imprinted by nature in man’s *âme*, whence it moves us to seek good and flee evil. He accentuates the depth and scope of this *intérêt*-like drive with the terms ‘au fonds’ and ‘ensevelies dans ses abysmes’. As he construes it, the mechanics of this instinct reside in the *âme* and *appétit*; and the key responses to this *connaissance* in the *appétit* are on the one hand, *amour* and *désir*, and on the other hand, *haine* and *aversion*. In a different vein, Rousseau, who does mention the verb *s’intéresser*, sees this word in a way that is close to a contemporary definition of empathy. In his *Lettre à d’Alembert*, Rousseau asks, ‘Car s’intéresser pour quelqu’un qu’est-ce autre chose que se mettre à sa place?’<sup>15</sup> So another term that is synonymous with *intérêt* is *se mettre/être à sa place*. Strikingly, this query mirrors Furetière’s definition of *cœur* (which, as we have seen, is spoken by Éliante with *s’intéresser*): ‘On dit, qu’il faut prendre son *cœur* à autrui, pour dire, faire ce qu’on feroit si on estoit à sa place’. Both Rousseau and Furetière’s delineations recall Don Juan’s explanation for risking his life to save a stranger.

Thus, *intérêt* in its sympathetic sense is an instinctual will to protect oneself, to defend others, and to seek good, as well as a communion of sentiments between

<sup>14</sup> Marin Cureau de la Chambre, *Les Caractères des passions*, 5 vols (Paris: Jacques d’Allin, 1640-1662), I, p. 64-5, in *Gallica* <<http://gallica.bnf.fr>> [accessed 1 August 2009]

<sup>15</sup> Rousseau, p. 96.

different people. Moreover, Molière closely associates this sympathetic *intérêt* with *honneur*, *aveuglement*, *souffrir*, and *satisfaction*, in addition to *amitié* and *amour*.

...

### 2.2.2 Negative *Intérêt*

In contrast to his sympathetic use of *intérêt*, Molière's negative use of the word arises in situations that evoke greed, lasciviousness, conniving, and other forms of treachery. When Sganarelle claims to Géronte that he is not ruled by interest in Act II, scene iv of *Le Médecin malgré lui*, he means that he is not swayed by financial motives; the punch line is that he is, in fact, wholly and obviously avaricious. Don Juan uses *intérêt* when he comments on the mercenary nature of the poor man who asks him for alms, remarking, 'Ah, ah, ton avis est intéressé' (III, ii). Similarly, in the first scene of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, the dance teacher criticizes the music teacher over his preference for wealthy students, admonishing, 'l'intérêt est quelque chose de si bas, qu'il ne faut jamais qu'un honnête Homme montre pour lui de l'attachement'. Angélique in *Le Malade imaginaire* also articulates *intérêt* as greed when she obliquely accuses Béline of marrying her father for money. She bemoans women 'qui font du mariage un commerce de pur intérêt' (II, vi). Béline counters with a barrage of insults, the strongest of which is that Angélique betrays 'un ridicule orgueil'. This is the sole utterance of *orgueil* in the entire play. Hence, Molière creates a link between selfish, greed-motivated *intérêt* and *orgueil*, and he places it in opposition to the notion of an *honnête homme*.

In terms of lasciviousness, Sganarelle speaks of *intérêt* during his second attempt to molest the *nourrice*, Jacqueline, in *Le Médecin malgré lui*. He tells her employer, Géronte, 'Mais, comme je m'intéresse à toute votre Famille, il faut que j'essaye un peu le Lait de votre Nourrice' (II, iii). The way he uses this verb, Sganarelle is subtly expressing his crass desire for Jacqueline. Molière further conveys this

inappropriate, boundary-violating undercurrent in *intérêt* when the word is spoken by Arnolphe in Act II, scene i of *L'École des femmes*. Cogitating about Agnès and Horace in his first soliloquy, he says, 'J'y prends, pour mon honneur, un notable intérêt' (381). At face value, this statement appears quite similar to Don Juan's explanation to Don Carlos. By pairing *intérêt* with *honneur*, Arnolphe likewise justifies his drive for self-defence with a code of behaviour. However, Arnolphe's true concern lies not in his *honneur*, but in his desire for Agnès. Had Horace taken more from her than a ribbon, it would not have affected Arnolphe's *honneur* because she was not his wife—but it would have thwarted his perverted wish to marry an ignorant virgin (a situation fraught with the threat of rape). Therefore, instead of being regulated by *honneur*, Arnolphe's destructive *intérêt* spills over into excessive *amour-propre*.

With respect to *intérêt* in situations of conniving and using others for personal gain, a couple of prominent examples come from Célimène, and surprisingly, Elmire. Célimène explains to Alceste her flirtation with the marquis Clitandre, saying he can help her win her court case: 'Il peut intéresser tout ce qu'il a d'Amis' (II, i, 492). Although this expression of *ami* in and of itself is not negative, the context in which it appears is one of collusion and politicking.

During the pivotal scene in *Le Tartuffe*, wherein Elmire fools the hypocrite, she also utters *intérêt* in a manner that bespeaks trickery. She tells Tartuffe of 'l'intérêt qu'en vous on s'avise de prendre' (IV, v, 1434), in describing her feelings for him. In this instance, *intérêt* is intended to be synonymous with love, and, taken on its own, her statement could be an expression of tenderness, but it is complicated by the fact that Elmire is pretending. In fact, one wonders what Alceste's reaction to Elmire's disingenuous confession of love might be, given his biting utterance of *intérêt*. Alceste claims that, in society, he encounters nothing but 'Injustice, Intérêt, Trahison,

Fourberie' (I, i, 94). Although Philinte's interpretation is more forgiving towards his fellow men, his use of *intérêt* is just as scathing as Alceste's; he says:

Oui, je vois ces Défauts dont votre âme murmure,  
Comme Vices unis à l'Humaine Nature;  
Et mon esprit, enfin, n'est pas plus offensé,  
De voir un Homme fourbe, injuste, intéressé,  
Que de voir des Vautours affamés de carnage,  
Des Singes malfaisants, et des Loups pleins de rage.  
(I, i, 173-8)

Both Alceste and Philinte speak of *fourberie* and *injustice*, using these words as offenses equal in measure to *intérêt*. Within Molière's vocabulary (see Appendix 1), it is apparent that *âme* and *esprit*, two words that are spoken by Philinte in this passage, appear most frequently in *Le Misanthrope*; *âme* is spoken 41 times in this play, and *esprit* is spoken 24 times (which ties *Le Misanthrope* with *L'École des femmes*). Therefore, the utterance of pernicious *intérêt* raises the notions of *âme*, *humaine nature*, *esprit*, and a host of ills, including *injustice*, *trahison*, and *fourberie*.

In his final entry for *intérêt*, Furetière notes that the word, 'signifie aussi la somme qu'on paye chaque année à celui dont on a emprunté de l'argent', thus acknowledging its financial dimension, as we have seen Richelet does in his first entry. He defines *intéresser* as, 'Engager quelqu'un par son Interest à soutenir, à faire quelque affaire', and he adds the example, 'on a corrompu ce Juge, on l'a *Intéressé* par plusieurs pressens', which is in complete accord with Célimène's use of the word. Fittingly, the last explanation Furetière includes in his entry for *interest* is, 'On dit proverbialement, que l'*interest* nous aveugle, ou que chacun est aveugle dans ses *interests*, pour dire, que nostre amour propre nous flatte, ne nous fait pas connoître nos deffauts'. Hence, it is clear that the notions of *intérêt* and *amour-propre* are firmly interwoven (I will examine *amour-propre* at length in the final section of this chapter).

But for now, it is pertinent to show how, by treating *intérêt* and *amour-propre* as constructs that extend beyond simple *conservation*, Senault connects these two

notions as the inevitable guiding factors for people who live without 'la Grace'. He writes of man,

[N]'agissant pas par la Grace, il falloit qu'il agist par la concupiscence; et estant possédé par l'amour propre, il ne se pouvoit point proposer d'autre fin que soy-même: Il cherchoit, ou la gloire, ou le plaisir, et dans toutes ses actions il ne s'élevoit point plus haut que ses interests.<sup>16</sup>

Hence, selfish *intérêt* and *amour-propre* go hand in hand with *concupiscence*, *gloire*, and *plaisir*. Taking this a step further, Alain Brunn comments that neutral *intérêt*, or 'souci de soi', is actually synonymous with *amour-propre* when it slides into negative terrain, writing, 'c'est le cas lorsque ce souci de soi devient premier, lorsqu'il est amour-propre, retour vain et incessant sur soi'.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, depending on context and the surrounding diction, negative *intérêt* can range in meaning from pure greed, deceitful social behaviour, and lust, to the absence of divine grace. Other terms that appear in concert with *intérêt* in a negative context include the nouns *gloire* and *plaisir*, as well as to the verbs *aveugler* and *flatter*. With respect to the notion of *conservation*, *intérêt* can tilt decidedly towards *amour de soi* or *amour-propre*.

...

### 2.3 Amitié

Unlike *intérêt*, which appears in Molière's plays at alternating points as a fundamental will to live, a feeling of concern or affection, or conversely, deceit, perversion, and *amour-propre*, *amitié* functions in Molière's lexis as a social structure as well as a feeling. But similarly to *intérêt*, *amitié* also has multiple meanings that evoke sympathy and *amour de soi*.

Amongst Molière's characters, there is a pronounced distinction between those who speak repeatedly about *amitié* and those who speak of it less, but actually manifest the qualities of a true friend through action. In a sense, this disparity is what Alceste

<sup>16</sup> Jean-François Senault, *De l'usage des passions* [1641] (Paris: Fayard, 1987), p. 29.

<sup>17</sup> Alain Brunn, *Le Laboratoire moraliste* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2009), p. 196.

points out in his initial exchange with Oronte in *Le Misanthrope*. The would-be poet claims that he wants to be Alceste's friend, and he speaks the words *ami* and *amitié* five times before either word passes Alceste's lips. Oronte tells the *misanthrope* of his, 'ardent désir d'être de vos Amis' (I, ii, 256); how he wishes to share with him, 'un nœud d'Amitié' (258); and that he himself would be 'un Ami chaud' (259). He begs, 'Et qu'en votre Amitié, je vous demande place' (274), finally asking for assurance, 'vous me la promettez, | Votre Amitié?' (275-6). Also speaking of *amitié* in his reply, Alceste avers, 'Mais l'Amitié demande un peu plus de mystère, | Et c'est, assurément, en profaner le nom, | Que de vouloir le mettre à toute occasion' (I, ii, 278-80). Through this response, the very articulation of *amitié* ('le nom') is imbued with a meaning of sacredness, especially given the inclusion of the words *mystère* and *profaner*. It is not to be taken lightly. The irony is that, although in this scene it is Oronte who has overused and profaned *ami* and *amitié*, in the play in its entirety, it is Alceste who commits the very crime he himself critiques. In this sample of plays, the one that contains the greatest number of utterances of *amitié* is *Le Misanthrope* (see Appendix 2c). Out of all 27 utterances of *ami* and *amitié*, Alceste speaks them eight times in total, which is more than any other character in the play. This scene also shows *ami* and *amitié* in close proximity not only with *mystère* and *profaner*, but also with words such as *désir*, *nœud*, *chaud*, and *promettre*.

At one end of the spectrum of *amitié*'s duality, it means a trusting relationship marked by confidence and service, and *amitié* is also a near-synonym for *amour*, and is used to illustrate a sympathetic kind of love, rather than self-love. Therefore, I will examine positive *amour* in this section, as well. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Molière uses *amitié* and *ami* as a means of exalting one's social status—whether real or imagined—over that of others, and as a caricature of true friendship.

### 2.3.1 Positive *Amitié*

The essential elements that accompany Molière's sympathetic use of *ami* and *amitié* are sharing and service, and therefore, trust. The three plays that hold the most utterances of *ami* on its own are *L'École des femmes*, *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, and *Le Malade imaginaire*, with 17 mentions each. In particular, *L'École des femmes* proffers illuminating examples of friendship as an obligation to confide. From their very first meeting in *L'École des femmes*, Horace confesses his highest hopes to Arnolphe, on account of the friendship between Arnolphe and his father. He tells Arnolphe about his *coup de foudre*, reasoning, 'Et l'amitié m'oblige à vous en faire part' (I, iv, 305). Later on, when recounting the episode with the *gré*, Horace tells Arnolphe, 'Mais il faut qu'en ami je vous montre la lettre. | Tout ce que son cœur sent, sa main a su l'y mettre' (III, iv, 940-1). Telling Arnolphe of his plans to rescue Agnès, Horace says, 'Comme à mon seul ami je veux bien vous l'apprendre, | L'allégresse du cœur s'augmente à la répandre' (IV, vi, 1176-7). Taking Arnolphe further into his confidence, Horace asks him to protect Agnès for him, stating, 'C'est à vous seul aussi, comme ami généreux | Que je puis confier ce dépôt amoureux' (V, ii, 1434-5). Thus, the trust and *générosité* inherent in the state of being an *ami* make Horace feel comfortable sharing (*confier*) his 'dépôt amoureux'.

However, Horace is not the only character who manifests friendship as a display of trust. In the play's first scene, after lecturing Chrysalde about choosing a wife, Arnolphe invites him to meet Agnès, saying, 'Le résultat de tout, est qu'en Ami fidèle, | Ce soir, je vous invite à souper avec elle' (I, i, 151-2). Horace treats Arnolphe the same way that Arnolphe treats Chrysalde—each man trusts the other with the object of his affection. The group of words that encircles *amitié* in this sense largely includes verbs that imply partaking, including *confier*, *montrer*, *inviter*, and even *souper*, in addition to *cœur*.

With respect to *amitié* as service, Horace begs Arnolphe to discourage Oronte from forcing him to marry, beseeching, ‘Et rendez en ami ce service à mon feu’ (V, vi, 1647). According to this formulation, the state of *amitié* leads to service, rather than the other way around. Consequently, because Horace has placed the trust of *amitié* ahead of the deeds of *service*, Arnolphe does prove to be a false friend. However, Valère in *Le Tartuffe* and Cléante in *Le Malade imaginaire* both speak of *amitié* ‘after the fact’—that is, they describe friends who have proven themselves as trustworthy through their actions. When Tartuffe tries to turn Orgon’s family out of their home, Valère warns them to flee. He explains,

Un Ami qui m’est joint d’une amitié fort tendre,  
Et qui sait l’intérêt qu’en vous j’ai lieu de prendre,  
A violé pour moi, par un pas délicat,  
Le secret que l’on doit aux affaires d’État.  
(V, vi, 1829-32)

He speaks of his *ami* as someone willing to take a risk for him, thus strengthening the association between *amitié* and *intérêt* (‘deffence’), and creating one between *amitié* and *tendre*, even though in this case, *amitié* does not have a romantic connotation. Similarly, in Cléante’s effort to convey his feelings to Angélique, he tells Toinette that he will visit her ‘comme ami de son Maître de Musique, dont j’ai obtenu le pouvoir de dire qu’il m’envoie à sa place’ (II, i). He then recounts this story to Argan, saying, ‘et comme son ami intime, il m’envoie à sa place’ (II, ii). In addition to the fact that Cléante’s friend has risked his livelihood to help him, this *service* characteristic of *amitié* is underscored by his repetition of the phrase ‘à sa place’, which acts as a variant of the notion that empathy is putting yourself in someone else’s place. The real music teacher quite literally allows Cléante to occupy his own place. Coupling the adjective *intime* with *ami* in this instance is sincere rather than ironic, because it is backed up by an intimate gesture—that of sharing one’s identity.

Richelet, Furetière, and the Académie all define *ami* in a way that communicates love and affection. Richelet writes of *ami*, ‘Celui qui aime & qui est aimé’, and Furetière defines it thus: ‘Qui a de l’affection pour quelque personne, & qui luy procure ou qui luy souhaite toute sorte d’avantages’. The Académie does the same, offering first as a definition, ‘Celuy, celle qui a de l’affection pour quelque personne, & se porte à luy rendre toutes sortes de bons offices’. Remarkably, while all the dictionaries bring up either the verb *aimer* or the noun *affection*, the Académie is the only one to describe *ami* as reciprocal.<sup>18</sup> It purports that, ‘Il se dit principalement quand l’affection est reciproque’, and then cautions, ‘Il se dit aussi quelquefois, quoique l’amitié ne soit pas reciproque’. But with respect to *amitié*, Richelet also draws attention to reciprocity, calling it: ‘Afection réciproque qu’on se témoigne pour de particulieres considérations’. The verb *se témoigner* corresponds in meaning with the *amitié* described by Valère and Cléante. Using similar terms, the Académie writes of *amitié*, ‘Affection mutuelle, reciproque entre deux personnes à peu près d’égale condition’. However, Furetière takes a different view, writing of *amitié*: ‘Affection qu’on a pour quelqu’un, soit qu’elle soit seulement d’un costé, soit qu’elle soit reciproque. Les devoirs de l’amitié obligent à se servir l’un l’autre’. Therefore, according to Furetière and the Académie, *amitié* can be one-sided or requited, whereas Richelet emphasizes reciprocity. Another interesting detail brought up by the Académie’s definition is that *amitié* requires the parties involved to be ‘à peu près d’égale condition’, thus broaching the issue of hierarchy, which I will discuss in the following section.

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<sup>18</sup> With respect to what he calls ‘la passion de posséder’, Bénichou writes, ‘Il n’est de certitude et de jouissances vraies que dans des rapports de réciprocité et d’échange avec le monde vivant’. See Bénichou, p. 242.

In the *Essais*, Montaigne describes *amitié* as a relation between two people in what amounts to a kind of ‘egale condition’, in that this *condition* can indicate the state of two people united as parts of a whole. He writes,

Au demeurant, ce que nous appellons ordinairement amis et amitez, ce ne sont qu’accoinctances et familiaritez nouées par quelque occasion ou commodité, par le moyen de laquelle nos ames s’entretiennent. En l’amitié dequoy je parle, elles se meslent et confondent l’une en l’autre, d’un melange si universel, qu’elles effacent et ne retrouvent plus la couture qui les a jointes. Si on me presse de dire pourquoy je l’aymois, je sens que cela ne se peut exprimer, /// qu’en respondant: ‘Par ce que c’estoit luy; par ce que c’estoit moy’.<sup>19</sup>

The verbs that appear here, such as *se mêler* and *confondre* recall the verbs that denote partaking spoken by Horace and Arnolphe, and this ‘melange universel’ educes a kind of identification. Although confiding appears to be a necessary part of *amitié*, it is also something that has rewards in terms of comfort. Citing the following statement from Saint François de Sales’s *Introduction à la vie dévote*: ‘Que c’est un souverain remède de découvrir son mal à quelque ami spirituel qui nous puisse soulager’,<sup>20</sup> Richard Parish comments that the effect of François’s chapter is of ‘[G]rounding thereby the attainment of spiritual consolation in an act of immanent trust’.<sup>21</sup> Providing relief from suffering and the mingling of selves in trust are therefore essential components to this sympathetic *amitié*.

...

### 2.3.2 Negative *Amitié*

Molière’s negative use of *ami* and *amitié* manifests itself most often in situations where characters try to exert their superiority over others, but also in ones of flattery and manipulation. By speaking these words in these contexts, characters draw attention to hierarchies of which they have positioned themselves at the top and thus cast the

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<sup>19</sup> Michel de Montaigne, *Essais Livre I* [1580] (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1969), p. 236.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Parish, “‘Une vie douce, heureuse et amiable’: a Christian *joie de vivre* in Saint François de Sales’, in *Joie de Vivre in French Literature and Culture*, ed. by Susan Harrow and Timothy Unwin (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), pp. 129-40 (p. 137).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

vocabulary in a negative light.

For instance, when Don Juan and Sganarelle meet the poor man in the woods who gives them directions, Don Juan thanks him, blandishing, ‘Je te suis obligé mon ami, et je te rends grâces de tout mon cœur’ (III, ii). Thus, Molière uses the word as an ironic indicator of someone to be abused for one’s own amusement, coupling *ami* with *obliger*, *grâce*, and *cœur*. Similarly, when spoken by Arnolphe, *ami* becomes paternalistic. Using *ami* as a counterfeit term of endearment, Arnolphe wheedles to Alain and Georgette, ‘vous êtes mes fidèles, | Mes bons, mes vrais amis’ (IV, iv, 1092-3), later appealing, ‘Et quel affront pour vous mes enfants pourrait-ce être, | Si l’on avait ôté l’honneur à votre Maître?’ (1096-7). In this case, *ami* and *enfant* serve to create a spurious sense of connection with *honneur*, and the absurdity with which Arnolphe sullies the word *ami* is stressed when he addresses his servants as ‘Traîtres’ (V, i, 1352).

With respect to the manipulative profanation of *amitié*, two of the most culpable characters are Béline in *Le Malade imaginaire* and Dorante in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*. As I have noted, *ami* is spoken 17 times in each play, nine of which in the former are spoken by Béline, and ten of which in the latter are spoken by Dorante. They speak this word referring to Argan and Monsieur Jourdain, whom they respectively try to swindle. Nonetheless, there is an interesting point made about *amitié* when Dorante ironically describes Monsieur Jourdain to himself and Dorimène. He says, ‘Vous voyez, Madame, que Monsieur Jourdain n’est pas de ces Gens que les prospérités aveuglent, et qu’il sait dans sa gloire connaître encore ses Amis’ (V, iii), to which Dorimène replies, ‘C’est la marque d’une âme tout à fait généreuse’. In spite of the deceptive manner in which Dorante speaks *ami*, a pattern emerges: *prospérité* (wealth) and *gloire* render a person *aveugle*, which can prevent him from being an *ami* (a person with an *âme* marked by *générosité*). In the same vein, Alceste rails

vociferously against what he calls ‘la vaste complaisance’ (I, i, 61) of people who do not recognize merit, and then he mercilessly argues to Philinte that ‘on devrait châtier, sans pitié, | Ce Commerce honteux de Semblants d’Amitié’ (67-8). *Commerce*, like *prospérité*, brings a financial connotation into this lexis, and this negative, false *amitié* goes hand in hand with *complaisance* and is opposed to *pitié*.

However, we can see from Richelet, Furetière, and the Académie that the *Anciens* and the *Modernes* were in agreement that *ami* can be pejorative and a mark of condescension. Richelet writes, ‘Ce mot se dit quelquefois d’un ton supérieur & d’un air insultant’. Clearly, *supérieur* and *insultant* harmonize with Don Juan’s utterances of *ami*, and Richelet correctly names what it is that creates the insult: ‘le ton’ and ‘l’air’. A secondary definition Furetière gives of *ami* is, ‘C’est quelquefois un terme de familiarité, ou de hauteur, quand quelque supérieur dit, Mon *ami*, allez faire cela pour moy’. Hence, he reinforces the relation between *ami* and *supérieur*. In its figurative sense, *hauteur* only appears once in my sample, in *Le Misanthrope*, when Célimène remarks to Arsinoé about, ‘Cette hauteur d’Estime où vous êtes de vous, | Et ces yeux de pitié, que vous jetez sur tous’ (III, iv, 931-2); interestingly, this also places *hauteur* in opposition to *pitié*.

The Académie adds to its first definition of *ami*, ‘un terme dont on se sert souvent en parlant à des personnes beaucoup inférieures’. Hence, these dictionary definitions are condescending and are consistent with the paternalistic tone of Arnolphe’s usage of the word. He employs *ami* interchangeably with *enfant*, which accentuates this collection of patronizing diction, including *supérieur*, *insultant*, *hauteur*, and *inférieur*. Using vocabulary similar to Alceste’s, La Rochefoucauld draws *intérêt* and even reciprocity into the cluster of words surrounding negative *amitié*, writing, ‘Ce que les hommes ont nommé amitié n’est qu’une société, qu’un ménagement réciproque d’intérêts [...] ce n’est enfin qu’un commerce où l’amour-

propre se propose toujours quelque chose à gagner'.<sup>22</sup> Once again, the word *réci-proque* arises from *amitié*, but in this instance, its meaning is mercenary, relating to *commerce* and *prospérité*. And, as with *intérêt*, *amitié* also gives rise the subject of *amour-propre*.

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### 2.3.3 Positive *Amour*

In addition to expressing both sympathetic devotion and a self-obsessed view of hierarchy, *amitié* is sometimes a synonym for *amour*, the sympathetic form of which I will explore here. When Molière uses *amitié* and *amour* interchangeably, it is most often in cases of romantic love, both reciprocal and unrequited. Of the six longer plays, *amour* and its variants are spoken the most frequently in *Le Misanthrope* and the least frequently in *Le Tartuffe* (see Appendices 1 and 2a). In Appendix 3, I have taken note of which mentions of the word *amour* are spoken in a manner that reflects *sympathie* and which are spoken in a manner that reflects *amour-propre*. Out of the total 150 utterances, there are 67 that fall on the side of *sympathie* and 83 that lean towards *amour-propre*.

There are a number of exchanges in which forms of *amitié* and *amour* are spoken in concert. For instance, discussing Célimène's behaviour, Alceste tells Philinte, 'Je ne l'aimerais pas, si je ne croyais pas l'être' (I, i, 237). Philinte then asks why her other suitors irk him so, starting, 'Mais si son amitié, pour vous, se fait paraître' (238), to which Alceste eventually responds, 'la Raison n'est pas ce qui règle l'Amour' (248). In this sequence, *amitié* is literally encircled by *aimer* and *amour*, and its meaning is virtually identical. Another close cousin of *amour*, *tendresse* appears with the sole utterance of *amitié* in *Don Juan*. Both are spoken by Done Elvire when she first confronts Don Juan: 'j'ai été assez bonne, je le confesse, ou plutôt assez sotté pour vouloir me tromper moi-même, et travailler à démentir mes yeux et mon

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<sup>22</sup> La Rochefoucauld, p. 52.

jugement. J'ai cherché des raisons pour excuser à ma tendresse le relâchement d'amitié qu'elle voyait en vous' (I, iii). By connecting *amitié* with *tendresse*, this passage reinforces its sympathetic connotation. These words are also placed into conflict with *se tromper soi-même*.

The last time *amour* is spoken in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* is by Dorante with a smile of sympathy and complicity that denotes *amitié*. He tells Dorimène, 'Et puis, Madame, il faut tâcher de servir l'amour de Cléonte' (V, ii). By using the verb *servir*, Dorante raises the notion—integral to sympathetic *amitié*—of serving one's friends. And indeed, as I have already cited, in the final scene, he restates this sentiment to Madame Jourdain, saying, 'C'est l'amitié que nous avons pour vous, qui nous fait intéresser dans vos avantages' (V, vi). Between these two passages, 'l'amour de Cléonte' and 'l'amitié que nous avons pour vous' are parallel; *amour* and *amitié* both function equally as the spark for concern and action.

Likewise, Éliante and Angélique offer definitions of *amour* that greatly resemble the *affection* of *amitié*. Speaking of Alceste's infatuation with Célimène in *Le Misanthrope*, Éliante says,

Cela fait assez voir que l'Amour, dans les Cœurs,  
N'est pas, toujours, produit par un rapport d'humeurs;  
Et toutes ces raisons de douces Sympathies,  
Dans cet Exemple-ci se trouvent démenties.  
(IV, i, 1175-8)

Not only does this observation reinforce the connection of *cœur*<sup>23</sup> with sympathetic *amour*, but it also adds *rapport*, *humeur*, and *sympathie* to this lexis. Defining *sympathie*, Furetière writes, 'Convenance ou conformité de qualités naturelles, d'humeurs, ou de tempérament, qui font que deux choses s'aiment', uniting *humeur* and *sympathie*. Richelet's definition, '[C]onformité & raport d'humeur', bridges

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<sup>23</sup> *Le Misanthrope* contains the greatest number of mentions of the word *cœur* (it appears 70 times).

Molière and Furetière, conjoining *conformité*, *rappor*t, and *humeur* under the banner of *sympathie*.

Likewise, Angélique argues to Thomas Diafoirus, ‘Mais la grande marque d’amour, c’est d’être soumis aux volontés de celle qu’on aime’ (II, vi). Hence, she offers a self-effacing definition of love. According to the Académie, the verb *sousmettre* means, ‘Reduire, ranger sous la puissance’, but also, ‘On dit, *Se sousmettre aux ordres, à la volonté de quelqu’un*, pour dire, Y conformer ses actions, ses sentimens’. This *amour* implies putting someone else’s interests ahead of one’s own. This set of words surrounding Molière’s use of *amour* includes *cœur*, *se soumettre*, and *conformer*.

A somewhat different vision of *amour* and *cœur* emerges in *Le Tartuffe*, when the Exempt announces that the King has discerned Tartuffe’s charade and tells Orgon’s family, ‘Mais sans aveuglement il fait briller ce zèle, | Et l’amour pour les vrais, ne ferme point son cœur | À tout ce que les faux doivent donner d’horreur’ (V, vii, 1914-6). In this moment, *amour* and *cœur* combine without *aveuglement* to yield truth.

Richelet says of *amour*: ‘Mouvement de l’ame par le moien duquel elle subit aux objets qui lui paroissent beaux & bons’, and Furetière’s first definition is, ‘Passion de l’ame qui nous fait aimer quelque personne, ou quelque chose’, creating a parallelism between *mouvement* and *passion*. Later in this entry, Furetière continues, ‘On dit aussi, Il aime d’amour, pour dire, d’une amitié violente’. Thus, he underscores the interrelated nature of *amitié* and *amour*, making the point that they differ in degree of intensity (*amitié* is less explosive).<sup>24</sup> And the Académie claims that *amour* signifies, ‘Sentimens de celui qui aime. Affection qu’on a pour un objet que l’on considere comme un bien’. Therefore, the *Modernes* qualify the object of one’s love, either as ‘beaux & bons’ or ‘bien’, while *Ancien* Furetière sets no such restriction.

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<sup>24</sup> This lends additional credence to my assertion that the progression of this chapter moves forward according to complexity. See Section 2.1.

The adjective *tendre* is spoken by Valère in conjunction with *ami*, *amitié*, and *amour*, and, correspondingly, all three dictionaries define *tendresse* as synonymous with both *amitié* and *amour*.<sup>25</sup> Richelet writes, ‘Ce mot ne se dit bien qu’au figuré dans le discours ordinaire, & il veut dire *amitié*, *amour*’. According to Furetière, *tendresse* is a ‘Sensibilité du cœur & de l’ame. La délicatesse du siècle a renfermé ce mot dans l’amour & dans l’amitié’. The Académie concurs, adding *passion* to this mix; it defines *tendresse* as, ‘Sensibilité à l’amitié, ou à l’amour’ and ‘La passion mesme de l’amour’.

Another important part of the *amitié/amour* lexical constellation, *cœur* is the single most-used word in my entire sample, with 267 individual utterances (see Appendix 1). Richelet first defines *cœur* as, ‘Partie qui est le principe de la vie [...] qui est située au milieu de la poitrine’, and both Furetière and the Académie provide comparable definitions.<sup>26</sup> Subsequently, Richelet gives a myriad of denotations for *cœur*, including, ‘Esprit’; ‘Plaisir, joie’; ‘Fierté. Maniere d’ame généreuse, & incapable de foiblesse, & de lâcheté. Caractère d’ame plein de bonté, de tendresse, de générosité & d’amitié’; ‘Désir’; ‘Passion’; ‘Amitié, amour, inclination’; and ‘Personne qui a de la bonté & de l’amitié’. Furetière writes that *cœur*, ‘se dit figurément en choses spirituelles & morales, & signifie l’ame, & ses principales fonctions’. Another meaning he offers is that *cœur*, ‘se dit particulièrement de l’affection, de l’amitié, de l’amour, de la tendresse’, thereby reaffirming the connection between *cœur*, *tendresse*, *amitié*, and *amour*. Hence, *cœur* amalgamates *esprit*, *plaisir*, *générosité*, *âme*, *tendresse*, *passion*, as well as both *amitié* and *amour*.

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<sup>25</sup> The titular character of Mademoiselle de Scudéry’s *Clélie* defines the noun *tendresse* as a trait that leads to a sympathetic form of *amitié*, heralding it as ‘une certaine sensibilité de cœur, qui ne se trouve presque jamais souverainement, qu’en des personnes qui ont l’âme noble, les inclinations vertueuses, et l’esprit bien tourné, et qui fait que, lorsqu’elles ont de l’amitié, elles l’ont sincère, et ardente, et qu’elles sentent si vivement toutes les douleurs, et toutes les joies de ceux qu’elles aiment, qu’elles ne sentent pas tant les leurs propres’. See Madeleine de Scudéry, *Clélie, histoire romaine* [1654-60], ed. by Delphine Denis (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2006), p. 74.

<sup>26</sup> Indeed, the Académie gives only the physical definition.

Fittingly for a medical doctor, Cureau de la Chambre describes the physical effects of *amour*, noting a quality of selflessness that is in conflict with the urge for *conservation*. For instance, with respect to hunger, he writes,

*L'Appetit se perd* pour les mesmes raisons, parce que l'objet aymé occupant toutes les pensées de l'ame, luy oste le soin de toutes les fonctions de la vie: les Esprits estans aussi destourrez, ne portent plus dans l'estomach le sentiment qui cause l'appetit.<sup>27</sup>

*Amour* can cause distraction to such a degree that the lover neglects his basic, bodily needs; it halts the *appétit* and thwarts the *esprits*. In this *amour*, one is so preoccupied with the 'objet aymé' that he forgets his own nature and contradicts his *intérêt*. But Descartes presents a more balanced notion of *amour*, where rather than forgetting himself, the lover thinks of himself and the beloved as one, much in the same way that Montaigne views *amitié* as a 'mélange si universel'. Descartes defines *amour* as, 'une émotion de l'ame, causée par le mouvement des esprits, qui l'incite à se joindre de volonté aux objets qui paroissent luy estre convenables'.<sup>28</sup> He elaborates that this is not the passion for procreation, but rather that, 'on imagine un tout, duquel on pense estre seulement une partie, & que la chose aimée en est une autre'.<sup>29</sup> In conjunction with this passage, Rodis-Lewis cites a letter written in 1645 by Descartes to the Princess Élisabeth, in which he writes, 'il faut tousjours préférer les intérêts du tout, dont on est partie, a ceux de sa personne en particulier'.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, using words such as *âme*, *esprit*, and *aimer*, Descartes attests to a link between *amour* and *intérêt* as the consideration of someone else's position. However, Dandrey complicates this notion of a sympathetic melding into one when writing about *amour* in *L'École des femmes*, arguing, 'La grande surprise d'Arnolphe, sa surprise de l'amour, si l'on peut dire, sera

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<sup>27</sup> Cureau de la Chambre, p. 87.

<sup>28</sup> René Descartes, *Les Passions de l'âme* [1649], ed. by Geneviève Rodis-Lewis (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1994), p. 121.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 2.

d'apprendre qu'Agness [...] est un[e] autre, un être à part entière'.<sup>31</sup> The element dividing the Cartesian concept and Dandrey's assertion<sup>32</sup> lies between considering yourself a part of a larger whole and considering someone else to be merely an extension of yourself, the latter being a common trait of narcissists.

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#### 2.4 Self-Directed *Amour*

With respect to more self-obsessed examples of *amour*, they manifest themselves in these plays during expressions of sexual desire, physical vanity, and pride. There are a number of instances when Molière's use of sympathetic *amour* is closely (and sometimes ambiguously) intermingled with this *amour de soi*. In *Don Juan*, when Elvire has her final confrontation with her faithless lover, she implores, 'Sauvez-vous, je vous prie, ou pour l'amour de moi, ou pour l'amour de vous' (IV, vi). Although the second expression of *amour* in this statement suggests a fundamental self-regard or *intérêt*, the 'vous' she refers to is Don Juan, and his *intérêt* certainly leans towards negative *amour de soi*. Concurrently, Elvire's first reference to *amour* appeals to tender consideration for another (in this case, herself). Therefore, in Elvire's invocation of two loves, narcissistic and sympathetic, Molière communicates the dual nature of the word.

Another moment when both positive and negative *amours* are articulated in close proximity occurs in a brief but remarkable speech in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, when Madame Jourdain confides in her servant that she suspects her husband of cheating on her, lamenting, 'Je suis la plus trompée du monde, ou il y a quelque amour en campagne' (III, vii), but in the next breath she puts her own concerns aside in favour of her daughter's, saying, 'Tu sais l'amour que Cléonte a pour elle. C'est un Homme

<sup>31</sup> Dandrey, *Molière ou l'esthétique du ridicule*, p. 346.

<sup>32</sup> Couton comments on this same propensity to see others as extensions of oneself, writing in his *Notice for Le Malade imaginaire*, 'La cruelle découverte des moralistes du XVIIe siècle, et de Molière, est que l'homme est mené par l'"amour-propre", l'"amour de soi est de toutes choses pour soi"; l'amour-propre nie aux autres le droit à une existence indépendante et en fait des objets: objets, leurs filles ou leurs fils, pour Orgon, pour Harpagon, pour M. Jourdain, pour Argan'. See Molière, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Georges Couton, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), II, p. 1077.

qui me revient, et je veux aider sa recherche, et lui donner Lucile, si je puis'. Thus, in the space of 70 words, the word *amour* refers to both an illicit sexual liaison and the attachment of a young couple.

One instance in which the meaning of *amour* is obscured between sympathy and self-love takes place during Don Juan's encounter with the poor man, during which he attempts to coax the latter into swearing. Even though he fails in his cajolery, he finally gives the man money, claiming to do so, 'pour l'amour de l'humanité'<sup>33</sup> (III, ii). Thus, he speaks of *amour* whilst performing an act of charity.<sup>34</sup> But does this make Don Juan a *philanthrope*? (The word *philanthrope* is absent from these plays; see Appendix 1). Depending on how an actor chooses to play Don Juan's statement, it could simply communicate exasperated impatience. This *amour* may seem contemptuous when looked at in the context of the entire play, but in the context of the particular scene—Don Juan gives money to a destitute man and then rescues a stranger—it is plausible as genuine concern for others. Furthermore, an actor could read the line sincerely, rather than with bitterness. For these reasons, I have counted this utterance of *amour* as an example of sympathetic love rather than of *amour-propre* (see Appendix 3).<sup>35</sup>

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#### 2.4.1 *Amour* as Lust

Although the presence of lustful *amour* is the most obvious in *Le Tartuffe* and *Don Juan*, there are examples of this kind of self-centred *amour* in some surprising quarters.

<sup>33</sup> Translating Diderot's *Lettre sur les aveugles*, Kate Tunstall chooses 'empathy' for the noun *humanité*: 'Living with a blind man has other benefits too – moral ones as well as ones related to domestic comforts: it makes the sighted less untidy and more compassionate 'soit par un effet du bon exemple qu'ils donnent, soit par un sentiment d'humanité qu'on a pour eux' [either owing to their good example or out of a feeling of empathy that we have for them]'. See Kate E. Tunstall, *Blindness and Enlightenment: An Essay* (New York: Continuum, 2011), p. 73.

<sup>34</sup> One corresponding definition given by the Académie for *charité* is, 'Aumosne, assistance qu'on donne aux pauvres'.

<sup>35</sup> Don Juan's statement is very similar to one made by Alceste in the opening scene of *Le Misanthrope*, when he tells Philinte, 'L'Ami du Genre Humain n'est point du tout mon fait' (64). In speaking the word *ami*, Alceste delineates an insincere flatterer, someone who is truly no one's friend. That Alceste objects to such a flatterer places his statement on more sympathetic terrain.

For instance, during Horace's first appearance on stage in *L'École des femmes*, there is one moment when his choice of words intimates that he might only be interested in possessing Agnès physically. He comments to Arnolphe that money, 'En amour, comme en guerre, avance les conquêtes' (I, iv, 348). He places *amour* and *guerre* on the same plane, which suggests that love to him is something that does not concern the other party, but wherein you take what you want. The word *conquête* builds a parallel between Horace and Don Juan, who uses bellicose language to sketch his own amorous encounters.<sup>36</sup>

Two particularly malignant scenes, wherein the observation of sympathetic *amour* engenders a vulgar expression of lust, occur in *Le Médecin malgré lui*, when Sganarelle molests the wet nurse, Jacqueline, in the presence of her husband; and in *Don Juan*, when the title character tells Sganarelle about his new romantic pursuit. In the farce, Sganarelle lewdly gropes Jacqueline (the stage direction reads, '*Il lui porte la main sur le sein*'), to which Lucas objects, informing Sganarelle that they are married. Sganarelle replies, 'Ah vraiment, je ne savais pas cela: et je m'en réjouis pour l'amour de l'un et de l'autre' (II, ii), although he continues to pursue Jacqueline for the remainder of the scene. Here, 'amour de l'un et de l'autre' inflames Sganarelle's desire to violate a boundary.

Compared to this racy moment of physical comedy, the sentiments Don Juan feels when observing a couple in love are sinister. He tells Sganarelle:

Jamais je n'ai vu deux personnes être si contents l'un de l'autre, et faire éclater plus d'amour: la tendresse visible de leurs mutuelles ardeurs me donna de l'émotion, j'en fus frappé au cœur, et mon amour commença par la jalousie; oui je ne pus souffrir d'abord de les voir si bien ensemble; le dépit alluma mes désirs, et je me figurai un plaisir extrême à pouvoir troubler leur intelligence.  
(I, ii)

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<sup>36</sup> For instance, Don Juan tells Sganarelle about 'les charmes attrayants d'une conquête à faire'; 'l'ambition des conquérants'; and 'mes conquêtes amoureuses' (I, ii).

The image of lovers ‘si contents l’un de l’autre’, coupled with the words *tendresse*, *mutuel*, and *ardeur*, raises the idea of sympathetic *amour*, but the stream of vocabulary that follows in this voyeuristic statement is unsettling. With the aggregate of *amour*, *jalousie*, *souffrir*, *désir*, and *plaisir*, Molière conveys that Don Juan is aroused.

Similarly, he is aroused when Done Elvire repents for her ‘amour terrestre, et grossier’ (IV, vi). The adjectives *terrestre* and *grossier* colour the *tendresse* she describes in her first monologue (I, iii), giving it a lustful dimension.<sup>37</sup>

Although *aimer* arises 39 times over the course of the play (*Don Juan* and *Le Misanthrope* are tied for the most frequent use of this verb; see Appendix 2a), *amour* is voiced only 20 times, only twice more than in *Le Tartuffe*. And like *Don Juan*, *Le Tartuffe* is similarly rife with utterances of *amour* that convey lasciviousness, most notably in his solicitation of Elmire in Act III, scene iii, during which he speaks *amour* six times, or a third of the total mentions in the play. Starting out, he tells her that he hopes God will ‘bénisse vos jours autant que le désire | Le plus humble de ceux que son amour inspire’ (881-2); he then says, ‘L’amour qui nous attache aux Beautés éternelles, | N’étouffe pas en nous l’amour des temporelles’ (933-4), and, ‘d’une ardente amour sentir mon cœur atteint’ (943). He concludes his suit by offering her, ‘De l’amour sans scandale, et du plaisir sans peur’ (1000), and when she rejects him, he begs her to forgive, ‘Des violents transports d’un amour qui vous blesse’ (1010), justifying his behaviour with the excuse, ‘Que l’on n’est pas aveugle, et qu’un Homme est de chair’ (1012). The lexical group surrounding Tartuffe’s prurient *amour* is visceral; it includes *désirer*, *beauté*, *cœur*, *plaisir*, *violent*, *aveugle*, and *chair*; of note, the combined occurrences of the verb *désirer* and the noun *désir* appear more often in *Le Tartuffe* than in any of the other plays (see Appendix 2f), which serves to strengthen the connection between *désirer* and licentious *amour*.

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<sup>37</sup> Couton writes of Done Elvire’s utterance of *tendresse* in Act I, scene iii: ‘Tendresse est le terme le plus fort par lequel puisse se traduire l’amour-passion’. See Molière, *Œuvres complètes*, II, p. 1304.

One word that does not appear in this list, and which one would not automatically associate with lust is *réalité*. Indeed, Hubert de Phalèse proffers expansive groups of words related to *amour* in Molière's plays, and the word *réalité* does not figure into any of them.<sup>38</sup> Surprisingly, even though *réalité* appears but twice in this sample of plays, both times it is closely tied to *amour*. Its first appearance is in *Le Tartuffe*, and the second is in *Le Misanthrope*, which is curious since, out of the six longer plays, the former has the fewest mentions of *amour* and related words and the latter has the most (see Appendix 2a).

When Elmire tempts Tartuffe, with Orgon hidden beneath a table, the incredulous hypocrite demands to initiate their physical relationship immediately, telling her, 'Et je ne croirai rien, que vous n'ayez, Madame, | Par des réalités, su convaincre ma flamme' (IV, v, 1465-6), to which she responds, 'Mon Dieu, que votre amour, en vrai Tyran agit! | Et qu'en un trouble étrange il me jette l'esprit!' (1467-8). Likewise, in *Le Misanthrope*, Célimène tells Arsinoé the gossip about her façade of prudishness, quoting others as saying, 'Elle fait des Tableaux couvrir les nudités, | Mais elle a de l'amour pour les Réalités' (III, iv, 943-4). These two exchanges utilizing *réalité* introduce another cluster of words surrounding *amour* that includes *flamme*, *tyran*, *trouble*, *esprit*, and *nudité*. By pairing the word *réalité* with *amour*, Molière transforms it into a euphemism for vulgar physical expressions of love. In addition to this, *tyran* conforms with the warlike diction of *amour* used by Horace and Don Juan. Richelet offers two definitions for *réalité*; the first is, 'Chose effective & réelle', and the second is, 'Quelque chose d'effectif & de solide'. Similarly, Furetière states that *réalité* means, 'Qualité de ce qui est solide, subsistant, reel, effectif'. The Académie defines it as, 'Existence effective' and 'Chose réelle'. It is this notion of solidity—evocative of concrete evidence and corporeal beings, rather than ones in paintings—

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<sup>38</sup> Phalèse, pp. 71-9.

that is applied by Tartuffe and Célimène. While the dictionaries underscore the idea of physicality in their definitions of *réalité*, none of them betrays the glimmer of sexuality Molière imparts to the word.

The second definition Furetière gives for *amour* describes it as, ‘cette violente passion que la nature inspire aux jeunes gens de divers sexes pour se joindre, afin de perpétuer l’espece’. While none of these examples of *amour* suggests that these lustful characters seek to procreate, they do betray this violent passion (Tartuffe even uses the word *violent*). These scenes set up an opposition between two different kinds of *amour*, which Descartes explains in his treatise on the passions. Constructed in the context of ‘amour pour les Réalités’, *amour* takes on the meaning of wantonness, or what Descartes calls ‘Amour de concupiscence’. He identifies this *amour*, contrasting it to a more sympathetic love, writing,

Or on distingue communement deux sortes d’Amour, l’une desquelles est nommée Amour de bienveillance, c’est à dire, qui incite à vouloir du bien à ce qu’on aime; l’autre est nommée Amour de concupiscence, c’est à dire, qui fait désirer la chose qu’on aime. Mais il me semble que cette distinction regarde seulement les effets de l’Amour, & non point son essence. Car si tost qu’on s’est joint de volonté à quelque objet, de quelle nature qu’il soit, on a pour luy de la bienveillance, c’est à dire on joint aussi à luy de volonté les choses qu’on croit luy estre convenables: ce qui est un des principaux effets de l’Amour. Et si on juge que ce soit un bien de le posséder, ou d’estre associé avec luy d’autre façon que de volonté, on le desire: ce qui est aussi l’un des plus ordinaires effets de l’amour.<sup>39</sup>

Also associating ‘Amour de concupiscence’<sup>40</sup> with *désir*, Galien writes, ‘la faculté concupiscible nous précipite souvent dans un désir incurable’.<sup>41</sup> Both Descartes and Galen’s observations correspond with the association between *amour* as spoken by Tartuffe and *désirer*. This is consonant with the Narcissus myth, for his great desire was physical in nature: to touch the image reflected in water. Ovid writes, ‘Unwittingly

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<sup>39</sup> Descartes, p. 123.

<sup>40</sup> In identifying different categories of *amour* in Molière, Phalèse does not account for *amour de concupiscence*. He subdivides *amour* into the following groups: *la rencontre*; *la naissance de l’amour*; *le mariage*; *le feu, la flamme*; *les attraits de l’amant*; *les mots doux*; *le service d’amour*; and *les blessures d’amour*. See Phalèse, pp. 71-9.

<sup>41</sup> Galen, *L’Âme et ses passions*, ed. by Vincent Barras, Terpsichore Birchler, and Anne-France Morand (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1995), p. 23.

he desires himself; he praises, and is himself what he praises; and while he seeks, is sought'.<sup>42</sup> However, Cureau de la Chambre puts *désir* in opposition to *amour*, writing, 'Et pour lors si l'Amour est un Desir, ce ne sera plus Amour, puis que l'on ne peut desirer ce que l'on a'.<sup>43</sup> Later in his treatise, Cureau de la Chambre elaborates:

Car nous avons montré que l'Amour consistoit principalement dans l'union interieure de l'appetit avec l'objet aymé; que le plaisir l'accompagnoit tousiours; que la Beauté inspiroit la soûmission & le respect; qu'aymer n'estoit rien que mourir; Et que si un Amant ne possede la personne aymée, le desir l'en sollicite sans cesse.<sup>44</sup>

Therefore, he further confirms the ties between *amour* and *appétit*, *plaisir*, and *désir*.

He also draws the issue of *beauté* into the discussion of *amour*.<sup>45</sup> But rather than only inspiring *soumission* and *respect*, beauty can also generate *amour de soi* inside the beautiful person.

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#### 2.4.2 *Amour* as Vanity

A variant on lustful *amour*, negative self-love also reveals itself as vanity regarding the physical appearance of the beloved. As Cureau de la Chambre observed, 'la beauté inspiroit la soûmission & respect', but it can also inspire arrogance on the part of people who flatter their lovers and themselves. One interesting comparison of similar formulations using the word *amour* negatively with respect to beauty is between Don Juan and Cléante in *Le Malade imaginaire*. Don Juan tells Charlotte, 'cet amour est bien prompte sans doute; mais quoi! c'est un effet, Charlotte, de votre grande beauté, et l'on vous aime autant en un quart d'heure qu'on ferait une autre en six mois' (II, ii). In

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<sup>42</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses: Books I-VIII* [8 CE], trans. by Frank Justus Miller, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 155.

<sup>43</sup> Cureau de la Chambre, p. 34.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>45</sup> Plato writes of love as a desire for beauty in the *Symposium*; for instance, Diotima tells Socrates, 'Beginning from obvious beauties he must for the sake of that highest beauty be ever climbing aloft', and later, 'In that state of life above all others, my dear Socrates [...] a man finds it truly worth while to live, as he contemplates essential beauty'. See Plato, *Symposium* [360 BCE], in *Plato: Lysis. Symposium. Gorgias.*, trans. by W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1925), pp. 81-245 (p. 207).

telling the story of the shepherd and shepherdess, Cléante says, 'de ce premier moment il emporte chez lui tout ce qu'un amour de plusieurs années peut avoir de plus violent' (II, v). Two important distinctions in word choice between these descriptions of love at first sight are in the amount of time expressed, and the attributes on which each man claims to base his affections. While Don Juan is oddly specific about the time frame of his love, he is vague about its inspiration, and Cléante is the opposite. Cléante's metaphor that a moment in love with the shepherdess felt like a year is a simpler, less-contrived statement than Don Juan's, that fifteen minutes felt like six months.

With respect to the spark of his *amour*, Don Juan very clearly focuses on Charlotte's 'grande beauté'. Earlier in the scene, he rapidly compliments her for a long list of features, including her waist, head, face, eyes, lips, and even her teeth. The contrast with Cléante's shepherd is stark. While he is conscious of the shepherdess's physical charms, he is moved the most by the way that she thanks him. Just before describing the depth of his *amour*, he marvels at the 'touchantes douceurs d'une âme si reconnaissante'. Even though a little more than halfway through the speech Cléante refers to the shepherdess as 'l'adorable Beauté', the first time he uses the word *beauté* is in the first sentence of the story, when he says, 'Un Berger était attentif aux beautés d'un Spectacle'. When the shepherd does speak of specific physical features, it is only of his beloved's eyes ('des deux plus beaux yeux qu'il eût jamais vus'), as opposed to Don Juan's well-rehearsed flattery. Hence, emphasis is placed on the beauty of the theatre rather than on the physical appearance of the beloved. Beauty is a construct of central importance to the story of Narcissus; after all, Furetière and Richelet both identify *narcisse* as 'un beau garçon'. Although it is of secondary importance in spurring a more genuine *amour*, it takes precedence in an *amour* based on lust, flattery, and conquest.

While it does not manifest *amour de soi* on her part, Éliante gives a long speech

about *amour* to Célimène's guests in which she makes two interesting points. The first is that a lover's defence of his beloved has more to do with justifying his own choices than anything else. She commences her speech stating,

L'Amour, pour l'ordinaire, est peu fait à ces Lois,  
 Et l'on voit les Amants vanter, toujours, leur Choix:  
 Jamais, leur Passion, n'y voit rien de blâmable,  
 Et dans l'Objet aimé, tout leur devient aimable.  
 (II, iv, 711-4)

Therefore, one defends his lover's looks in order to affirm his own good taste. The other curious point she makes is in enumerating the many ways that *amour* causes a lover to see his love's physical and personality flaws as beautiful. For example, she says, 'La Pâle, est aux Jasmins, en blancheur, comparable' (II, iv, 717). Shortly thereafter, the marquis Acaste delivers a speech that lends credence to Éliante's assertions, except for one catch: his 'Objet aimé' is none other than himself, in which he sees no flaws, capping the speech off with the self-referential accolade, 'Fort aimé du beau Sexe, et bien auprès du Maître' (III, i, 802), the *Maître* being the king. In this speech, the verb *aimer* is accompanied by a cornucopia of self-obsessed diction. For instance, towards the beginning, he asserts, 'Pour le Cœur [...] | On sait, sans vanité, que je n'en manque pas' (787-8); he then follows up with, 'Pour de l'Esprit, j'en ai, sans doute' (791); and then coming to his physical self, he proclaims, 'j'ai bon air, bonne mine, | Les Dents belles, surtout, et la taille fort fine' (797-8). Assuming that Acaste has presented his case for self-love in order of importance, then his physical aspect takes precedence in his affections. The collection of words surrounding his self-love includes *aimer*, *beau*, *cœur*, *vanité*, and *esprit*.

Curiously, this is the first appearance of *vanité* in my exploration of Molière's diction, and it appears more often in *Le Misanthrope* than in any of the other plays (four times), and only ten times in the entire sample. Richelet defines *vanité* simply as, 'Orgueil', while the Académie—in addition to stating that it means, 'Inutilité, peu de

solidité’, and also, ‘Orgueil, présomption’—concludes, ‘*la vanité est une marque de petitesse d’esprit*’. Furetière describes *vanité*, first of all, as, ‘Qualité de ce qui est vain, peu solide, peu certain’, but then elaborates that it is also, ‘un sentiment d’orgueil, une trop bonne opinion de soy-même. La *vanité* est naturelle à l’homme, & encore plus à la femme’. This astonishing assertion that vanity is more natural in women than in men opens the door to the question of whether or not this is true on Molière’s stage. The data in Appendix 3 imply that on average male characters speak *amour* in a narcissistic manner more than female characters do. In this sample of articulations of *amour*, 44% of those spoken by female characters lean towards *amour-propre*, compared to 55% of those spoken by male characters.<sup>46</sup> The question of sex is one I intend to address in a later chapter.<sup>47</sup>

As with the ‘secrete connoissance’,<sup>48</sup> Cureau de la Chambre describes how the effect beauty has on humanity resembles an instinct.<sup>49</sup> However, *imagination* leads us to gloss over the foibles of our lovers. Making a point similar to Éliante’s, he writes,

Car l’imagination recevant l’image de l’objet aymé, la forme sur le modèle de cette idée generale de la Beauté que la nature luy a imprimée, la pare des mesmes grâces qu’elle a, la confond avec elle, & se represente ainsi la personne aymée, beaucoup plus parfaite qu’elle n’est en effet. Et l’on peut dire encore qu’il en arrive icy comme dans ces maladies de l’esprit, où l’erreur particuliere qui le tient en désordre, altere & corrompt toutes les pensées qui ont quelque rapport avec elle, celles qui en sont éloignées, demeurans assez raisonnables.<sup>50</sup>

Seeing the image of the beloved as ‘beaucoup plus parfaite qu’elle n’est en effet’ catapults us into ‘maladies d’esprit’ and ‘erreur’. Consequently, *maladie* and *erreur* are additional terms in the lexis of *amour de soi*.

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<sup>46</sup> For female characters, 15 articulations out of the total of 34 suggest *amour-propre*, which is approximately 44%. For male characters, 63 articulations out of the total of 114 suggest *amour-propre*, which is approximately 55%.

<sup>47</sup> Bénichou gives positive dimension to the *amour-propre* of women. When observing the difference in comportment between Molière’s ‘jeunes filles de bonne condition’ and their servants, he writes that, while the girls behave in a constrained manner, their servants ‘transposent en style agressif les mouvements de l’amour-propre féminin contre l’injustice masculine’. See Bénichou, p. 263.

<sup>48</sup> See above at n. 14.

<sup>49</sup> For more on this subject, see Denis Dutton, *The Art Instinct: Beauty, Pleasure, and Human Evolution* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009).

<sup>50</sup> Cureau de la Chambre, p. 67.

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### 2.4.3 Negative *Amour-propre*

As noted earlier, particularly in Furetière,<sup>51</sup> there is a significant connection between *amour-propre* and negative *intérêt*. The term *amour-propre* only appears once in these plays, in *Le Tartuffe*, and the expression *amour de soi-même* appears once as well, in *Le Misanthrope*. When Elmire plots to expose Tartuffe, she acknowledges his leading characteristic, stating, ‘on est aisément dupé par ce qu’on aime, | Et l’amour-propre, engage à se tromper soi-même’ (IV, iii, 1357-8). Done Elvire uses the expression *se tromper soi-même* with *amitié* in Act I, scene iii of *Don Juan*. In Célimène’s portrait of Adraste, she says, ‘Ah! quel orgueil extrême! | C’est un Homme gonflé de l’amour de soi-même’ (II, iv, 617-8). Thus, Molière connects *amour-propre* and *amour de soi* with *se tromper* and *orgueil*.

However, just because these are the only utterances of *amour-propre* and *amour de soi* does not mean that these ideas are not well represented in the plays. In *L’École des femmes*, for instance, there is a delicate balance between the use of the word *amour* in ways that imply *amour-propre* and ways that imply a more reciprocal and respectful love. Out of the 25 times that the word appears in the spoken text, it is uttered 11 times by Arnolphe, 13 times by Horace, and once by Agnès. Aside from Agnès, there are 12 mentions of a more narcissistic love and 12 mentions of a more empathetic one (see Appendix 3). From Arnolphe’s very first use of the word in Act I, scene i, when speaking to Chrysalde, he establishes his view of *amour* as a feeling based on a difference of station, between the powerful and the vulnerable. He desires a wife characterized by ‘la soumise, et pleine dépendance’ (127), and claims that when she was a child, Agnès ‘[m]’inspira de l’amour pour elle, dès quatre ans’ (130). He uses the adjective *soumis* in a manner that is the polar opposite of Angélique’s formulation

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<sup>51</sup> See Section 2.2.2.

about *amour*. Arnolphe applies the word to his fantasy wife rather than to himself, and his subsequent uses of *amour*, even in his painful confrontation with Agnès in Act V, scene iv, reinforce the self-centred nature of his *amour*.<sup>52</sup>

In the antepenultimate scene of *Le Tartuffe*, Dorine comments ironically that Tartuffe's actions were inspired by his 'amour du Prochain' (V, v, 1817), and that he is robbing them out of 'charité pure' (1819). Through her sarcasm, she contrasts Tartuffe's true *amour*, which is *amour-propre*, with *charité*. Richelet identifies *charité* as, 'Amour de Dieu & du prochain', and Furetière holds self-love as a necessary prerequisite for *charité*, defining it as, 'L'une des trois vertus theologales [...] Elle consiste à aimer Dieu de tout son cœur, & son prochain comme soy-même'; and also as, 'une vertu morale, qui consiste à secourir son prochain de son bien'. The Académie leaves out the element of loving oneself, calling *charité*, 'Amour de Dieu & du prochain par rapport à Dieu'.

Molière offers a reflection on the superficiality of self-centred *amour* when Covielle flatters Monsieur Jourdain that the fictional son of the 'Grand Turc' wants to marry Lucile. In a moment of hesitation, Monsieur Jourdain tells him that his daughter only wishes to marry Cléonte, and Covielle responds, 'le Fils du Grand Turc ressemble à ce Cléonte, à peu de chose près [...] et l'amour qu'elle a pour l'un, pourra passer aisément à l'autre' (IV, iii). Monsieur Jourdain's reaction to this statement is left to the discretion of the performer. But even if the actor playing Monsieur Jourdain betrays misgivings about the easy transfer of his daughter's affections, through facial expressions or gestures, such scepticism must be rapidly swept aside, because his next line, spoken to Cléonte, is submissive: 'Je suis très humble serviteur de Son Altesse Turque' (IV, iv). These words—*amour* and 'passer aisément'—project that a physical

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<sup>52</sup> Between these two competing paradigms of *amour*—love as taking advantage of the vulnerable versus love as caring for the vulnerable—the balance is tilted towards empathetic love by the one additional use of the word, spoken by Agnès in Act II, scene v, in her six line speech that begins with her describing Horace's protestation of 'une amour sans seconde' (559), and ends with her feeling '[c]ertain je ne sais quoi' (564).

resemblance is enough for a woman to transfer her affections from one man to another.

In a similarly shallow expression, after Angélique implores Thomas Diafoirus to be patient in his suit, he responds, ‘Oui, Mademoiselle, jusques aux intérêts de mon amour exclusivement’ (II, vi). In this context, *amour* with *intérêt* and *exclusivement* combine to justify the seizure of what you want, when you want it, without regard for anyone else.

As Alceste’s desires are confounded over the course of *Le Misanthrope*, his use of *amour* (which he speaks 15 times in total) sinks into *amour-propre*. For instance, there is a marked contrast between the first time he says *amour* and one of the last times, when he speaks it directly to Célimène. When telling Philinte of his love for Célimène, Alceste grumbles, ‘Non, l’amour que je sens pour cette jeune Veuve | Ne ferme point mes yeux aux défauts qu’on lui treuve’ (I, i, 225-6), which although a curmudgeonly expression of affection, evokes an avoidance of *aveuglement* in the face of one’s beloved. But when he confronts Célimène over the letter she wrote to Oronte, he gives a speech that begins and ends with *amour*, whining, ‘Ah! rien n’est comparable à mon amour extrême’ (IV, iii, 1422).<sup>53</sup> Modifying *amour* with *extrême* highlights the violent nature of his love, which he claims, in a megalomaniacal manner, is *incomparable*. This use of *extrême* also recalls the aforementioned portrait by Célimène in which she uses *extrême* to modify *orgueil*. In that statement, *orgueil* is a synonym for *amour de soi*, hence it is important to examine this word’s meaning.

All three dictionaries acknowledge a duality in *orgueil*. While on its own, the word carries a heavy, negative denotation, when modified with an epithet, such as *noble*, it takes on a positive one. Richelet writes of *orgueil*, ‘Ce mot signifie *vanité*, & se prend toujours en mauvaise part à moins qu’il ne soit accompagné de quelque épithète qui le relève’. Furetière states that it means, ‘Fierté, arrogance, superbe, sottise gloire &

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<sup>53</sup> Alceste’s statement is remarkably similar to Arnolphe’s desperate statement to Agnès: ‘Enfin à mon amour rien ne peut s’égalier’ (*L’École des femmes*, V, iv, 1599).

presomption, le premier des sept pechez capitaux. C'est ce peché qui a precipité les mauvais Anges dans l'abysme, qui eurent l'*orgueil* de se vouloir comparer à Dieu'. He also writes, 'La grandeur inspire un noble *orgueil* qui empêche de faire des bassesses'. The Académie elaborates on this dual definition of *orgueil*, stating that on the one hand it means, 'Vanité, presumption, opinion trop avantageuse de soy-mesme, par laquelle on se prefere aux autres', and '*le premier de tous les pechez*', but that it can also mean, '*Un noble orgueil*, pour dire, Un sentiment noble & eslevé, qui fait qu'on ne voudroit faire aucune bassesse'. Its positive side is associated with *noble*, *relever*, *grandeur*, and *élevé*; its negative aspect is united with *vanité*, *fierté*, *arrogance*, *gloire*, *présomption*, and *péché*. While *orgueil* requires a modifier to give it a more positive connotation, the ambiguity of *intérêt* requires no epithet.

Just as the possibility of duality exists in *orgueil*, so does it in *amour-propre*. Interestingly, *amour-propre* does not appear in either Richelet or Furetière, and it does not appear in the *Dictionnaire* of the Académie until its 5<sup>th</sup> edition in 1798. However, the term holds a prominent position in the *Maximes* of La Rochefoucauld. For example, he writes, 'L'amour-propre empêche bien que celui qui nous flatte ne soit jamais celui qui nous flatte le plus'.<sup>54</sup> Parmentier explicates the place of *amour-propre* in the *Maximes*, writing,

Une interprétation traditionnelle présente les *Maximes* comme un 'système de l'amour-propre'. C'est ce que suggérait La Bruyère lui-même, dès 1688: La Rochefoucauld, 'observant que l'amour-propre est dans l'homme la cause de tous ses faibles, l'attaque sans relâche, quelque part où il se trouve'. Pourtant, il suffit d'ouvrir les *Maximes* pour se rendre compte de l'insuffisance de cette analyse: l'amour-propre n'est pas la seule force en action: il faut lui ajouter les *passions*, les *intérêts*, les *faiblesses*; ces forces sont à la fois le produit de l'amour-propre et une foule de puissances turbulentes qui s'agitent dans l'homme, se combattent entre elles, se miment réciproquement.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, according to Parmentier, *amour-propre* for La Rochefoucauld is the source of humanity's *intérêts*.

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<sup>54</sup> La Rochefoucauld, p. 95.

<sup>55</sup> Parmentier, p. 73.

Like *intérêt*, self-love is not malignant in and of itself; in fact, as Galen describes it, to a certain degree it resembles a positive form of *intérêt*. Galen views it as the necessary precondition for any attempt at self-knowledge, and consequently, wisdom. He writes, ‘Puisque la garantie du bonheur humain réside dans l’examen des buts, c’est à bon droit que tous ceux qui s’estiment<sup>56</sup> eux-mêmes se sont tournés vers cette recherche’.<sup>57</sup> Utilizing the expression *s’estimer soi-même*, Galen paints self-love as an essential trait, approaching the notions of *intérêt* and *conservation*. However, it becomes dangerous when this instinct exceeds a concern for one’s survival. For instance, for Senault, self-love functions as a barrier between humanity and divine love; he writes,

Ainsi l’amour du bien est une haine du mal, et cette même passion qui a de la douceur pour ceux qui l’obligent, a de la severité pour ceux qui l’offensent [...] s’il est permis de monter jusques dans les Cieux, elle se regle sur Dieu même, qui ne haït le pecheur, que parce qu’il s’aime soy-même.<sup>58</sup>

Furthermore, in a section of the *Nicomachean Ethics* about friendship, Aristotle discusses the interaction between self-love, honour, and interest, writing:

People criticize those who love themselves most, and call them self-lovers, using this as an epithet of disgrace, and a bad man seems to do everything for his own sake [...] while the good man acts for honour’s sake, and the more so the better he is, and acts for his friend’s sake, and sacrifices his own interest.<sup>59</sup>

As we have seen in my examination of *intérêt*, *intérêt* can be made sympathetic when it is regulated by *honneur*, and Aristotle corroborates this influence.

Describing a procedure to guide a man in his quest for self-knowledge, Galen writes,

Si donc, par la voie indiquée, l’on extirpe de celui qui s’apprête à rechercher la vérité la vanité, l’amour-propre, la présomption, aussi bien que l’amour de la

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<sup>56</sup> According to Richelet, the verb *estimer* means, ‘Honor. Avoir de l’estime pour quelqu’un’.

<sup>57</sup> Galen, p. 57.

<sup>58</sup> Senault, p. 59.

<sup>59</sup> Aristotle. *The Nicomachean Ethics* [350 BCE], trans. by David Ross, rev. by J.L. Ackrill and J.O. Urmson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 234-5.

gloire ou de l'argent, il y parviendra tout à fait après s'y être exercé, non pas des mois, mais des années.<sup>60</sup>

He places *vanité* and *présomption* on the same plane as *amour-propre*, and then *amour de la gloire* in the same category as *amour de l'argent*; he seems to think it is possible to rid oneself of these traits through serious effort, in search of truth. While, in contrast to Galen, Furetière writes, 'l'*amour* de la gloire est la cause des plus belles actions', like Galen, Senault sees *amour de la gloire* as a baneful quality. However, Senault sees desire for *gloire* as perennially present in humanity, writing,

Le desir de la gloire est une passion éternelle, l'âge qui affoiblit toutes les autres, la fortifie, et il semble que ce mal n'ait point de remede que la mort: néanmoins les mauvais sucez le guerissent, et deux ou trois batailles perduës le convertissent en mélancolie.<sup>61</sup>

As an example of a man who has shifted from seeking *gloire* into a state of *mélancolie*, Senault offers Hannibal, who he argues after being defeated, 'ne cherchoit pas tant l'accroissement de sa gloire que la conservation de sa vie'.<sup>62</sup> What is fascinating about Senault's diction in these passages is how he first submits that *désir de la gloire* is a *passion* that becomes more pronounced as we grow older, and then how he sets it up as being at odds with *conservation*, which is also, in a sense, a 'passion éternelle'.

The conflict between 'désir de la gloire', which spurs outward action, and the inwardness of *mélancolie* mirrors the idea of outwardly and inwardly directed *amour*—an idea that Dandrey picks up in a chapter he concludes by dubbing Orgon 'le nouveau Narcisse'.<sup>63</sup> Using the notion of *mouvement* to draw a distinction between *amour* and *amour-propre*, Dandrey conceives of the latter as a misdirected variant of the former:

[L]'hypertrophie du moi, cet *amour-propre* dont la dénomination même traduit le caractère contradictoire, maladif, puisque l'amour s'entend naturellement comme propulsion hors de soi, élan vers autrui; le rabattre sur le moi dont il émane suppose une perversion de son essence, une fureur de solipsisme dont la

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<sup>60</sup> Galen, p. 51.

<sup>61</sup> Senault, pp. 61-2.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>63</sup> Dandrey, *Molière ou l'esthétique du ridicule*, p. 386.

sanction toute naturelle est l'isolement de l'amoureux de soi dans la solitude du délire.<sup>64</sup>

Thus, rather than projecting this *mouvement* outwards, 'hors de soi', the *amoureux de soi* is turned inwards; and with the words *solipsisme*, *isolement*, *solitude*, and *délire*, Dandrey appends an additional dimension to the lexis of *amour-propre*.

...

## 2.5 Conclusion

We have seen the way Molière draws out the double meanings of *intérêt*, *amitié*, and *amour*, and how he interweaves these words with a variety of others. On the side of sympathy, notable words associated with *intérêt* include *honneur*, *souffrir*, *aveuglement*, *amitié*, *satisfaction*, *âme*, and *appétit*; those associated with *amitié* include *tendre*, *confier*, *service*, *intérêt*, *affection*, *réci-proque*, and *se mêler*; and those associated with *amour* include *amitié*, *tendresse*, *cœur*, *sympathie*, *soumettre*, *mouvement*, *esprit*, *intérêt*, and *bienveillance*. On the side of self-love, notable words associated with *intérêt* include *commerce*, *orgueil*, *humaine nature*, *esprit*, *gloire*, *plaisir*, *aveugler*, and *flatter*; those associated with *amitié* include *enfant*, *honneur*, *prospérité*, *gloire*, *aveugle*, *commerce*, *complaisance*, *pitié*, *supérieur*, and *hauteur*; and those associated with *amour* include *amour-propre*, *amour de soi*, *guerre*, *conquête*, *jalousie*, *désir*, *plaisir*, *terrestre*, *beauté*, *cœur*, *violent*, *aveugle*, *réalité*, *tyran*, *concupiscence*, *vanité*, *orgueil*, *erreur*, *fierté*, *arrogance*, *gloire*, *péché*, *intérêt*, *mélancolie*, and *solitude*. While there is overlap between groups, each set of words gives a sense of the duality of empathy and narcissism in Molière's vocabulary. These compendiums of words provide a framework for looking at character personalities and actions, which I will begin to do in the following chapter.

Two words that are conspicuously absent in these plays are *compassion* and *générosité*. The adjective *généreux* appeared in my examination of *intérêt*. However,

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 365.

their absence is certainly not because these words were not in use in the seventeenth century. A generation before Molière, Descartes employs them in the section of his treatise entitled ‘De la pitié’. He writes that humans are moved to feel *pitié*, ‘plutost par l’Amour qu’ils se portent à eux mesmes, que par celle qu’ils ont pour les autres’.<sup>65</sup> The import here is that *amour de soi-même* is an attribute that engenders pity, and subsequently, compassion and generosity. However, in spite of its positive effects, this *amour de soi-même* is not positive in and of itself. Descartes elaborates, writing about both *compassion* and *générosité*,

Mais neantmoins ceux qui sont les plus généreux, & qui ont l’esprit le plus fort, en sort qu’ils ne craignent aucun mal pour eux, & se tiennent au delà du pouvoir de la fortune, ne sont pas exemts de Compassion, lors qu’ils voyent l’infirmité des autres hommes, & qu’ils entendent leurs plaintes. Car c’est une partie de la Générosité, que d’avoir de la bonne volonté pour un chacun. Mais la Tristesse de cette Pitié n’est pas amere; & comme celle que causent les actions funestes qu’on voit représenter sur un theatre, elle est plus dans l’exterieur & dans le sens, que dans l’interieur de l’ame, laquelle a cependant la satisfaction de penser, qu’elle fait ce qui est de son devoir, en ce qu’elle compatit avec des affligez.<sup>66</sup>

*Généreux* comes from the Latin *generosus*, which means of good or noble birth.

According to the Académie, *généreux* means first, ‘Magnanime, de naturel noble’, and secondly, ‘Liberal’. *Générosité* means ‘Magnanimité, grandeur d’ame’. Thus, the people Descartes is writing about are strong, and yet they can feel tenderness for those who suffer. This *pitié* is not bitter, and it does not weaken them or take away from their life force; they see it and understand it as exterior to themselves, and they even help (*volonté*), but they remain unaffected on the interior, which complicates the idea of empathy as literally feeling what someone else feels. For Descartes then, it is not empathy that the spectator feels, but compassion, with the former entailing more of an expectation of engagement, or being rendered ‘hors de soi’,<sup>67</sup> and of reciprocity, than the latter. This passage, with its explicit reference to the theatre, leads to the question of

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<sup>65</sup> Descartes, p. 199.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 200.

<sup>67</sup> I will return to the concept of being ‘hors de soi’ in the final chapter.

what kind of pleasure is afforded to the audience through identification, when ‘on compatit’ with the characters and their actions in the drama. For Molière, are the feelings exchanged between his stage and his public empathy or compassion?

One might consider this passage to be inapplicable to Molière’s oeuvre because Descartes uses the term ‘actions funestes’, which implies tragedy rather than comedy. However, there are characters in Molière’s work that are certainly worthy of our pity. For instance, what befalls Done Elvire is certainly affecting. The passage ends with the notion ‘compatir avec les affligés’. Richelet writes of *compassion*, ‘Affliction qu’on a pour un mal qui semble menacer quelqu’un de sa perte, ou du moins de la faire beaucoup souffrir’. Furetière writes, ‘Mouvement de l’ame qui nous porte à avoir quelque pitié, quelque douleur en voyant souffrir un autre’, and the Académie calls *compassion*, ‘Pitié, commiseration, mouvement de l’ame qui compatit aux maux d’autrui’.

When Descartes writes, ‘Mais la Tristesse de cette Pitié n’est pas amere’, it is reminiscent of the Académie’s definition of *intérêt*, ‘Prendre interest à la joye, à l’affliction de quelqu’un [...] pour dire, En estre touché, y estre sensible’. As Descartes views it, just as we can share in someone else’s joy, so we can share in their suffering, without being inwardly afflicted ourselves. Whether or not this is the kind of pleasure imparted to spectators of Molière’s comic art is a question that merits further investigation.

## Chapter 3

### Social Codes and Conflicts Made Visible

#### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter investigated seventeenth-century vocabulary relating to empathy and narcissism, with particular attention paid to the concepts of *intérêt*, *amitié*, and *amour*, finding that the same words are used to express these psychic phenomena, depending on how they are employed and by whom. In this chapter, I seek to show how Molière conveys the fortitude of the empathizers and the vulnerability of the narcissists visually, by examining the physical characteristics of the greatest empathizers and narcissists as revealed by my psychological questionnaire analysis (for the full results, see Appendices 7 and 8). I will focus on these characters because they most clearly present the distinctions between empathy and narcissism in that they show, through their adherence to or breaking of social codes, how Molière conveys to the audience *visually* with whom they should (and should not) be in sympathy.

Any study of the theatre necessarily entails taking into consideration visual effects, from costumes to staging and characterisation. Furthermore, physical appearance is an essential component for any discussion of narcissism, starting with the source mythology of the disorder. For example, Ovid writes, ‘while he drinks he is smitten by the sight of the beautiful form he sees. He loves an unsubstantial hope and thinks that substance which is only shadow’.<sup>1</sup>

Molière points to the interwoven relationship of appearance and narcissism when characterising *Narcisse* as a ‘blondin accompli’ (ii) in *Pastorale comique*.

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<sup>1</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses: Books I-VIII*, p. 153.

Connecting the physical to the idea of primary *intérêt*, Fawcett poses the question, ‘Is narcissism a Darwinian survival trait?’<sup>2</sup> And Darwin himself writes,

Men and women, and especially the young, have always valued, in a high degree, their personal appearance; and have likewise regarded the appearance of others. The face has been the chief object of attention [...] Our self-attention is excited almost exclusively by the opinion of others, for no person living in absolute solitude would care about his appearance.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, empathy requires engagement with the visual, as well. De Waal explains the importance of the physical, writing,

[E]mpathy needs a face. With impoverished facial expression comes impoverished empathic understanding, and a bland interaction devoid of the bodily echoing that humans constantly engage in. As French philosopher Maurice Merleau Ponty put it, ‘I live in the facial expression of the other, as I feel him living in mine’. When we try to talk to a stone-faced person, we fall into an emotional black hole.<sup>4</sup>

De Waal’s explanation further complicates the distinction between empathy and narcissism in showing how echoing behaviour plays into our ability to empathize, for narcissists seek the echo of their imagined selves in others.

Molière issues a caveat against placing too much consideration on what we see, when Sganarelle warns,

Vous voyez qu’en ce fait la plus forte apparence  
Peut jeter dans l’esprit une fausse créance:  
De cet exemple-ci, ressouvenez-vous bien,  
Et quand vous verriez tous, ne croyez jamais rien.  
(*Sganarelle*, 654-7)

Nonetheless, considering the physicality of both empathizers and narcissists in Molière’s work may provide insight for how to deftly distinguish between the two, which is, consequently, of great importance in everyday life.

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<sup>2</sup> Jan Fawcett, ‘What Can We Do about Human Narcissism for the Common Good?’, *Psychiatric Annals*, 39, 4 (2009), 172.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (London: John Murray, 1872), p. 345.

<sup>4</sup> de Waal, *The Age of Empathy*, p. 83.

The irony of great narcissists is that, even though they project images of themselves as bastions of strength and authority<sup>5</sup> through controlling, arrogant, self-focused behaviour, proclamations of superiority, and delusions of grandeur, they are themselves blisteringly vulnerable. They constantly seek to have their self-images reflected back by the people surrounding them, whether from the admiring eyes of love objects (as with Don Juan) or companions (as with Tartuffe) or from a professional class (as with Argan). This hunger places them in the untenable position of needing continual reinforcement from those they consider beneath themselves, and it puts them into positions of weakness. When the images reflected back by others do not match what they themselves envision, they can be tipped into tailspins of self-loathing, aggression, rage,<sup>6</sup> and violence towards others and themselves.

Whereas the capacity of great empathizers to turn away from their own needs and understand another person's perspective may seem at first glance to weaken them by diverting their attention away from their primary *intérêts*, this capacity springs from a firm knowledge of identity. Such individuals do not require a continuous flow of reassurance. Paraphrasing the psychoanalyst John Bowlby, Baron-Cohen writes of one's 'internal pot of gold'<sup>7</sup>, or sense of security garnered in childhood from parental affection. He explains,

The idea – which builds on Freud's insight – is that what a parent can give his or her child by way of filling the child up with positive emotions is a gift more precious than anything material. That internal pot of gold is something the child can carry inside throughout their life, even if they become a penniless refugee or are beset by other challenges. This internal pot of gold is what gives the individual the strength to deal with challenges, the ability to bounce back

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<sup>5</sup> Narcissists often seek to fill positions of power, in order to reaffirm their superiority. See Vamik D. Volkan, and J. Christopher Fowler, 'Large-group Narcissism and Political Leaders with Narcissistic Personality Organization', *Psychiatric Annals*, 39, 4 (2009), 214-223.

<sup>6</sup> For more about narcissistic rage, see Paul H. Ornstein, "'Chronic Rage from Underground": The Treatment of a Patient with a Severe Narcissistic Disorder', *Psychiatric Annals*, 39, 3 (2009), 137-143; also see Salman Akhtar, 'Love, Sex, and Marriage in the Setting of a Pathological Narcissism', *Psychiatric Annals*, 39, 4 (2009), 185-91.

<sup>7</sup> Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy*, p. 48.

from setbacks, and the ability to show affection and enjoy intimacy with others, in other relationships. It overlaps with what the London child psychiatrist Michael Rutter refers to as ‘resilience’.<sup>8</sup>

Also, he notes that, ‘securely attached infants later also develop better empathy and “theory of mind” (being able to accurately infer others’ thoughts)’.<sup>9</sup> Thus, for both empathizers and narcissists, their behaviour and relationships spring from the stability or relative instability of their primary *intérêt*. In this chapter, I will argue that these underlying traits of vulnerability and strength are visible in the physical presences of Molière’s characters.

Accordingly, this chapter is divided into three sections, devoted separately to empathizers (characters with high scores on the Empathy Quotient); narcissists (characters with high scores on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory and those that qualify for Narcissistic Personality Disorder); and then two particular cases: characters combining high levels of empathy *and* narcissism (‘narcissistic empathizers’); and finally, the three characters with the very highest scores on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (‘super narcissists’). The four narcissistic empathizers are Nérine and Sbrigani from *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, Dorante from *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, and L’Amour from *Psyché*. The three super narcissists are Tartuffe, Don Juan, and Vénus from *Psyché*. Within each of these groups, my discussion of physical characteristics will progress from more general characteristics to more specific ones, showing how Molière uses the visual to permit the public to immediately comprehend standardized codes of conduct.

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### 3.2 Empathizers

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

Most of Molière's empathizers are sympathetic: benevolent parents, like Anselme in *L'Avare*; helpful confidants, like Toinette in *Le Malade imaginaire*; and especially, lovers. They are male and female, and the majority are young. Most of the lovers are requited—for instance, Horace in *L'École des femmes*—with the notable exceptions of Done Elvire in *Don Juan* and Agénor and Cléomène in *Psyché* (see Appendix 8). Curiously, the romantic aspirations of the latter three lovers are foiled respectively by a super narcissist (Don Juan) and a narcissistic empathizer (L'Amour). I will return to this in the final section of this chapter.

We could call 'super empathizers' Éliante and Philinte in *Le Misanthrope*, Clitandre in *L'Amour médecin*, Sabine in *Le Médecin volant*, Perrin in *Le Médecin malgré lui*, and Cléante in *Le Malade imaginaire* (see Appendix 8).<sup>10</sup> They represent two *comédies-ballets*, one 'grande comédie', one farce, and one three-act comedy. These six super empathizers include three major roles, Éliante, Philinte, and Cléante; and three less well-known ones, Sabine, Clitandre, and Perrin. Éliante and Philinte are supporting characters (rather than leads) and lovers; Clitandre and Cléante are lead lovers in their respective plays; and Sabine and Perrin are both more minor characters. Counter-intuitively, only a third of these high-empathizers are female.

It is constructive to consider the plot outcomes for the most highly empathetic characters. By the ends of their respective plays, four of them are happily on the verge of marriage (Éliante and Philinte to each other; Clitandre to Lucinde; and Cléante to Angélique); while the other two are roles that give aid to family members: Sabine contrives for her cousin Lucinde to marry Valère, and Perrin succeeds in obtaining (admittedly ersatz) medical advice for his ailing mother by correctly reading

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<sup>10</sup> According to Baron-Cohen, the average range of scores on the EQ runs from 33 to 52. Scores between 52 and 63 are 'above average', and scores from 64 to 80 are 'very high'. According to my standard deviation calculations, the six characters with scores of 64 and higher are more than two standard deviations above the average. See Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy*, p. 134.

Sganarelle's mind. Éliante and Philinte are the only two characters analysed from *Le Misanthrope* who do not qualify for Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

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### 3.2.1 Youth and Beauty

Sympathetic characters in Molière are often young, indeed, very young. Among the empathizers characterized by their youthfulness are Horace in *L'École des femmes*, Mariane in *L'Avare*, Octave in *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, and Cléante in *Le Malade imaginaire*. Agnès refers to Horace's age in the letter she secretly tosses to him; Horace reads aloud to Arnolphe, 'On me dit fort, que tous les jeunes hommes sont des trompeurs' (III, iv). In Cléante's initial account of Mariane to Élise, he notes her youth and appeal, saying, 'Une jeune personne qui loge depuis peu en ces quartiers, et qui semble être faite pour donner de l'amour à tous ceux qui la voient' (*L'Avare*, I, ii). Octave is described several times as being young; one of the first things Scapin says on stage is his promise to Octave that he will aid him, identifying himself as an 'Homme à m'intéresser aux affaires des jeunes Gens' (I, ii), which is precisely what we, in the audience, are invited to do. When conversing with an enraptured Angélique in *Le Malade imaginaire*, Toinette calls Cléante, 'votre jeune Amant' (I, iv), and Béline later reports to Argan that she spotted 'un jeune homme' (II, vii) with his daughter.

Even though it facilitates the development of romantic love, beauty also makes empathizers tempting as prey to narcissists. A male empathizer who is noted for his attractiveness, both in earnest and with contempt, is Horace in *L'École des femmes*. When Arnolphe and Agnès discuss her meeting Horace, she describes him as 'Un jeune homme bien fait' (II, v, 487). Upon being told that she may not see him again, Agnès sighs, 'Las! il est si bien fait' (II, v, 639). Beauty and the terms with

which it is described are often used as a means for seduction. In the case of Arnolphe, a frustrated rival, this renders beauty a disqualifying value. Disparagingly, he repeatedly calls Horace a *blondin*, fulminating about ‘le blondin séducteur’ (III, i, 645) and ‘ce blondin funeste’ (IV, vii, 1208). Similarly, when Elmire in *Le Tartuffe* and Jacqueline in *Le Médecin malgré lui* are noted for their attractiveness, it is done so with an edge of anger, jealousy, or lust from the speaker. During his initial seduction attempt, Tartuffe flatters Elmire’s vanity, rhapsodizing that, compared with other works of the *Ciel*, she is the ‘plus beau des Portraits où lui-même il s’est peint’ (III, iii, 944). In other words, he elevates her physical beauty to a representation of divinity itself. Changing strategies in seducing the nurse in *Le Médecin malgré lui*, Sganarelle addresses Jacqueline three times as ‘belle Nourrice’ (III, iii), and insists that many men would consider themselves ‘heureux de baiser, seulement, les petits bouts de vos Petons’ (III, iii).

In *Le Malade imaginaire*, when Argan speaks to Angélique about Thomas Diafoirus, she believes he is speaking about Cléante. Argan says he is a ‘grand jeune Garçon bien fait’ (I, v), ‘De belle taille’, ‘Agréable de sa personne’, ‘De bonne physionomie’ (I, v), and Angélique agrees. For Argan, dwelling on the physical attractions of the man he intends for his daughter is a means for manipulation. And praising the charms of Éliante in *Le Misanthrope*, Alceste, rather than drawing attention to her specific, physical beauty, describes a more abstract variety, grounded in her character. In the final moments of the play, Alceste tells her, ‘Madame, cent Vertus ornent votre Beauté’ (V, iv, 1785).

Beauty is associated with the notion of nobility, and accordingly, the faces of Célié and Myrtil belie their social origins. An enslaved young woman whom Lélié calls ‘un bel objet’ (*L’Étourdi*, II, i, 491), Célié has an expressive visage that fails to

hide her true social status. In spite of his bungling, L  lie predicts the plot’s resolution simply from her mien; he tells Mascarille, ‘Pour moi, dans ses discours, comme dans son visage, | Je vois pour sa naissance un noble t  moignage’ (I, ii, 27-8). Similarly, in *M  licerte*, Myrtil’s build and eyes give the impression of a station higher than that of a shepherd. Describing him as young and beautiful,   rox  ne, one of the two maidens who boldly pursue his affections, muses, ‘Et sa taille, son air, sa parole et ses yeux, | Feraient croire qu’il est issu du sang des Dieux’ (I, ii, 91-2).

And true beauty is also associated with the idea of *douceur*. In addition to revealing her station in life and the denouement of *L’  tourdi*, C  lie’s appearance is something she is aware of not wanting to use to cause harm to anyone. When L  lie compliments her, C  lie claims ignorance of her effect on others, saying, ‘Mon c  ur qu’avec raison votre discours   tonne, | N’entend pas que mes yeux fassent mal    personne’ (I, iii, 115-6).<sup>11</sup> Similarly, another empathizer, Elmire in *Le Tartuffe*, is conscious of not using her physical self to inflict pain. In addition to speaking the only use of the noun *amour-propre* in Moli  re’s work, Elmire is also Moli  re’s only character to use the curious verb *d  visager* (see Appendix 4). She speaks it in reaction to Orgon’s comment that she appeared too calm to have been sexually harassed by Tartuffe. Elmire retorts,

J’aime qu’avec douceur nous nous montrions sages,  
 Et ne suis point, du tout, pour ces Prudes sauvages,  
 Dont l’honneur est arm   de griffes, et de dents,  
 Et veut, au moindre mot, d  visager les Gens.  
 (IV, iii, 1329-32)

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<sup>11</sup> C  lie’s words mirror the lesson Agn  s is taught by Horace’s elderly female accomplice. Her eyes, Agn  s learns, can be both generative and destructive. First the old woman tells Agn  s, ‘vos yeux, pour causer le tr  pas | Ma fille, ont un venin que vous ne savez pas’ (*L’  cole des femmes*, II, v, 521-2); then she comforts her, saying, ‘Vos yeux peuvent eux seuls emp  cher sa ruine, | Et du mal qu’ils ont fait   tre la m  decine’ (II, v, 531-2). Therefore, eyes can cause suffering or be palliative, depending on how they are employed, which mirrors the duality of the endogenous words that express narcissism and empathy discussed in the previous chapter.

Her instinct is to be gentle and to avoid causing such men crises over their self-images, but rather to laugh. She constructs her outward appearance consciously to adhere to a code of behaviour that she deems honourable.

The idea that you can react to someone by making him lose his face (*dévisager*) is significant; the human face is what makes one most instantly recognizable as an individual, the first sign of one's identity for other human beings. Furetière defines *dévisager* as, 'Blessier quelqu'un au visage, en sorte qu'il en soit défiguré & gasté'. De Waal's aforementioned observation that facial expressions are an essential component for empathy adds some richness to why the idea of being *dévisagé*, in its literal and metaphorical senses, is so devastating. Elmire's policy for handling seducers shows that she is aware that someone like Tartuffe has a paper-thin sense of self. Also, Kohut notes,

The similarity between the perceptual immediacy of the recognition of a face and the [empathetic] grasp of another person's psychological state may not be only an incidental one; it may well be derived from the significant genetic fact that the small child's perceptual merging with the mother's face constitutes simultaneously its most important access to the mother's identity and to her emotional state.<sup>12</sup>

In effect, these indications (apart from the 'blonde' component of *blondin*) are rather imprecise in physical details. It is rarely said if these characters are short or tall, thin or plump. Therefore, Molière leaves the task to the actors to give substance with their own physical appearances (the *blondin* indication is easier accomplished, since donning a wig makes it possible for anyone to achieve). For him, thus, signalling youth and beauty is sufficient for the creation of sympathy.

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### 3.2.2 Attire and Disguise

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<sup>12</sup> Heinz Kohut, *The Search for the Self: Selected Writings of Heinz Kohut: 1950-1978* [1978], ed. by Paul H. Ornstein, 2 vols (London: Karnac Books, Ltd, 2011), II, p. 451, n. 16.

Curiously, given Kohut's assertion, there are no maternal figures amongst the most highly empathetic characters; furthermore, there is young stepmother, Elmire in *Le Tartuffe*, among their ranks.<sup>13</sup> As such, she is ensconced in another woman's place: that of Orgon's first wife; and her mother-in-law berates her for her clothing. Madame Pernelle lectures, 'Quiconque à son mari veut plaire seulement, | Ma bru, n'a pas besoin de tant d'ajustement' (I, i, 31-32), casting aspersions on her *honneur*, which, as we have seen in the case of Don Juan,<sup>14</sup> is a code of behaviour that can promote empathy formation.

For this, we have recourse to disguises. Frequently, Molière's empathizers are obliged to enter into diametrically different codes of conduct in order to promote their own happiness; one way they accomplish this is through donning costumes. The *dramatis personae* of *Le Dépit amoureux* lists among its characters 'Ascagne', a 'Fille sous l'habit d'homme'. Even though her relative Lucile claims to undergo 'une métamorphose' (II, iii, 544) in her affections, it is Ascagne herself who truly experiences a visible change by the play's denouement, by revealing she is a woman and, indeed, the one who married Valère. Earlier, Ascagne explains to Frosine how a veil prevented Valère from distinguishing her from Lucile at their wedding: 'Sous ce voile trompeur qui flattait sa pensée, | Je lui dis que pour lui mon âme était blessée' (II, i, 447-8). Like Ascagne, Done Ignès in *Don Garcie de Navarre* is an empathetic woman disguised as a man to protect her interests: for Ascagne, an inheritance, and for Done Ignès, her life and honour. To different degrees, they both enter into a different code of conduct for self-preservation. Done Ignès first appears on stage in the latter half of the play, '*en habit de Cavalier*', explaining to Élise that she faked her death and that 'J'ai par elle [la mort] évité cet Hymen redoutable, | Pour qui j'aurais

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<sup>13</sup> The only other stepmother I analysed using my method is Béline in *Le Malade imaginaire*.

<sup>14</sup> See Section 2.2.1.

souffert une mort véritable' (IV, iv, 1160-1). For her, death and masculine garb combine to prevent her marriage to a tyrant. For these female empathizers, their relationship to apparel reveals agency and resourcefulness.

Disguises also serve to create sympathy in cases where it is necessary to trick an adversary for whom the public feels antipathy. In *L'Amour médecin*, Clitandre pretends to be a doctor who feigns marrying Lucinde. Throughout his time on stage, he is disguised '*en habit de Médecin*' (III, v). In other words, we only see him under theatrical circumstances, and it is this that leads to the lovers' marriage in the plot resolution. Describing his apothecary costume to Sganarelle in *Le Médecin malgré lui*, Léandre says, 'Il me semble que je ne suis pas mal ainsi, pour un Apothicaire: et comme le Père ne m'a guère vu, ce changement d'Habit, et de Perruque, est assez capable, je crois, de me déguiser à ses yeux' (III, i). And in *Le Malade imaginaire*, Toinette masquerades as a male doctor, wearing an '*habit de Médecin*' (III, ix), in order to shake Argan's belief in medical omnipotence; she calls this act, 'une imagination fort plaisante' (III, ii). Empathetic *imagination* is a subject to which I will return in the following chapter on cognition.

Finally, it is necessary to note a very particular case of disguise. As the lone unfortunate empathizer whose object of desire, Don Juan, is a super narcissist, Done Elvire presents an unconventional case, because she does not attempt to enter into his codes through her attire. When we first observe Don Juan laying eyes on Done Elvire, he makes a judgment on her frame of mind based on clothing that he deems incongruous with the setting. He asks Sganarelle, 'Est-elle folle de n'avoir pas changé d'habit, et de venir dans ce lieu-ci avec son équipage de Campagne?' (I, ii). When she last sees Don Juan, as 'une Dame voilée' (IV, vi), she says, 'vous me voyez bien changée de ce que j'étais ce matin' (IV, vi). She disguises her sexual self, regressing

to what she was before she married him. And his reactions to their two encounters are perverse. Whereas her impassioned suffering left him cold, her desexing of herself turns him on. He muses, ‘son habit négligé, son air languissant et ses larmes ont réveillé en moi quelque petits restes de feu éteint’ (IV, vii).

The theatre is a visual art, and among other visual elements, it is an art of costume, within which disguises are a kind of apogee. Molière employs them adroitly to indicate relationships of sympathy. And he does this often by making use of *double énonciation*,<sup>15</sup> because the public is conscious of the disguises even though the noxious characters that must be tricked, in the *énonciation* on stage, are unaware of them.

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### 3.2.3 Changes in the Skin

It follows that Molière’s empathizers, because they are positive in the eyes of the spectators, betray signs of trouble and shame when they are accused of reprehensible conduct, presenting a range of instances of facial skin reddening and blanching.

Indeed, on the causes of blushing, Darwin writes,

These consist of shyness, shame, and modesty; the essential element in all being self-attention. Many reasons can be assigned for believing that originally self-attention directed to personal appearance, in relation to the opinion of others, was the exciting cause; the same effect being subsequently produced, through the force of association, by self-attention in relation to moral conduct. It is not the simple act of reflecting on our own appearance, but the thinking what others think of us, which excites a blush.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The concept of *double énonciation*, which refers to the fact that words delivered on stage are spoken to both characters on stage and to the real people in the audience, is a topic to which I will return in the final chapter. Moreover, the image of the audience watching Don Juan telling Sganarelle about Done Elvire’s attire illustrates what Baron-Cohen calls the ‘Shared-Attention Mechanism’, which he posits is a component of theory of mind, and it closely mimics the mechanisms of the *double énonciation* of the theatre. See Simon Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1995), pp. 31-58.

<sup>16</sup> Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, p. 326-7.

This is very much the code that is evoked in *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas*, wherein Julie's first words are a teasing commentary on her lover's tardiness. She tells the Vicomte, 'Oui, vous en devriez rougir, Cléante, et il n'est guère honnête à un Amant de venir le dernier au rendez-vous' (I, i). As he eventually admits, the cause of his blushing is the deliberate nature of his lateness; he wanted to avoid being alone with the Comtesse d'Escarbagnas. Thus, his face reveals when he is in the wrong. For Valère in *L'Avare* and Done Ignès in *Don Garcie de Navarre*, their skin tone indicates their blamelessness. When Harpagon accuses Valère of stealing his *cassette*, he demands, 'Comment, traître, tu ne rougis pas de ton crime?' (V, iii). Valère believes the crime is his intention to marry Élise, and his lack of a blush shows the *honnêteté* of his intentions towards his love object. Self-effacing about her womanly charms, Done Ignès claims to understand why her lover transferred his affections to Done Elvire, saying, '[...] Et mon front ne doit point rougir d'une inconstance | Qui de vos traits aux miens marque la différence' (V, iv, 1668-9). Thus, her absent blush indicates her personal code of conduct, that she is not envious of the beauty of other women. This is a trait to which I will return presently when discussing narcissists Arsinoé and Célimène in *Le Misanthrope* and super narcissist Vénus in *Psyché*.

In *L'Amour médecin*, the aspect of Lucinde's physical appearance to which the most attention is also drawn, for the benefit of her father, is to changes in her skin tone as well as the cast of her eyes. First, when Lisette (falsely) informs Sganarelle that Lucinde has fallen ill, she tells him, 'tout d'un coup son visage a pâli, ses yeux se sont tournés' (I, vi). Subsequently, when Clitandre reports the effect of his pretend-but-real marriage proposal, he describes Lucinde's reaction to Sganarelle, saying, 'Soudain son visage a changé, son teint s'est éclairci, ses yeux se sont animés' (III, vi). These renderings of her skin and eyes are intended to elicit a sympathetic

response from her father, and to indicate her restored vitality with the suggestion of gaining a husband. Darwin writes, 'In some rare cases paleness instead of redness is caused under conditions which would naturally induce a blush'.<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, Moron in *La Princesse d'Élide* proclaims his own paleness, his 'teint blême' (*Deuxième intermède*, i), as evidence of his being in love.

It must be noted that, in the theatre, certain of these indications are not easy to enact *sur scène* (an actor does not blush at will), nor are they easily perceived from the perspective of the *salle* (for the spectators to actually 'see' a blush or paleness, it is necessary for the actor to apply rouge or white makeup). Also, something significant revealed by these verbal cues is that there is a language of colours of empathy.

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#### 3.2.4 Positions of Vulnerability

On the other hand, something that the theatre can convey very well are gestures, and, in particular, those that signify vulnerability. One of the most visible of physical traits of Molière's empathizers is their ability to put themselves into positions of being vulnerable, whether they entail bowing down or putting themselves at risk to prevent quarrels. One such character that falls to his knees in supplication, Valère tells Harpagon, speaking of his daughter rather than his money, 'Je vous le demande à genoux, ce trésor plein de charmes' (*L'Avare*, V, iii). Similarly, in *Le Malade imaginaire*, Louison tells Argan that she has seen a man with Angélique who 'se mettait à genoux devant elle' and 'lui baisait les mains' (II, viii). When Argan reveals himself to be alive in the end and Angélique begs him to not force her into marriage with anyone other than Cléante, she begins, 'Mon Père, permettez que je me mette à

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 313.

genoux devant vous' (III, xii), making her vulnerability perceptible to both her father and the audience.

Perspective-taking gains a literal meaning in the cases of Octave in *Les Fourberies de Scapin* and Philinte in *Le Misanthrope*. When Léandre and Scapin quarrel, Octave prevents the former from assaulting his valet. A stage direction describes Octave '*se mettant entre deux, pour empêcher Léandre de le frapper*' (II, iii). At the start of *Le Misanthrope*, Philinte articulates an etiquette that is essentially a code of empathy, and its expression involves a physical aspect. He tells Alceste, 'Lorsqu'un Homme vous vient embrasser avec joie, | Il faut bien le payer de la même monnaie' (I, i, 37-8). For Philinte, empathy involves reciprocity in the form of mirroring of physical and emotional behaviour. The only reference to Philinte's body language comes in the form of a stage direction; as Alceste and Oronte's initial confrontation reaches its heated apex, Philinte steps in, literally. His stage direction reads, '*se mettant entre deux*' (I, ii). Our impression of his empathy is heightened by his act of putting himself between the two sparring men, because he is motivated to help not by romantic love, but simply by a platonic friendship. Thus, the placement of Philinte's body in the staging of this scene hints that he is capable of understanding the perspective of different people. He takes a risk, since by placing himself between these two, he could be punched—therefore, it is a form of vulnerability, but for reasons that are social rather than sentimental. His physical position midway between the two pettifoggers is mirrored by his stage presence; he is only absent during the play's central act. He is this comedy's emotional and ethical ballast.

The language of the body is, therefore, one of the best means Molière uses for conveying the qualities of empathy. These are not as visual in and of themselves as, for example, signs of anger, but he strengthens the more 'difficult' signs (blushing)

with signs that are more naturally theatrical (falling to one's knees) in order to create for the spectator the vision of sympathetic characters.

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### 3.2.5 Tears and Romantic Love

Another strong sign is that of tears: if not actually crying, actors can at the very least mimic the postures of weeping. Also, Molière makes great use of this, and it is above all for signaling love. There are six 'empathizer couples' in his work; that is, couples in which both partners are highly empathetic. They are Clitandre and Lucinde in *L'Amour médecin*; Philinte and Éliante in *Le Misanthrope*; Valère and Élise in *L'Avare*; Éraste and Julie in *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*; Octave and Hyacinthe in *Les Fourberies de Scapin*; and finally, Cléante and Angélique in *Le Malade imaginaire*. This sample of pairs is comprised of two *grandes comédies*, one farce, and three *comédies-ballets*; five plays composed in prose and one in verse. All of these empathizer couples appear in works created in 1666 or later. Thus, Molière's work appears to have undergone an evolution in this respect.

Tears are shown to be a powerful spark for empathizer couples. Octave in *Les Fourberies de Scapin* and Cléante in *Le Malade imaginaire* both describe their lovers, Hyacinthe and Angélique, respectively, weeping, and subsequently the audience witnesses the two women crying on stage. Hyacinthe's beauty combined with the visibility of her suffering fascinates Octave. He tells Scapin of, 'une jeune Fille toute fondante en larmes, la plus belle, et la plus touchante qu'on puisse jamais voir' (I, ii). He then focuses on what specifically about her weeping struck him as remarkable: it did not alter her face. He explains, 'Ses larmes n'étaient point de ces larmes désagréables, qui défigurent un visage; Elle avait à pleurer, une grâce touchante; et sa douleur était la plus belle du Monde' (I, ii). Even in her grief and despair, Hyacinthe is

not *dévisagée*; her essential self and her physical attractiveness remain intact. Octave himself mirrors Hyacinthe's displays of feeling. Of their first meeting, he says, 'Elle faisait fondre chacun en larmes' (I, ii), clearly revealing that at the very least, she made him cry.

Frequently, Molière uses tears in first impressions of female characters that are empathetic and worthy of the audience's sympathy. Thus, the action of the play is set out as: 'how does one console this poor young woman?'. For instance, when Hyacinthe first appears in the following scene, the audience witnesses the effect her crying has on Octave. He observes with alarm, 'Mais que vois-je? vous pleurez! Pourquoi ces larmes?' (I, iii). After watching their exchange, Scapin mutters, 'Elle n'est pas tant sotté, ma foi, et je la trouve assez passable' (I, iii). She has earned Scapin's respect; his comment implies that these tears are partly calculated, giving her an additional tincture of exercising control over her destiny.

As with Hyacinthe, Angélique inspires love when she is found weeping in *Le Malade imaginaire*. When Cléante tells the story of their meeting, in front of Argan and the Diafoiruses, he describes her as a girl who 'versait des larmes, qu'il trouva les plus belles du monde' (II, v). Later, when she believes Argan is dead, Cléante appears and queries, 'que vois-je? dites, qu'avez-vous, belle Angélique?' (III, xii), reacting again to the visual cue of her crying. This progression mimics *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, wherein Octave describes his reaction to her tears, and then we get to see it. With Cléante and Octave, their reactions to the anguish of the women they love reinforce the impression they give of empathy.

Similarly, Molière utilizes hunger the way he uses tears—as a means for eliciting sympathy in the audience for a romantic female lead. Telling Harpagon about Mariane in *L'Avare*, Frosine reports, 'elle est nourrie et élevée dans une grande

épargne de bouche. C'est une Fille accoutumée à vivre de salade, de lait, de fromage, et de pommes' (II, v). Interestingly, privation is not unique to Mariane in *L'Avare*. Maître Jacques describes Harpagon's starving horses in their pitiful condition as 'des idées ou des fantômes; des façons de Chevaux' (III, i). Subsequently, Harpagon mentions the horses, Mariane, and hunger, all in the same breath; he says, 'Qu'on mette donc les Chevaux au Carosse. Je vous prie de m'excuser, ma Belle, si je n'ai pas songé à vous donner un peu de collation avant que de partir' (III, vii). These lines show that, on some level, Harpagon comprehends that his horses and his bride-to-be are hungry; he simply does not care. The comparison with the disappearing horses and Harpagon's callousness serves to heighten sympathy in the audience with this young woman.

But in the case of the empathizer couple in *L'Avare*, Valère puts himself literally in Élise's place when he rescues her from drowning; she recalls 'cette générosité surprenante, qui vous fit risquer votre vie, pour dérober la mienne à la fureur des ondes' (I, i). Similarly, when Cléomène and Agénor join Psyché on the desolate rocks where she is abandoned to die, Cléomène presents the two of them as, 'Deux Amis, deux Rivaux, dont l'unique souci | Est d'exposer leurs jours pour conserver les vôtres' (*Psyché*, II, iv, 809-10). These princes exhibit empathy for each other as well as for Psyché.

Thus, the irony of Molière's empathizers is that physical traits, clothing, gestures, and behaviours that, at first blush, seem vulnerable often prove to show wells of inner fortitude. And the signs of love, therefore, play a major role in the theatre. They render empathetic relationships visible to the spectators, as well as making them visible between characters on stage. But this is not the same for narcissistic characters.

...

### 3.3 Narcissists

Molière's narcissists present a demographic that diverges from his empathizers and is less uniform in scope. It also includes both men and women, young and old, but the group contains a higher concentration of older characters, like Argan in *Le Malade imaginaire*; more of those marked by high social status, like the *Princesse d'Élide*; more of those who aspire to an exalted social status, like the *Bourgeois gentilhomme*; and a panoply of the not loved, like *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* (see Appendix 8).

Elsa Ronningstam paints a sweeping picture of the myriad manifestations of narcissists, writing,

Some match the typical expectation of a narcissistic personality (I, being boastful, assertive, arrogant). Others can initially appear friendly and tuned in, but gradually become strikingly distant and aloof. Some can be modest and unassuming with an air of grace. Still others present as perpetual failures, while constantly driven by unattainable, grandiose aims. One can be shy and quiet, another charming and talkative, yet another domineering, aggressive, and manipulative.<sup>18</sup>

Noting the possible variations, Kernberg describes three different degrees of seriousness of the disorder. For the lowest level, he writes, 'they typically present with significant problems in long-term intimate relationships and in long-term professional work interactions'.<sup>19</sup> Then, he adds, 'A second level of severity of illness of narcissistic personalities reflects the typical syndrome with all the various clinical manifestations. These patients need treatment for their personality disorder'.<sup>20</sup>

Out of the 269 characters evaluated, 88 scored a five or higher on the criteria of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, which qualifies them

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<sup>18</sup> Elsa Ronningstam, 'Narcissistic Personality Disorder: Facing DSM-V', *Psychiatric Annals*, 39, 3 (2009), 111-21 (p. 112).

<sup>19</sup> Otto F. Kernberg, 'Narcissistic Personality Disorders', *Psychiatric Annals*, 39, 3 (2009), 105-10 & 164-6 (p. 105).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

as having Narcissistic Personality Disorder. This is approximately a third of the entire sample of characters analysed, and this result has important implications theatrically: narcissists should occupy an outsized place in a specifically comic oeuvre. And this highlights a connection between bombastic narcissism and humour.

...

### 3.3.1 Youth and Beauty

Among Molière's narcissists, indications of youth and beauty come in the form of arrogant personal declarations that stretch the truth to comic effect. Consequently, the audience laughs at and is not in sympathy with these characters. For instance, the only character in *Le Misanthrope* who speaks of Acaste's appearance is Acaste himself. Admiringly, he vaunts his own youth, good looks, and attire, boasting to Clitandre, 'je suis jeune' (III, i, 783) and 'Je suis assez adroit, j'ai bon air, bonne mine' (III, i, 797). Similarly, in *Sganarelle*, the title character enumerates among his own fine physical attributes, bragging about '[c]ette taille, ce port, que tout le monde admire, | Ce visage si propre à donner de l'amour, | Pour qui mille beautés soupirent nuit et jour' (vi, 166-68).

Likewise, the first character to refer to the appearance of the Comtesse d'Escarbagnas is the woman herself. She insists to Julie that she does not feel threatened when her lovers pay attention to other women, indirectly stating that she herself is a beauty; she says, 'je ne suis point de l'humeur de ces femmes injustes, qui s'applaudissent des incivilités, que leurs Amants font aux autres belles' (I, ii). According to the *Dictionnaire* of the Académie française, the verb *s'applaudir* means, 'Se louer, se vanter soy-mesme [...] *c'est une sottise vanité que de s'applaudir soy-mesme*'. Thus, while claiming humility, she praises herself. Then, she speaks of her own powers of attraction, claiming to have, 'assez de beauté, de jeunesse' (I, ii). And

when her son appears on stage, Julie comments on how grown-up he is, and the Comtesse replies, ‘Hélas! quand je le fis, j’étais si jeune que je me jouais encore avec une poupée’ (I, vii). Understood literally, her statement would be unsettling; it implies that she was a child bride. However, the implication is that she wants the others to think her younger than she actually is.

But even worse, comparative youth is a weapon in Célimène’s arsenal. In a barely civil manner, she and Arsinoé fight to dominate each other. Célimène reveals her age twice, first telling Arsinoé that it does not suit a woman to be ‘Prude à vingt ans’ (*Le Misanthrope*, III, iv, 984), and then recoiling from Alceste’s proposal that she run away with him, arguing that, ‘La Solitude effraye une Âme de vingt ans’ (V, iv, 1774). And the same is true of comparative beauty. Describing Arsinoé to her face, Célimène notes, ‘Cette affectation d’un grave Extérieur’ (III, iv, 927). Subsequently, she informs the older woman that others mock her, saying, ‘elle met du blanc, et veut paraître belle’ (III, iv, 942).

In ‘On Narcissism’, Freud writes of beautiful women, ‘Strictly speaking, it is only themselves that such women love with an intensity comparable to that of the man’s love for them’.<sup>21</sup> The proof positive of this is Célimène. Distraught by her letter to Oronte, Alceste fulminates at her, ‘Oui, je voudrais qu’aucun ne vous trouvât aimable, | Que vous fussiez réduite en un Sort misérable, | Que le Ciel, en naissant, ne vous eût donné rien’ (IV, iii, 1425-7). Clearly, he does not want an equal for a lover; he wants a dependent. However, his possessiveness would strip her of all of the qualities that attract him to her; without her charismatic, narcissistic beauty, none of what Alceste finds appealing about her would remain. Campbell, Brunell, and Finkel write,

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<sup>21</sup> Freud, ‘On Narcissism’, p. 31.

Not surprisingly, what narcissists particularly look for in a partner are physical attractiveness and agentic traits (e.g., status and success). A narcissist's ideal partner is like a narcissist's ideal self [...] Narcissists report that part of the reason that they are drawn to attractive and successful partners is that these people are similar to them.<sup>22</sup>

The truth of Alceste's wish is that, rather than wanting to render her a needy lover, he wants to metamorphose her into a creature he could not love and would want nothing to do with.

Similarly, in response to hearing Horace read aloud Agnès's letter, Arnolphe indulges in fantasies of self-harm, raging, 'je souffletterais mille fois mon visage' (*L'École des femmes*, III, v, 1001). Unlike empathetic Elmire in *Le Tartuffe*, the impulse to act upon the verb *dévisager*, self-destructively, is strong amongst narcissists. Explicating Paul Wink's work on covert narcissism, Gabbard points to two sub-groups of narcissists: those who are grandiose and those who are more visibly insecure. He writes,

[O]ne might say that a critically important distinction revolves around narcissistic vulnerability. The hypervigilant narcissist is exquisitely vulnerable to narcissistic wounding, while the oblivious narcissist is more intensely defended against that vulnerability.<sup>23</sup>

He adds, 'A key difference is that the hypervigilant narcissist is secretly grandiose, while the avoidant individual is not. The overt or oblivious narcissist may claim to be happy compared with the covert or hypervigilant subtype'.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, some narcissists succeed better at putting on a façade of confidence than do others, like Arnolphe, who struggles to hide his despair from those on stage, and fails to keep it from the audience.

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<sup>22</sup> W. Keith Campbell, Amy B. Brunell, and Eli J. Finkel, 'Narcissism, Interpersonal Regulation, and Romantic Relationships: An Agency Model Approach', *Self and Relationships: Connecting Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Processes*, ed. by Kathleen D. Vohs and Eli J. Finkel (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006), pp. 57-83 (p. 67-8).

<sup>23</sup> Gabbard, p. 131.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

Parallel to boastful vanity, Molière's narcissists employ unattractiveness to manipulate the audience's sympathy. Bolstering his self-image, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac ridiculously boasts to Sbrigani of his clothing, 'l'habit est propre et riche, et il fera du bruit ici' (*Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, I, iii). Later, the *Premier médecin* lists Monsieur de Pourceaugnac's attributes, describing, 'ces yeux rouges et hagards, cette grande barbe, cette habitude du corps, menue, grêle, noire et velue' (I, viii). While we laugh at this description of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac's appearance, it is calculated to make him, a vulnerable narcissist, insecure and thereby to diminish his grandiose self-image, making him an easier opponent to defeat.

While lecturing Agnès about wifely duties, Arnolphe actively discourages her from looking at his face without consent, and in doing this he breaks a basic code of human interactions: that we know each other through facial recognition. His version of the relation between man and wife includes the following dictum:

Lorsqu'il jette sur elle un regard sérieux,  
 Son devoir aussitôt est de baisser les yeux;  
 Et de n'oser jamais le regarder en face  
 Que quand d'un doux regard il lui veut faire grâce.  
 (III, ii, 713-6)

Not only does this demand allow Arnolphe to exert dominance over Agnès, but it would serve to prevent her from truly knowing him, and in this way, it is a self-defence strategy, helping him bolster his false self. Molière furthers this concept when we see in *Les Femmes savantes* that Clitandre claims to have known what Trissotin looked like from what his writing reveals about his personality. Although he gives no specifics about the poet's features, Clitandre's speech is the lone textual description of Trissotin's appearance. He explains to Henriette,

Et je vis par les Vers qu'à la tête il nous jette,  
 De quel air il fallait que fût fait le Poète;  
 Et j'en avais si bien deviné tous les traits,  
 Que rencontrant un Homme un jour dans le Palais,

Je gageai que c'était Trissotin en personne,  
Et je vis qu'en effet la gageure était bonne.  
(I, iii, 263-8)

Thus, Molière suggests we *visualize* someone's face through the product of his mind;

I will return to this notion in the fourth chapter.

Even older narcissists claim youth and beauty. In *Le Mariage forcé*, Sganarelle praises his own physical condition, vitality, and appetite to Geronimo, asking, 'Y a-t-il Homme de trente ans, qui paraisse plus frais, et plus vigoureux, que vous me voyez?' (i). Playing on similar vanities, Frosine flatters Harpagon, 'Voilà un corps taillé, libre, et dégagé comme il faut, et qui ne marque aucune incommodité' (*L'Avare*, II, v). When she thinks him dead, Béline, who has made a career of flattering Argan, is giddy and describes her husband as she truthfully sees him: 'un homme mal bâti, mal fait, sans esprit, de mauvaise humeur, fort âgé' (*Le Malade imaginaire*, III, x), unveiling how deliberately she has manipulated his self-image to her benefit.

Thus, whereas empathetic characters often possess youth and beauty, but do not declare it themselves (characters surrounding them speak of these attributes), the narcissists proclaim themselves young and beautiful, and they are sometimes quite wrong. This distribution of utterances gives to the spectator a strong indication about the personality of each category of characters. Such a striking contrast shows how Molière constructs images of empathizers and narcissists with truly theatrical means.

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### 3.3.2 Attire and Disguise

One of the comic effects in Molière arises from how narcissists exploit the social code argued for by Philinte in *Le Misanthrope*, that one should be kind in social situations, using it to fish for flattery. In *Les Précieuses ridicules*, Mascarille asks the girls what

they think of his attire, which he praises himself. Magdelon gushes, ‘Il faut avouer que je n’ai jamais vu porter si haut l’élégance de l’ajustement’ (ix), and Cathos describes his feathers as, ‘Effroyablement belles’ (ix). At the other extreme, Alceste breaks Philinte’s code of polite decorum, using the clothing of others as a tool for derision. When badgering Célimène about her stable of suitors, Alceste scornfully enumerates Clitandre’s attributes and apparel, which include ‘l’Ongle long, qu’il porte au petit Doigt’ (*Le Misanthrope*, II, i, 479); ‘sa Perruque blonde’ (482); ‘ses grands Canons’ (483); ‘L’amas de ses Rubans’ (484); and ‘sa vaste Rhingrave’ (485). However, this contempt is thrown back in Alceste’s face when he learns, through her writing, that Célimène’s epithet for him reduces him to ‘l’Homme aux Rubans verts’ (V, iv). There is disagreement over whether Alceste’s green ribbons make him seem out-dated or very much in vogue,<sup>25</sup> but either way, they represent a sign of setting himself apart from others sartorially, and as such, they show how costume can be an indicator of personality.<sup>26</sup>

Clothing provides Molière’s narcissists with a means for notoriety. In *L’École des maris*, Ariste promotes a code of sartorial understatement; he argues against drawing attention to oneself through idiosyncratic attire, admonishing that, ‘jamais il ne faut se faire regarder’ (I, i, 42). He implies that Sganarelle does in fact seek fame through his dress. Sganarelle defines his own unfashionable aesthetic, saying he prefers, ‘une coiffure en dépit de la mode, | Sous qui toute ma tête ait un abri commode’ (I, i, 67-8), and he concludes ungraciously that, ‘qui me trouve mal, n’a qu’à fermer les yeux’ (I, i, 74). This last comment—which shows an utter lack of

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<sup>25</sup> See Tom Lawrenson, ‘The Wearing o’ the Green: yet another look at “l’homme aux rubans verts”’, in *Molière: Stage and Study, Essays in Honour of W.G. Moore*, ed. by W.D. Howarth and Merlin Thomas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 163-9; and Howarth, *Molière: A Playwright and His Audience*, p. 145.

<sup>26</sup> For a full treatment of costume in Molière, see Stephen Varick Dock, *Costume and Fashion in the Plays of Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Molière: A Seventeenth-Century Perspective* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1992).

concern for anyone else—is ironic, given that his own watchfulness over Isabelle inspires Valère to dub him ‘cet argus’ (I, iii, 263). His disregard for others mirrors that of Célimène, who abdicates any responsibility for the effects of her beauty. She defends her entourage of admirers to Arsinoé, claiming, ‘Si ma Personne, aux Gens, inspire de l’amour, | [...] Je n’y saurais que faire, et ce n’est pas ma faute’ (*Le Misanthrope*, III, iv, 995-8). This approach to human interactions shows a complete disinterest in understanding the feelings of others. In their attitudes to their looks, Sganarelle and Célimène are two sides of the same coin of carelessness.

It is in relying on clothing that Monsieur Jourdain attempts to gain membership in a social group, by aping their garments. However, he fails and is therefore both ridiculous and sartorially isolated, neither noble nor bourgeois. The Maître tailleur describes Monsieur Jourdain’s new outfit as, ‘un Habit sérieux, qui ne fût pas noir’ (*Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, II, v). Monsieur Jourdain’s new clothes inspire equal parts laughter and confusion in his household, with his wife asking, ‘avez-vous envie qu’on se raille partout de vous?’ (III, iii).<sup>27</sup> However, Dorante flatters Monsieur Jourdain’s vanity, observing of his attire, ‘Vous avez tout à fait bon air avec cet Habit, et nous n’avons point de jeunes Gens à la Cour qui soient mieux faits que vous’ (III, iv). Hence, Dorante also takes advantage of Jourdain’s fantasy of seeming youthful.

The comic effect is pushed to a maximum when, at the end of *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, the title character is unsuccessfully disguised as a woman (unlike Ascagne and Done Ignès, whose male costumes are convincing). To wit, he worries

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<sup>27</sup> Defaux argues that Molière’s work undergoes an evolution from comedy as a social corrective towards a comedy that embraces humanity’s imperfections and laughs *with* fools. Within this structure, he deems *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*: ‘cet incontestable chef-d’œuvre de la comédie de la seconde manière’, complicating the laughter surrounding Monsieur Jourdain. See Gérard Defaux, *Molière ou les métamorphoses du comique: de la comédie morale au triomphe de la folie*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Lexington, Kentucky: French Forum Publishers, 1980), p. 293.

about his clothes and frets to Sbrigani about his beard, but the Neapolitan reassures him, ‘il y a des Femmes qui en ont autant que vous’ (III, ii). Moreover, like Dorante with Jourdain, Sbrigani flatters Pourceaugnac’s class pretensions, saying, ‘vous avez la mine comme cela, d’une Femme de condition’ (III, ii), thus, convincing him that he is adopting the identity of a woman with aplomb.

In this way, clothing seems like a permanent disguise for narcissists. One could summarize this in citing the remarks at the denouement of *Les Précieuses ridicules*, when La Grange and Du Croisy reveal the charade, and Mascarille and Jodelet are duly punished and stripped for it. Mascarille’s final words on stage, and to the *précieuses*, are ‘je vois bien qu’on n’aime ici, que la vaine apparence, et qu’on n’y considère point la vertu toute nue’ (xvi).

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### 3.3.3 Changes in the Skin

Unlike the blushing of empathizers, induced by the sense of a moral code betrayed, blushing in narcissists (or its absence) springs from sources like shamelessness or envy. For instance, Alceste begins a fit of unbridled anger by telling Célimène, ‘il n’est pas temps to rire, | Rougissez, bien plutôt, vous en avez raison’ (IV, iii, 1286-7). Then, when he presents her with the letter she wrote to Oronte, he demands, ‘Vous ne rougissez pas, en voyant cet Écrit?’ (IV, iii, 1328). Similarly, a financially cheated Cléante asks Harpagon, ‘Ne rougissez-vous point, de déshonorer votre condition, par les commerces que vous faites?’ (*L’Avaro*, II, ii). The unaltered complexions of the flirt and the miser reveal that they feel no compunction for their duplicitous behaviours.

Contrastingly, when Cidippe and Aglaure see the palace Psyché shares with her shadowy lover, their identification with each other’s plight takes on a visible,

physical aspect. Aglaure speaks first of her displeasure, and Cidippe mirrors her, saying, ‘Tout ce que vous prenez pour un mortel affront | Comme vous m’accable et me laisse | L’amertume dans l’âme, et la rougeur au front’ (*Psyché*, IV, i, 1294-6). Their blushes bespeak their intense jealousy.

The inverted symmetry with the empathizers appears pronounced here, as well; but it rests on upon different means than that of clothing. More difficult to show, blushing comes by words, and it escapes from narcissists; indeed, it is other characters around them that observe and comment on it. Arrogant and vain, they do not blush or cannot confess to blushing.

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### 3.3.4 Vulnerability and Aggression

Evidently, narcissists struggle in a balance of power with others. Consequently, as the question of blushing has suggested, they have an aggressive relationship with respect to vulnerability. For example, when he comes face to face with Lucinde, who is reputedly terribly ill, in *Le Médecin malgré lui*, Sganarelle mimics her gestures and sounds, with a stage direction that reads, ‘*la contrefaisant*’ (II, iv). This brief exchange shows the mechanics of empathy rooted in the body, even though, for Sganarelle, it shows incomprehension beneath the level of language when confronted with someone in a tenuous position.

We see Argante trembling, as indicated by a couple of stage directions. The first reads, ‘*Argante, pour n’être point vu, se tient en tremblant couvert de Scapin*’ (*Les Fourberies de Scapin*, II, vi), followed by, ‘*tout tremblant*’. Then, when Scapin convinces G ronte that a mob is after him, a stage direction for G ronte shows him ‘*en tremblant*’ (III, ii). He then begs Scapin to rescue him. Thus, for both men, they

are afraid, but do not wish to confess to their fear or have it be known; instead, they hide their vulnerability.

In a contrasting example, Jupiter, disguised as Amphitryon, prostrates himself before Alcmène. Begging for forgiveness for the quarrel between her and her actual husband, Jupiter tells her, ‘je me jette à genoux’ (*Amphitryon*, II, vi, 1360), and he continues to plead, ‘à vos pieds’ (II, vi, 1411). But what he really is doing is bringing the real Amphitryon to his knees, rather than himself. This is the opposite of the preceding examples; when it is not his vulnerability, but that of someone else, at stake, narcissistic Jupiter has no hesitations about making it known, and rendering the other man even more exposed.

Narcissists can be at once both fearful and aggressive—and vice versa—and their physical punishments are often laughable. In the opening scene of *Le Médecin malgré lui*, Sganarelle threatens his wife, saying, ‘j’ai le bras assez bon’ (I, i), and he then proceeds to beat her. In the following scene, Monsieur Robert attempts to intervene on her behalf, and Sganarelle thrashes him, as well. But afterwards, it is Sganarelle who is beaten, in punishment, by means of his wife’s ruse.

Failing to show itself through gestures, this violence manifests itself sometimes through words. When he has lost his lawsuit, Alceste tells Philinte of the money it will cost him: ‘pour vingt mille Francs, j’aurai droit de pester | Contre l’Iniquité de la Nature Humaine’ (*Le Misanthrope*, V, i, 1548-9).<sup>28</sup> He is so invested in his contempt for mankind that he is willing to pay for the right to freely indulge in it. When Célimène finally agrees to marry him, Alceste swiftly rejects her, in an action that mirrors his discussion with Philinte after his lawsuit has been decided.

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<sup>28</sup> Helpfully, Forestier and Bourqui note that the sum Alceste names would be the equivalent of €50,000 today. See Molière, I, p. 1464, n. 5.

When Célimène shrinks from his plan to become the living dead,<sup>29</sup> but makes a counter-offer, he in turn refuses to marry her. His motive is, again, to freely hate humanity. She is analogous to his lawsuit. He will give up a large sum of money and Célimène in order to nurse his misanthropy. In view of this parallel, one can place an exact value on Alceste's love for Célimène: 'vingt mille Francs'. To him, she is simply an object.

However, narcissists at times lose the sense of their bodies, adding strange extensions onto them, wherein their vulnerabilities are manifested. A case in point is Harpagon's most prized possession: the *cassette* containing his wealth. He describes it as 'petite' (*L'Avare*, V, ii) and 'grise', giving further clues to his physical appearance; but then he equates it with his innards, specifically 'mon sang, mes entrailles' (V, iii), showing he views it as essential to his *conservation*. Given the choice between his *cassette* and his daughter's life, Harpagon would choose the money,<sup>30</sup> which strengthens the notion that the *cassette* is an extension of his body.

We see the same concept at work in *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, wherein the stage directions and descriptions that show Géronte's physical self reveal his greed and cowardice. When Scapin tells him his son has been kidnapped by a Turkish galley and must be ransomed, a couple of stage directions reveal what is most important to the father. The first one states of Géronte, '*Il lui présente sa bourse, qu'il ne laisse pourtant pas aller; et dans ses transports il fait aller son bras de côté et d'autre, et Scapin le sien pour avoir la bourse*' (II, vii). Then he commands Scapin to rescue Léandre, while he himself pockets the ransom. However, Géronte stretches this objectification of human beings to its narcissistic conclusion. When Scapin tells

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<sup>29</sup> Célimène exclaims, 'Moi, renoncer au Monde, avant que de vieillir! | Et dans votre Désert aller m'ensevelir!' (V, iv, 1769-70).

<sup>30</sup> Harpagon tells Élise to her face, 'il valait bien mieux pour moi, qu'il te laissât noyer, que de faire ce qu'il a fait' (V, iv).

Géronte he will help him, the older man assures him, ‘Tu en seras récompensé, je t’assure; et je te promets cet Habit-ci, quand je l’aurai un peu usé’ (III, ii). The idea that all he would give in exchange for Léandre’s rescue is an old, used article of clothing shows that Geronde places little value on his son’s life.

In total, what these signs and stage directions reveal well is that narcissists are, actually, far more vulnerable than they would admit, and their aggression is, in fact, a disclosure of weakness.

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### 3.3.5 Sexual Mores

Unlike Molière’s empathizers who often appear in situations entailing romantic love, his narcissists are involved in circumstances wherein they flout basic codes of propriety in their sexual lives.

Narcissists desire to see themselves physically in positions of power. In *Les Fâcheux*, Clymène takes pleasure in subjugating a jealous lover, painting an arresting picture for the audience. She describes,

Le plaisir de le voir soumis à nos genoux,  
S’excuser de l’éclat qu’il a fait contre nous,  
Ses pleurs, son désespoir d’avoir pu nous déplaire,  
Est un charme à calmer toute notre colère.  
(II, iv, 449-52)

She exults over an image of herself dominating a weeping lover. For her, tears stimulate a cruel *plaisir*, rather than sympathetic *amour*.

The caricature of narcissism leads to scenes that are quasi-obscene, and therefore, the opposite of all romantic love. Thus, after the arrival of Jodelet in *Les Précieuses ridicules*, he and Mascarille attempt to cajole the girls into touching made-up battle wounds. Mascarille takes Magdelon’s hand, saying, ‘Donnez-moi un peu votre main, et tâtez celui-ci: là, justement au derrière de la tête’ (xi). Then, Mascarille

has a stage direction that states, '*mettant la main sur le bouton de son haut-de-chausses*', whilst he tells her, '*Je vais vous montrer une furieuse plaie*' (xi). The girls are distressed by these actions, as they conflict with their notion of courtship. In *Le Médecin malgré lui*, as previously mentioned, Sganarelle's interactions with Jacqueline involve unwelcome groping. Several stage directions indicate his actions towards Jacqueline, stating, '*Il lui porte la main sur le sein*'; '*il l'embrasse*'; and '*(il [...] se jette au cou de sa femme)*' (II, ii). Like Tartuffe with Dorine, Sganarelle draws attention to this servant's bosom by claiming, '*C'est l'Office du Médecin, de voir les Tétons des Nourrices*' (II, iii), and then asks to perform medical treatments on her. However, the sexual harassment tables are turned when Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, an insecure narcissist, is subjected to it himself. Attired '*en Femme*' (III, ii) and attempting to escape an alleged hanging, he meets two *Suisses* who comment crudely of his appearance, '*Li est là un petit teton qui l'est drole*' (III, iii).

And in all these cases, narcissistic 'love' is possessive. Thus, when confronting Valère over his love for Isabelle in *L'École des maris*, Sganarelle smugly informs his attractive rival, '*elle est destinée à l'honneur de ma couche*' (II, ii, 404). He does not say that he loves her, but rather, he objectifies her, while glorifying himself. Bénichou writes of Sganarelle, as well as Arnolphe in *L'École des femmes* and Harpagon in *L'Avare*,

Au fond d'eux-mêmes, ces personnages ne se sentent pas faits pour l'amour et pour le succès, et c'est pourquoi ils cherchent leurs sûretés dans une conception tyrannique de la vie conjugale; ou inversement leur égoïsme sans limite, leur interdisant toute communication vraie avec ce qu'ils aiment et leur dérobant sans cesse la certitude qu'ils recherchent, les rend inquiets et anxieux de l'échec.<sup>31</sup>

Taken in this light, Sganarelle's blustering about '*l'honneur de ma couche*' comes across as overcompensating for insecurities about love, and, more precisely, his

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<sup>31</sup> Bénichou, p. 240.

adequacy as a lover. He extends this vulgarity to Léonor when he believes that she has married Valère. He bitingly torments Ariste by insinuating, ‘la vertu chez elle est fort humanisée’ (III, v, 956).

The notion of being *humanisé* reappears in a divine context in *Amphitryon*. The metamorphoses of Jupiter delineate the border between feeling someone’s experience physically and understanding it emotionally. Mercure’s first reference to Jupiter’s physical being is to state that Jupiter ‘Aime à s’humaniser pour des Beautés mortelles’ (*Prologue*, 56). Subsequently, Mercure heralds the rape and impregnating of Alcmène, revealing that while her husband has been away, Jupiter ‘en a pris la forme, et reçoit là-dessous | Un soulagement à ses peines, | Dans la possession des plaisirs les plus doux’ (*Prologue*, 63-5). Writing of narcissists’ antisocial sexual behaviours, Campbell, Brunell, and Finkel give what is an accurate account of Jupiter’s assault on Alcmène. They write,

An additional and particularly harmful self-regulatory [behaviour] that may be displayed by narcissists is rape [...] Narcissists are told they cannot have something (sexual access to a woman) and they react by taking it anyway. Narcissists do not have the usual constraint of empathy to restrict this [behaviour]. Narcissists’ sense of power and entitlement is preserved, but with tragic consequences for the victim.<sup>32</sup>

Mercure pronounces to La Nuit that Jupiter’s exalted status is a hindrance to his romantic affairs, explaining, ‘Il sort tout à fait de lui-même, | Et ce n’est plus alors Jupiter qui paraît’ (*Prologue*, 91-2). But even if this practice takes him physically ‘hors de soi’, it does not put him in sympathy with the man whose identity he usurps, nor with the woman he misuses sexually. Of the verb *humaniser*, Furetière writes, ‘Devenir humain, traittable, familier [...] ce Tyran estoit cruel & orgueilleux, mais enfin il s’est *humanisé*’. However, for Sganarelle in *L’École des maris*, to become *humanisé* is to be defiled; for Jupiter, it involves assuming another man’s identity,

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<sup>32</sup> Campbell, Brunell, and Finkel, p. 74.

violating his wife, and purloining his genetic heritage. In this last point, Jupiter mirrors the concerns of Sganarelle in *Le Mariage forcé* and Monsieur Diafoirus, in their pursuit of offspring as extensions of their own selves. Sganarelle confesses to Géronimo, ‘je considère, qu’en demeurant comme je suis, je laisse périr dans le Monde la race des Sganarelles; et qu’en me mariant, je pourrai me voir revivre en d’autres moi-mêmes; que j’aurai le plaisir de voir des Créatures, qui seront sorties de moi’ (i). He ascribes pleasure to the thought of being encircled by youthful replicas of himself. And when one considers how Monsieur Diafoirus praises his son as his own reflection, it casts his vulgar comments about him into an utterly different light. When he claims that Thomas Diafoirus ‘possède en un degré louable la vertu prolifique, et qu’il est du tempérament qu’il faut pour engendrer et procréer des Enfants bien conditionnés’ (II, v), he is boasting about his own sexual prowess. Furthermore, this scene begins with a stage direction for Thomas Diafoirus that states he is a man ‘*qui fait toutes les choses de mauvaise grâce, et à contretemps*’ (II, v). This does not hint at any whiff of sensitivity as a lover. In fact, it makes Monsieur Diafoirus’s statement seem defensive and insecure.

As we see, narcissists are incapable of ‘love’ that is worthy of the name; they have solely an appetite for possession, and Bénichou’s remark is justified. For what is so arresting is that, repeatedly, this desire for possession gives the rise to the main plot.

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### 3.4 Two Special Cases

#### 3.4.1 Narcissistic Empathizers

Another question arises from this: to different degrees, some characters—namely Dorante, Sbrigani, Nérine, and even L’Amour—are all criminals, and yet, they aid in

bringing about happy resolutions for sympathetic young couples. Thus, their presence among their peers is of a mixed quality, as an effect of theatrical *double énonciation*: we in the audience are intended to like them; however, they have the potential to be dangerous. L'Amour is distinguished from the rest in that he *is* half of one such couple. Sbrigani and Nérine boast about each other's various crimes; Dorante essentially steals from Monsieur Jourdain; and L'Amour forcibly removes Psyché from her family, notably a loving and distraught father. Moreover, each of these characters actively hides his true identity, and they use physical disguises to do so. These four are Molière's 'narcissistic empathizers', which display the ambiguity of having high empathy and narcissism scores, at once.

A wily female *fourbe* in *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, Nérine claims to blush when Sbrigani praises her conniving and violent deeds, which include her false testimony that led to the hanging of two innocent people. In response, she claims, 'vos éloges me font rougir' (I, ii). When Nérine and Lucette pretend to be Monsieur de Pourceaugnac's wives, Nérine's entrance is accompanied by the indication that she is 'en Picarde' (II, viii). The interaction between the title character and the two women mimics that between Don Juan, Charlotte, and Mathurine, except that it is in reverse; it is the women who are in disguise and who bulldoze Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.

Questionable sincerity arises in the attire of Sbrigani, as well, who forebodingly tells Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, 'Vous regardez mon habit qui n'est pas fait comme les autres; mais je suis originaire de Naples, à votre service, et j'ai voulu conserver un peu et la manière de s'habiller, et la sincérité de mon Pays' (I, iii). Indeed, the only other references to Sbrigani's clothing in the play appear when he pretends to be a merchant to whom Pourceaugnac is indebted. At the start of the scene, a stage direction notes he is, 'en Marchand Flamand' (II, iii), and at the very

end, Sbrigani says to himself, ‘quittons notre ajustement de Flamand, pour songer à d’autres machines’ (II, iii). He has thus characterized his own appearance as a *machine*, of which the Académie française notes, ‘Se dit aussi fig. d’Une invention, d’une ruse, d’une adresse d’esprit dont on se sert dans quelque affaire’. However, in spite of his avowed crimes, and evident delight in meting out torture to Pourceaugnac, Sbrigani’s aid to Julie and Éraste makes him sympathetic, thus highlighting the liminal position of the narcissistic empathizer.

In the *Bourgeois gentilhomme*, Dorante pursues the *marquise* Dorimène by leading her to believe that he lavishes his own wealth on her, especially in giving her a brilliant diamond, when he is really borrowing large sums from Monsieur Jourdain. He uses social class as a lure and a weapon. When Dorante tells Dorimène, behind Monsieur Jourdain’s back, ‘C’est un bon Bourgeois assez ridicule, comme vous voyez, dans toutes ses manières’ (III, xvi), there is a stage direction that reads, ‘*Bas, à Dorimène*’, which implies he is in close proximity to her. He is the anti-Philinte, quietly driving a wedge—himself—between Monsieur Jourdain and the object of his affections, rather than mollifying the high tensions between Alceste and Oronte.

However, in the case of L’Amour in *Psyché*, his statements about his physical being and occupation are contradictory and extreme. On the one hand, he is conflicted about the pain and agony he has caused humankind. When Vénus commands him to make Psyché fall into unrequited love, ‘D’aimer, et n’être point aimée’ (*Prologue*, 158),<sup>33</sup> he pushes back initially, telling her, ‘On m’impute partout mille fautes commises’ (160). In the same vein, he tells Zéphire after kidnapping Psyché, ‘Il est temps de sortir de cette longue enfance’ (III, i, 964). But in the end, L’Amour

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<sup>33</sup> Ovid writes in the story of Narcissus, ‘At last one of these scorned youth, lifting up his hands to heaven, prayed: “So may he himself love, and not gain the thing he loves!” The goddess, Nemesis, heard his righteous prayer’. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses: Books I-VIII*, p. 153.

threatens to wreck havoc upon humankind and deities alike if he cannot have Psyché. He rages at Vénus, ‘Je vous blesserai tous là-haut pour des Mortelles, | Et ne décocherai sur elles | Que des traits émoussés qui forcent à hair’ (V, vi, 1984-6). This outburst of vindictive passion contradicts his earlier wishes for adulthood. He hovers in the borderland between childhood and maturity.

Likewise, his position is mixed, because he, an all-powerful deity, sets out to mask himself, but he does not achieve this completely. Upon seeing his human form, Zéphire tells L’Amour, ‘Cette taille, ces traits, et cet ajustement, | Cachent tout à fait qui vous êtes’ (III, i, 934-5). L’Amour explains to Zéphire that the motivation for his metamorphosis is to ‘cacher ce que je puis être | Aux yeux qui m’imposent des lois’ (III, i, 943-4). And yet, when Psyché lays eyes on him, she muses that he appears to be ‘un Dieu qui par Miracle | Daigne venir lui-même à mon secours!’ (III, iii, 1038-9). Thus, even though he has hidden his precise identity from her, her judgment of his appearance is accurate.

In terms of space, L’Amour reaches heights and depths that almost no other character in Molière’s work achieves, in both taking flight and falling to his knees, which also reflects his mixed personality. At the end of the *Prologue*, a stage direction indicates, ‘L’Amour s’envole’. Similarly, after Psyché forces L’Amour to reveal his identity, the text states: ‘L’Amour disparaît, et dans l’instant qu’il s’envole, le superbe jardin s’évanouit’ (IV, iii). Then, at the height of the play’s conflict, L’Amour implores Vénus, ‘Mais soyez moins inexorable | Aux prières, aux pleurs d’un Fils à vos genoux’ (V, v, 1930-1). Overcome with romantic love, L’Amour puts Psyché’s life ahead of his pride, abasing himself before his dangerously narcissistic mother.

Therefore, while this group of characters is highly narcissistic, and capable of inflicting distress with a certain amount of glee, their potential for harm is offset by the fact that they also appear at a high point on the empathy spectrum. Thus, these narcissistic empathizers are not really narcissists (and hence, would not be worthy of the moniker ‘empathising narcissist’); they can be helpful to the young lovers with whom we sympathize, although their competence for mischief is not to be taken lightly.

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#### 3.4.2 Super Narcissists

Within my Narcissistic Personality Inventory results (see Appendix 8), there are three characters whose scores are more than two standard deviations above average: the title characters of *Don Juan* and *Le Tartuffe* and Vénus in *Psyché*. These three characters are powerful in their ability to influence others, and are driven by combinations of greed, lust, and envy, to use others and then discard them. Unlike the narcissistic empathizers discussed in the previous section, they rely more on psychologically complex manipulation, in addition to disguises, to pursue their goals. For the happy resolution of each play, an ultimate authority, whether monarchical or divine, is required to intervene. Tartuffe is imprisoned, Don Juan is dragged into hellfire, and Vénus is relegated to the position of a beauty who will soon become a grandmother. The parallel here between imprisonment and death for male narcissists and aging for a female narcissist as supreme punishments certainly implies that for extreme female narcissists in particular, youth and beauty are all-important values, the loss of which is calamitous.

Additionally, Vénus may be the most threatening super narcissist, because, unlike the other two, who are effectively neutralized, she is immortal. But it must also

be noted of *Don Juan* and *Le Tartuffe* that they are plays about hypocrisy with religious repercussions.

Much has been observed in the psychological sciences about the worst forms of narcissism. For instance, Kernberg writes of the malignant kind, ‘These patients usually show severe and chronic failure in their work and profession, and chronic failure in their efforts to establish or maintain intimate relationships’.<sup>34</sup> While the place of Vénus in this description is questionable, it certainly applies to the dénouements for *Tartuffe* (‘failure in their work and profession’) and *Don Juan* (‘failure in their efforts to establish or maintain intimate relationships’). However, we do see Vénus emerge when Kernberg writes that malignant narcissists display ‘severe antisocial behaviour, significant paranoid trends, and self-directed or other-directed aggression’,<sup>35</sup> in her envious rage towards Psyché. And apart from their ‘remarkable lack of empathy’, Kernberg subsequently observes narcissists’ ‘shallowness in their emotional life, and a lack of capacity for commitment to relationships or goals’,<sup>36</sup> seemingly encapsulating all three super narcissists.

Furthermore, Clemence, Perry, and Plakun explain how highly afflicted narcissists blur the lines between self and other, writing,

The use of projective identification further suggests that these individuals become entangled in relationships in which they experience intense negative feelings, such as rage, envy, mistrust or hatred, but view their own feelings and related actions toward these individuals as driven by or originating in others.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Kernberg, p. 105.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>37</sup> Jill A. Clemence, J. Christopher Perry, and Eric M. Plakun, ‘Narcissistic and Borderline Personality Disorders in a Sample of Treatment Refractory Patients’, *Psychiatric Annals*, 39, 4 (2009), 175-84 (p. 183).

Thus, for a narcissist, nothing is ever his fault. He may exhibit uncontrollable anger and jealousy towards others (as do Vénus, Don Juan, and Tartuffe), but he brooks no responsibility for his own woes.

This sample of three characters, two male and one female, raises the question of the role of gender in narcissism. Indeed, the preceding chapter shows that male characters speak the noun *amour* in ways that express *amour-propre* more frequently than female characters. Furthermore, Clemence, Perry, and Plakun write of their study on Narcissistic Personality Disorder and Borderline Personality Disorder (a related non-empathetic condition), ‘A significant difference was found for gender, with the [Narcissistic Personality Disorder] group being predominantly male (66.7%), and the [Borderline Personality Disorder] group predominantly female (90.8%)’,<sup>38</sup> thus showing a strong majority of narcissists to be male. And Herzog connects parenting with this gender disparity, writing, ‘It is the particular vulnerability of the male child to paternal absence and his imperative need for the mother with father together representation, which skews the distribution of this disorder according to gender’.<sup>39</sup> Also emphasizing the tendency of the worst narcissists towards brutality, he continues, ‘Violence, intrapsychic and interpersonal, the end product of unmodulated and unorganized aggression, is the ultimate disintegration product of inadequate paternal authority’.<sup>40</sup> This complicates the denouements of *Le Tartuffe* and *Psyché*, in that in both cases, it is an ultimate *paternal* authority that steps in to resolve the conflict. With *Don Juan*, the protagonist hoodwinks his own paternal authority (Don Louis), and so the only force left that can dominate him is an unseen divine influence.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>39</sup> James M. Herzog, ‘Father Hunger and Narcissistic Deformation’, *Psychiatric Annals*, 39, 3 (2009), 156-63 (p. 163).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

While Don Juan and Vénus are both explicitly beautiful, Tartuffe is not. To this end, Dorine provides the most specific accounts of Tartuffe's person. First, she says that he arrived at their house shoeless, and that his clothing 'valait bien six deniers' (I, i, 64). Later, she describes Tartuffe's 'yeux farouches' (I, ii, 205), and says his overall appearance is 'Gros, et gras, le teint frais, et la bouche vermeille' (I, iv, 234). Later, she notes of Tartuffe, 'Il a l'oreille rouge, et le teint bien fleuri' (II, iii, 647). The plumpness and high colour she describes gives the impression of an inveterate pleasure-seeker, contrasting with the studied cheapness of his attire.

Telling Orgon that Mariane would cuckold Tartuffe, she describes him as having 'l'encolure' (II, ii, 538) for it. The *Dictionnaire* of the Académie française says of the word *encolure*, 'On dit fig. d'Un homme qui a la mine d'un sot'. Furetière writes of *encolure*, 'Mine, apparence. Ce jeune homme a toute l'*encolure* d'un sot. Cet homme qui étoit près de vous a toute l'*encolure* d'estre celui qui vous a pris vostre bourse'. With Furetière's last example, Tartuffe certainly fits the description, since this is exactly what he attempts to do to Orgon and his family. Therefore, the description of Tartuffe's physical attributes communicates clearly for the audience the substance of the real Tartuffe's personality.

As discussed earlier, Molière's narcissists clash with codes of decorum surrounding sex, and Tartuffe does so almost immediately when he first appears, by drawing attention to Dorine's breasts. He demands of her, 'Couvrez ce Sein, que je ne saurais voir' (III, ii, 860), implying that she wounds him with wantonness. However, she promptly turns his insult back on him, saying, 'à convoiter, moi, je ne suis point si prompte' (III, ii, 866), insinuating that it is he who sees sex everywhere.

In terms of movement and posture, Orgon describes Tartuffe as perpetually 'à deux genoux' (I, v, 284) in church, and then we see him 'à genoux' (III, vi, 1105)

before the older man when Damis accuses him of pursuing Elmire. Though Tartuffe manipulates Orgon by accusing himself, his self-accusations present one moment when Tartuffe offers the truth about himself. It seems plausible that what he says directly to Damis might be true, as well, and his speech amounts to a confession, because he reveals not only his culpability with respect to Orgon, but what criminal activity he has gotten away with in the past. Tartuffe tells Orgon, ‘Vous fiez-vous, mon Frère, à mon extérieur? | Et pour tout ce qu’on voit, me croyez-vous meilleur? | Non, non, vous vous laissez tromper à l’apparence’ (III, vi, 1095-7). Whilst kneeling, he returns to the scenes of his crimes verbally, saying to Damis,

Oui, mon cher Fils, parlez, traitez-moi de perfide,  
 D’infâme, de perdu, de voleur, d’homicide.  
 Accablez-moi de noms encor plus détestés.  
 Je n’y contredis point, je les ai mérités.  
 (III, vi, 1101-4)

These lines are similar to the confession at the end of *Amphitryon*, when Jupiter admits to his wrongdoings, fully anticipating the cuckolded husband to accept what has transpired. Tartuffe eases the burden of his secrets on himself, whilst bragging to Damis and the audience—via *double énonciation*—about his accomplishments. Tartuffe flaunts his crimes and fits into the picture of ‘malignant narcissism’, which is ‘characterized by seething anger, interpersonal manipulateness, pursuit of interpersonal power and control, lack of remorse, exaggerated self-importance, and feelings of privilege’.<sup>41</sup> At the play’s climax, the Exempt reveals of Tartuffe’s past, ‘Et c’est un long détail d’actions toutes noires, | Dont on pourrait former des Volumes d’Histoires’ (V, vii, 1925-6). This lends credence to the view that his kneeling speech is a confession.

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<sup>41</sup> Eric Russ, Jonathan Shedler, Rebekah Bradley, and Drew Weston, ‘Refining the Construct of Narcissistic Personality Disorder: Diagnostic Criteria and Subtypes’, *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 165, 11 (2008), 1473-81 (p. 1479).

Testimony of Don Juan's youth and pulchritude comes early in the play. In the opening scene of *Don Juan*, Sganarelle excuses his master's behaviour, telling Gusman, 'il est trop jeune encore' (I, i). And when Pierrot speaks of the men he saved from drowning, Charlotte inquires if there is one amongst them who is, 'mieux fait que les autres' (II, i); the peasant confirms that there is.

Indeed, Don Juan presents the most insidious case of a character relishing his own beauty. Also, he uses invocations of beauty to manipulate others. For instance, when he senses Charlotte's hesitancy, he praises her appearance, saying, 'votre beauté vous assure de tout; quand on est faite comme vous, on doit être à couvert de toutes ces sortes de créances' (II, ii). Of course, to her, he is completely insincere. However, if one views his discourse on feminine beauty as a thinly veiled encomium of his own allure, and a psychological projection, it throws his earlier musings into a different light. When he tells Sganarelle, 'pour moi, la beauté me ravit partout où je la trouve' (I, ii), one might suggest that what he means is: 'Pour moi, *je* me ravit partout où *je me* trouve', again, because feminine beauty does not truly ravish him—it is simply territory to be conquered in affirmation of his own superlative charms.

With respect to his skin, we see a conflict between Don Juan's apparent willingness to be seen naked by complete strangers, but his inability to show his face to his wife. When she confronts him, Done Elvire says, 'puis-je au moins espérer que vous daigniez tourner le visage de ce côté!' (I, iii). But after Pierrot has rescued him, he states that he has seen Don Juan and his men with their clothes off, saying, 'ils se sont dépouillés tous nus pour se sécher' (*Don Juan*, II, i). This piques Charlotte's sexual curiosity, for a moment later she asks of Don Juan, 'Est-il encore cheu toi tout nu, Piarrot?' (II, i). Furthermore, Don Juan's skin reflects his interior state; his father demands, 'ne rougissez-vous point de mériter si peu votre naissance; êtes-vous en

droit, dites-moi, d'en tirer quelque vanité?' (IV, iv). Consistent with other narcissists, his disrespect for codes of conduct is reflected in the lack of any signs of shame visible in his face.

Depicting someone who takes his appearance very seriously, both Sganarelle and Pierrot provide accounts of Don Juan's clothing. When Sganarelle criticizes a hypothetical master, he describes this master (obviously Don Juan) as having 'une perruque blonde et bien frisée, des plumes à votre chapeau, un habit bien doré, et des rubans couleur de feu' (I, ii). And speaking to Charlotte, Pierrot says of Don Juan and his entourage, 'il a du dor à son habit tout depuis l'haut jusque en bas' (II, i); and then, 'ils ont des cheveux qui ne tenent point à leur tête' (II, i). Their finery also includes, 'tant de rubans, tant de rubans' (II, i). Thus, Pierrot, corroborates Sganarelle's account. Don Juan is dressed to gleam like the sun; in other words, he draws attention to himself and intimidates with his clothing.

In terms of action, Don Juan engages in flurries of physical activity. When Pierrot quarrels with him, Don Juan is described as, '*le poussant*' (II, iii). Upon spotting the plight of Don Carlos, he runs to join the fight (III, ii). Don Juan fits into the 'high-functioning' narcissistic subtype; such narcissists 'have an exaggerated sense of self-importance but are also articulate, energetic, and outgoing'.<sup>42</sup> This is indeed true of Don Juan in the short-term; his risking himself for Don Carlos prevents Don Alonso from immediately killing him.

Don Juan has, therefore, an understanding of *honneur* as purely an action of combat. This is not the sense that Don Louis gives this term when he explains to his son, 'nous n'avons part à la gloire de nos ancêtres qu'autant que nous nous efforçons de leur ressembler' (IV, iv). He adds that, to have *honneur*, one must 'suivre les pas

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

qu'ils nous tracent' (IV, iv). Thus, being noble requires that one actively engage in a kind of empathy (a temporal form of communion with those who lived in the past).

The final physical description of Don Juan comes from the man himself; he cries, 'Ô Ciel que sens-je? un feu invisible me brûle, je n'en puis plus et tout mon corps devient...' (V, vi). It is significant that, in his last moments, he describes not some emotional feeling of regret or indignation or loss, but his ultimate physical sensations. And it is interesting that he feels a flame in death, when in life, he constantly chases women in order to avoid feeling dead. While living, he feels dead, and when dying, he feels more alive, and as such, this denouement for Don Juan reveals the essential emptiness of narcissism.

In *Psyché*, when she first appears in the *Prologue*, Vénus makes an august entrance; a stage direction reads, 'Vénus descend du Ciel dans une grande Machine avec l'Amour son Fils'. The lone female super narcissist, Vénus's most immediate attribute is, obviously, her beauty. Vénus is arguably the female character in Molière's work that most closely resembles a celebrity, in terms of fame and worship.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, Young and Pinsky's finding that famous women are largely more narcissistic than famous men is relevant to her; they write that, 'female celebrities might have a greater preoccupation with their physical appearance compared to their male counterparts'.<sup>44</sup> Fittingly, by invoking the judgment of Paris, Vénus illustrates how her beauty establishes her place within the divine hierarchy. She boasts, 'Moi, dont les yeux ont mis deux grandes Déeses | Au point de me céder le prix de la plus belle' (*Prologue*, 109-10). Accordingly, *Psyché* offers an unflattering

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<sup>43</sup> The 2010 London production of Martin Crimp's adaptation of *Le Misanthrope*—which transforms Célimène into Jennifer, an American film starlet—featured the British film star Keira Knightley in this role, presenting Célimène quite literally as a celebrity.

<sup>44</sup> S. Mark Young and Drew Pinsky, 'Narcissism and celebrity', *Journal of Research in Personality*, 40, 5 (2006), 463-71 (p. 467).

portrait of women's relations with their female peers. A parallel is established between the *Prologue* and the first scene, between Vénus ranking ahead of Junon and Pallas and Psyché ranking ahead of Aglaure and Cidippe. And even though Vénus and Psyché are simply at the pinnacles of beauty pyramids in their respective spheres, Vénus is blind to this similarity between herself and her upstart mortal rival.

When discussing Elmire's use of the verb *dévisager* in *Le Tartuffe*, I noted Furetière's first definition; however, the second definition includes an example that is both unflattering to women and applies to Vénus. Furetière writes, 'On le dit même des égratignures [...] Si vous reprochez à une vieille son âge, elle taschera de vous *devisager*'. In a metaphorical and literal sense, this is what Vénus exacts on Psyché, out of envy and insecurity about aging. After all, Zéphire tells L'Amour, 'Votre mère Vénus est de l'humeur des belles | Qui n'aiment point de grands enfants' (III, i, 974-5). Thus, when she claims to deplore her son's desire to wed a mortal woman, 'un Hymen dont je rougis' (V, vi, 2012), her blushing is caused, rather, by her dismay at the thought of becoming a grandmother and growing older.<sup>45</sup>

As a love deity who throughout *Psyché* exhibits nothing short of raging hatred, Vénus is a hypocrite. And likewise, *Don Juan* and *Le Tartuffe* are both plays about hypocrisy and religion. Therefore, it is important to consider that the Christian message, 'That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another' (John 13:34), is an injunction for empathy. Clearly, all three plays, devoted to super narcissists, are necessarily opposed to this religious message, as well as to empathy.

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<sup>45</sup> La Fontaine has envious Junon and Cérés introduce the possibility of grandchildren to Vénus in a moment of pure spite: 'Quel plaisir quand elle tiendrait entre les bras un petit Amour qui ressemblerait à son père!' Her reaction, writes La Fontaine, is also a blush: 'Vénus demeura piquée de ce propos-là: le rouge lui monta au front'. See Jean de La Fontaine, *Les Amours de Psyché et de Cupidon* [1669], ed. by Françoise Charpentier (Paris: Flammarion, 1990), p. 169.

### 3.5 Conclusion

The high incidence of narcissists in this sample of Molière's theatre suggests that narcissism is compelling on stage; that the prevalence of the disorder in everyday life is perhaps significantly underestimated; and that the impact of narcissists in the everyday is enormous.

Recent work in psychology argues that young people today are more narcissistic than were previous generations.<sup>46</sup> Convincing as much of this evidence may be, when coupled with Molière's portrayal of narcissists, what seems more likely than a generational shift is that the human race, regardless of the era, is much more narcissistic than we flatter ourselves to think. And as Pinker asserts, our empathy is changeable; he writes, 'It can be switched on and off, or thrown into reverse, by our construal of the relationship we have with a person'.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, in his study of psychopathy, psychiatrist Hervey Cleckley shows that in a psychiatric hospital setting, as many as 20% of patients may be afflicted with this other zero-empathy condition.<sup>48</sup> Then, he troublingly asserts, 'Although the incidence of this disorder is at present impossible to establish statistically or even to estimate accurately, I am willing to express the opinion that it is exceedingly high'.<sup>49</sup> This opinion is supported by Molière's work and is made visible by his dramaturgical techniques, perhaps especially by the fact that his most famous plays—*Le Tartuffe* and *Don Juan*, which remain in contemporary repertoires, and *Psyché*, which was his largest production in his own time—are focused upon super narcissists.

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<sup>46</sup> See Jean M. Twenge, *Generation Me* (New York: Free Press, 2006); and Jean M. Twenge and W. Keith Campbell, *The Narcissism Epidemic* (New York: Free Press, 2009).

<sup>47</sup> Pinker, p. 591.

<sup>48</sup> Hervey Cleckley, *The Mask of Sanity* (New York: Plume, 1982), p. 12.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

## Chapter 4

### Cognition and Change

#### 4.1 Introduction

Following the previous chapter's exploration of the visible signs of Molière's empathizers and narcissists, manifested through their adherence to or breaking of social codes, this chapter will analyse the various ways in which his characters think,<sup>1</sup> and specifically, their individual capacities for mindreading, a mental process and imaginative act that is a close cognate of empathy. Describing empathy as 'a mode of cognition',<sup>2</sup> Kohut insists that, 'Nonempathic forms of cognition are dominant in the adult'.<sup>3</sup> And clearly, empathy-free 'forms of cognition' are present in narcissists, of whose thinking Freud writes,

[E]ven great criminals and humourists, as they are represented in literature, compel our interest by the narcissistic consistency with which they manage to keep away from their ego anything that would diminish it. It is as if we envied them for maintaining a blissful state of mind—an unassailable libidinal position which we ourselves have since abandoned.<sup>4</sup>

This observation deserves careful consideration. First of all, Freud is concerned specifically with literary characters he describes as 'great', implying of superior achievement and, probably as a corollary, intelligence. Secondly, by drawing a parallel between 'criminals and humourists' as being marked by 'great' minds and narcissism, Freud highlights why comic texts should be of particular interest for the study of self-

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<sup>1</sup> Cognitive approaches to literature have gained increasing attention in the last decade. For instance, see 'Literature as an Object of Knowledge', dir. by Terence Cave, in *The Balzan Project* <[www.sjc.ox.ac.uk/3122/The-Balzan-Project.html](http://www.sjc.ox.ac.uk/3122/The-Balzan-Project.html)> [accessed 2 March 2014]

<sup>2</sup> Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, p. 300.

<sup>3</sup> Kohut, *The Search for the Self*, I, p. 451-2.

<sup>4</sup> Freud, 'On Narcissism', p. 32.

love. While in Molière's work, empathizers and narcissists, and all gradations in between, run the gamut from extreme cleverness to brainless buffoonery, the narcissistic empathizers (Dorante in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, Sbrigani and Nérine in *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, and L'Amour in *Psyché*) and the super narcissists (the title characters of *Le Tartuffe* and *Don Juan*, and Vénus in *Psyché*), as identified in the previous chapter, are all marked by intelligence and by criminality. In this way, Molière's work confirms Freud's assertion. Indeed, Freud's words are in concert with what Molière himself writes in one of the central texts of the quarrel surrounding *Le Tartuffe*, the *Premier placet* to the King. Abridging the criticisms he faced, Molière states the position of his detractors: 'ma Comédie, sans l'avoir vue, est diabolique, et diabolique mon cerveau; je suis un Démon vêtu de chair, et habillé en Homme; un Libertin; un Impie, digne d'un supplice exemplaire'.<sup>5</sup> He points to both *Le Tartuffe* and his brain as equal and primary targets. Therefore, thinking is an essential component in considering the behaviour of empathizers and narcissists alike, expressly in a comic context.

Furthermore, mindreading is also an essential skill in theatrical production, perhaps especially so when the playwright is long deceased and is, therefore, unable to answer questions that arise when performers interpret the text. Notably, there are very few stage directions in Molière's plays—typical for classical French drama—leaving plenty of blank spaces for the actors, directors, and spectators to fill with their own imaginations. And, drawing attention to the spectator-like qualities of psychological research, Kohut claims that,

Empathy is an essential constituent of psychological observation and is therefore of special importance for the psychoanalyst, who, as an empirical scientist, must

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<sup>5</sup> Molière, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Forestier and Bourqui, II, p. 192.

first perceive the complex psychological configurations that are the raw data of human experience before he can attempt to explain them.<sup>6</sup>

Hence, a spectator is perhaps even more of an empirical scientist than the psychoanalyst, because of the helpful distance between the audience and stage. Even though this chapter will investigate mindreading—again, the attribution of emotional states—as it occurs between the fictional characters on stage, the following chapter, with recourse to the concept of the *double énonciation*, will look at the interchange of emotional states as it occurs between the stage and the audience.

That thinking is a component of empathy and that Molière's brain was implicated in this extremely contentious and long-lasting quarrel lead one to ask, what role does thinking play in the process of empathy? Baron-Cohen says that empathy is related to 'our ability to identify what someone else is thinking or feeling, and to respond to their thoughts and feelings with an appropriate emotion',<sup>7</sup> and de Waal further emphasizes this two-pronged conception, writing, 'It is this combination of emotional arousal, which makes us care, and a cognitive approach, which helps us appraise the situation, that marks empathic perspective-taking. These two sides need to be in balance'.<sup>8</sup> Highlighting a different quality, Kohut explains, 'Empathy is the mode by which one gathers psychological data about other people and, when they say what they think or feel, imagines their inner experience even though it is not open to direct observation'.<sup>9</sup> In dramaturgical terms, Dandrey echoes Kohut:

Entre le masque caricatural de la dupe et celui, discret et efficace, du mystificateur, Molière a placé un intermédiaire qui n'existe pas sur la scène

<sup>6</sup> Kohut, *The Search for the Self*, I, p. 451.

<sup>7</sup> Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy*, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> De Waal, *The Age of Empathy*, p. 100.

<sup>9</sup> Kohut, *The Search for the Self*, I, p. 450-1.

italienne et qui va faire rentrer en force le naturel et une sorte de vraisemblance dans l'intrigue de *Pourceaugnac*: cet intermédiaire, sur lequel le diagnostic de mélancolie pointe l'index, c'est [...] l'imagination.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, the imagination plays a central role in the plays as well as for the audience's understanding.

What do the words and actions of Molière's characters tell us about the mental processes of empathizers compared to those of narcissists? This chapter will address this question and progress from investigating conceptions of the head and brain, to different kinds of mindreading, to finally addressing whether or not narcissists can change, and whether this can be enacted through thinking or feeling. Within each section, my discussion will treat empathetic and narcissistic characters (see Appendices 7 and 8) side-by-side, moving from simpler examples to ones that are more complicated.

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## 4.2 Brains and Actions

### 4.2.1 The Human Head

Much as we have seen in the second chapter that the noun *cœur* is an important one in Molière's empathy and narcissism vocabulary—indeed, it is the single most-spoken word in the lexis and the only word that appears in all 33 plays (see Appendix 4)—the nouns *cerveau*, *cervelle*, and *tête* are also significant in revealing the psychology of Molière's characters.<sup>11</sup> Through his invocation of different characters' brains and heads, we may probe whether or not this organ leads to behaviour that is more empathetic or narcissistic.

<sup>10</sup> Dandrey, *La Médecine et la maladie dans l'œuvre de Molière*, II, p. 186.

<sup>11</sup> The *Dictionnaire* of the Académie française defines the noun *cerveau* as, 'La partie intérieure de la tête contenue dans le crâne, laquelle est le principe du mouvement & du sentiment [...] On l'emploie quelquefois pour signifier Esprit'. Of the noun *cervelle*, it writes, 'La partie molle du cerveau [...] Il se prend aussi pour tout le cerveau', and 'Il signifie fig. L'entendement, le jugement'. Finally, of the noun

It is useful to begin by considering the uniqueness with which the playwright characterizes his characters' brains. For example, in *L'Étourdi*, empathetic Mascarille narrates his mind at work; he plots to Lélie, 'Laissez-moi quelque temps rêver à cette affaire' (I, ii, 75). However, narcissistic Lélie is impatient, and Mascarille pushes back, telling him, 'Ma cervelle toujours marche à pas mesurés' (I, ii, 78). His mental creativity requires both latitude ('rêver') and sufficient time, even leisure. The implication of Mascarille's words is that the individual brain has its own specific rhythm.

Similarly, when Gros-René informs Marinette that Éraste is jealous of Valère in *Le Dépit amoureux*, Marinette says, incredulously, 'De Valère? Ha! vraiment la pensée est bien belle! | Elle peut seulement naître en votre cervelle!' (I, ii, 105-6), thus differentiating Éraste by means of his anxious brain. Then, turning her attention to her own suitor, she asks Gros-René, 'Ta tête de ce mal est-elle aussi frappée?' (I, ii, 110), thereby equating *tête* with *cervelle*. Assuring her that he is not the jealous sort, Gros-René tells Marinette frankly, 'L'opinion que j'ai de moi-même est trop bonne | Pour croire auprès de moi que quelque autre te plût' (I, ii, 114-5). This unabashed expression of self-regard implies a directional impact: that self-love influences brain functioning.

Continuing in this vein, the empathetic chevalier in *La Critique de l'École des femmes* brushes off the laughter of the Marquis, identifying such insecurity as the product of a narcissistic brain. Dorante says, 'Ris tant que tu voudras; je suis pour le bon sens, et ne saurais souffrir les ébullitions de cerveau de nos Marquis de Mascarille' (v).

According to Furetière, the noun *esbullition* means, 'Action par laquelle on fait bouillir';

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*teste*, it states, 'Chef. la partie de l'animal, qui tient au reste du corps par le col, & qui est le siege des organes des sens'.

he also writes, ‘On le dit aussi du sang qui bout dans les veines’.<sup>12</sup> Hence, Dorante defines the impulse to contradict the opinion of the *parterre* in order to raise one’s own social standing and prestige as the action of an overheated, unreasonable brain.

For many of Molière’s narcissistic personages, drawing attention literally to the contents of their heads is a source of pride. Speaking with G ronte in *Le M decin malgr  lui*, Sganarelle claims to store vast medical knowledge inside his skull, or ‘L -dedans’, which is prefaced by the stage direction, ‘*se touchant le front*’ (II, iii). It is much like a gesture performed by the narcissistic Sganarelle of *L’ cole des maris* when Ariste refuses to believe that his ward and intended, L onor, has eloped with Val re. Sganarelle comments snidely to his older brother, ‘par ma foi, l’ ge ne sert de gu re | Quand on n’a pas cela’ (III, v, 975-6), referring to what is located in one’s head: a brain.

An interesting counterpoint to this brain-worship occurs when another Sganarelle, questioning Don Juan about his beliefs, focuses on his own thoughts instead. Articulating an explicit awareness of cognition, he shows his miscomprehension of its limits when he marvels, ‘cela n’est-il pas merveilleux que me voil  ici; et que j’aie quelque chose dans la t te qui pense cent choses diff rentes en un moment, et fait de mon corps tout ce qu’elle veut!’ (III, i). He lists the different ways in which he controls various body parts, after which a stage direction states that he falls down, thus disproving his point. This illustrates Bergson’s argument that we laugh at what seems mechanical.<sup>13</sup> As presented by

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<sup>12</sup> Richelet writes of * bullition*, ‘Ce mot se dit en parlant de sang  chauff , & ce sont des humeurs acres & chaudes qui poussent la peau’, and the Acad mie fran aise writes, ‘Espece de maladie qui cause sur la peau des esleveures ou taches rouges’.

<sup>13</sup> Bergson writes, ‘Ce qu’il y a de risible dans un cas comme dans l’autre, c’est une certaine *raideur de m canique* l  o  l’on voudrait trouver de la souplesse attentive et la vivante flexibilit  d’une personne’. Later, describing this more precisely, he elaborates that at the moment when we see a human body as ‘une mati re inerte pos e sur une  nergie vivante’, that this is when the feeling of the comic is triggered. See

Sganarelle, the brain is indeed an autonomous force, and its link with his body is clearly not well fitted.

Moreover, it is interesting to consider the ways Molière's characters dress their heads. In her sociological study of what humans wear, Lurie writes, 'Traditionally whatever is worn on the head, whether or not it grows there naturally, is a sign of the mind beneath it. The hat therefore, like the hair, expresses ideas and opinions'.<sup>14</sup> This principle appears to hold true for Molière's empathizers and narcissists, alike. For instance, describing Hyacinte to Scapin, empathetic Octave says, 'sa coiffure était une Cornette jaune, retroussée au haut de sa tête, qui laissait tomber en désordre ses cheveux sur ses épaules' (*Les Fourberies de Scapin*, I, ii). Her messy hairstyle mirrors her emotional distress. In turn, this enhances Octave's sensitivity to her suffering, thereby strengthening his sympathy and love. Providing a narcissistic point of contrast, when Harpagon returns from his garden, hunting for his *cassette* in a panic, he is '*sans chapeau*' (*L'Avare*, IV, vii). This absence of a head covering reveals his mental state: since Harpagon's money *is* himself, his head is emptied out when his wealth is stolen. But due to his self-love, the audience is disinclined to sympathize with him, unlike Hyacinte, whom, it should be noted, the audience sees in her disordered grieving through the lens of Octave's description.

Furthermore, given the exposed nature of the head, making it susceptible to harm, the way that humans shelter them is of meaningful concern. Lurie adds, 'many hats also have a protective function, shielding their wearers from extremes of climate and from

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Henri Bergson, *Le Rire: Essai sur la signification du comique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), p. 8, 38.

<sup>14</sup> Alison Lurie, *The Language of Clothes* (New York: Random House, 1981), p. 176.

human aggression'.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, for Molière's brittle narcissists, hats and their absence indicate their hierarchical vulnerabilities, as well as threats to their self-images. For instance, in *L'École des femmes*, when Arnolphe and Alain converse face-to-face, there is a stage direction that reads, '*Arnolphe ôte par trois fois le chapeau de dessus la tête d'Alain*' (I, ii). He berates his servant, saying, 'Qui vous apprend, impertinente bête, | À parler devant moi, le chapeau sur la tête?' (I, ii, 223-4). He recognizes that this sign of impoliteness reflects what Alain thinks of him, and he cannot tolerate the lack of respect he considers his due. Conversely, narcissistic *précieuse* Cathos derides the attire of Du Croisy and La Grange, sneering pitilessly about 'un chapeau désarmé de plumes; une tête irrégulière en cheveux' (iv). The young men's hats and hair signal to her their unworthiness of her and her cousin's affections, and therefore, her own superiority. And in a somewhat different case, narcissistic Sganarelle in *L'École des maris* eschews the fashions of young people, pouring his scorn on 'ces petits chapeaux | Qui laissent éventer leurs débiles cerveaux' (I, i, 25-6). Subsequently, he informs Ariste, 'Je veux une coiffure en dépit de la mode, | Sous qui toute ma tête ait un abri commode' (I, i, 67-8). According to Sganarelle's formulation, the *cerveaux* of others are worthy of scorn, and his own *tête* is an instrument for distinguishing himself from—and looking down on—his fellow men.

In addition to this, Molière's narcissists go so far as to objectify their own brains to achieve their ends. At the denouement of *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, the titular narcissist escapes persecution for his chicanery by feigning a deadly head injury. Scapin's confidant Carle informs everyone, 'il lui est tombé sur la tête un Marteau de Tailleur de Pierre, qui lui a brisé l'os, et découvert toute la cervelle' (III, xii), thereby

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

demanding their pity. In the subsequent scene, Scapin's stage direction reads that he appears with '*la tête entourée de linges, comme s'il avait été bien blessé*' (III, xiii). The bandages on his head are like a mask would be for his face; his final act of bravado is, therefore, unmasking his *tête* and *cerveau*, both fully intact. In exploiting his brain as an object, Scapin uses it to showcase his creative talents, thus gaining glory. The virtuosic, rapid quality of his thinking is Scapin's major source of ego-inflation, but the fact that he objectifies his gift shows that he has little real respect for its power, in the way that a narcissist simultaneously loves his false self and loathes his empty true-self. In contrast, self-loathing George Dandin threatens genuine harm to his *tête* with his final words: 'lorsqu'on a comme moi épousé une méchante femme, le meilleur parti qu'on puisse prendre, c'est de s'aller jeter dans l'eau la tête la première' (III, viii). This way, his intent towards his head shows the weakness of his most fundamental *intérêt*.

However, the brain is also characterized by its psychological vulnerability, and in this way it is a target of narcissistic characters, like the doctors who attempt to 'treat' the risible Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, whilst actually driving him to the edge of his sanity. The *Second médecin* recommends for the *Limousin*, among other things, 'de lui composer un fronteau où il entre du sel; le sel est symbole de la sagesse: de faire blanchir les murailles de sa chambre, pour dissiper les ténèbres de ses esprits' (I, viii).<sup>16</sup> Furetière states that a *fronteau* is, 'Remede sec qu'on applique sur le front avec un bandeau pour guerir des maux de teste & la migraine'. Ironically, he purports to want to soothe

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<sup>16</sup> In her first book, *The Decoration of Houses*, the American novelist Edith Wharton writes about designing spaces for children to learn in, and her words confirm that there may be some good sense in the doctor's recommendations. She argues, 'Above all, the walls should not be overcrowded. The importance of preserving in the school-room bare wall-spaces of uniform tint has hitherto been little considered; but teachers are beginning to understand the value of these spaces in communicating to the child's brain a sense of repose which diminishes mental and physical restlessness'. See Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman, *The Decoration of Houses* [1897] (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), p. 180.

Pourceaugnac's *tête*, all while whipping him into a mass of confusion. Further along, speaking to the *Premier médecin* about Pourceaugnac's resistance to his treatments, narcissistic empathizer Sbrigani comments, 'C'est être bien ennemi de soi-même, que de fuir des remèdes aussi salutaires que les vôtres' (II, i), to which the narcissistic doctor adds gravely, 'Marque d'un cerveau démonté, et d'une raison dépravée, que de ne vouloir pas guérir' (II, i). In his estimation, Pourceaugnac is an anosognosiac, who lacks awareness of his disease.

Furthermore, the brain can leave one open to those who wish to inflict profound harm, even death, like super narcissist Vénus. Having opened the container of the beauty of Proserpine requested by Vénus, Psyché narrates its toxic effect just before she collapses, and this effect is on her brain. She cries out, 'Quelles vapeurs m'offusquent le cerveau, | Et que vois-je sortir de cette Boîte ouverte?' (*Psyché*, V, iii, 1827-8). The Académie française *Dictionnaire* states that the verb *offusquer* means, 'Empescher de voir, d'estre vû, obscurcir', and also, 'On dit fig. que *Les vapeurs du vin offusquent le cerveau* [...] pour dire, que Les vapeurs du vin troublent le cerveau'. Therefore, this last blow that Vénus (indirectly) deals to her rival in beauty—in order to eliminate her as a love object for L'Amour—is to impair Psyché's thinking and seeing and ultimately kill her. Thus, this *tragédie-ballet* underlines the primacy of cognition and vision in the sustaining of love, even empathy.

In sum, although the *cerveau* or *cervelle*, and by extension the *tête*, are important in the dynamics of love, they are also vulnerable to attack and to being used to deliver narcissistic supply. The invocation of the brain can be a sign of empathy that is, indeed, absent.

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#### 4.2.2 Thinking process

Since knowledge of the brain as an object can often serve to enhance pride, how do empathizers and narcissists differ in their thinking processes? The answer appears to lie in their abilities to engage *imagination*<sup>17</sup> and *réflexion*. Of the former, the *Dictionnaire* of the Académie française writes, ‘La faculté de l’ame qui imagine’; of the latter, it states, ‘L’action de l’esprit qui reflechit. Meditation serieuse, Consideration attentive sur quelque chose’. In order to clarify the distinction between these two nouns, it is helpful to look at their verb forms. Of *imaginer*, this dictionary states, ‘Former quelque chose dans son idée, dans son esprit’, and of *réfléchir*, it notes, ‘Penser meurement, & plus d’une fois à une chose’. Thus, while both involve the *esprit*, one action is generative (‘former quelque chose’) and also involves the *âme*, and the other is deliberative (‘penser murement’) and characterized by repetition.

With respect to *âme* and *esprit*, the first definitions given by the Académie française provide a useful point of distinction between the two concepts. Of *âme*, it writes, ‘Ce qui est le principe de la vie dans les choses vivantes’, while of *esprit*, it states, ‘Substance vivante & incorporelle. Il se dit de Dieu’. So both are ‘vivante’, but *âme* is a component of corporeal beings, while *esprit* applies more immediately to the divine. Indeed, in his fable ‘L’Homme et son image’, dedicated to La Rochefoucauld, La Fontaine relates the story of a man he calls ‘notre Narcisse’,<sup>18</sup> concluding of humanity:

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<sup>17</sup> As we have seen in the second chapter, Cureau de la Chambre credits the *imagination* with causing one’s love object to appear ‘beaucoup plus parfaite qu’elle n’est en effet’. See Section 2.4.2.

<sup>18</sup> La Fontaine, *Fables* [1668-1694], ed. by Antoine Adam (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1966), p. 60, line 11.

‘Notre âme, c’est cet Homme amoureux de lui-même’,<sup>19</sup> thereby casting the *âme* as the equivalent of an *homme*. Also, it is worth noting here that Bergson relates the cognition of the *homme d’esprit* explicitly to the theatrical:

Au sens le plus large du mot, il semble qu’on appelle esprit une certaine manière *dramatique* de penser. Au lieu de manier ses idées comme des symboles indifférents, l’homme d’esprit les voit, les entend, et surtout les fait dialoguer entre elles comme des personnes. Il les met en scène, et lui-même, un peu, se met en scène aussi. Un peuple spirituel est aussi un peuple épris du théâtre.<sup>20</sup>

Here, the meaning of *esprit* is ‘wit’.

That empathy is a notion that requires use of the imagination may seem obvious; nonetheless, it is interesting to see how Molière’s characters illustrate this idea. For example, in narrating her own thinking process, Martine questions herself, ‘Ne puis-je point trouver quelque invention pour me venger?’ (*Le Médecin malgré lui*, I, iv); this line is accompanied by the stage direction, ‘*Rêvant à part elle*’. According to the Académie française, the verb *inventer* means, ‘Trouver quelque chose de nouveau par la force de son esprit, de son imagination’.<sup>21</sup> Thus, she seeks to punish her husband’s violence towards her through some creative means, and she succeeds. Her machinations result in Sganarelle’s being beaten, as he beat her; she thus forces him into a physical understanding of her feelings.

Additionally, the use of the imagination entails seeing things that are not present. Molière addresses this directly in the *Au lecteur* preceding *L’Amour médecin*, when he encourages a kind of reading that is active. He writes, ‘On sait bien que les Comédies ne sont faites que pour être jouées, et je ne conseille de lire celle-ci qu’aux personnes qui ont

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 61, line 24.

<sup>20</sup> Bergson, p. 80.

<sup>21</sup> According to the *Dictionnaire* of the Académie française, the noun *invention* means, ‘Qualité, faculté, disposition de l’esprit à inventer [...] Il se prend aussi pour l’action d’inventer, & pour la chose inventée’.

des yeux pour découvrir dans la lecture tout le jeu du Théâtre'.<sup>22</sup> In this instance, the eyes are synonymous with the imagination. Consequently, reading a play and imagining what is not spelled out is a kind of textual mindreading. And naturally, this can be carried into situations beyond the context of reading, like when Scapin connects with Octave's storytelling and finds the drama in it. He tells the young man of Hyacinte, 'sans l'avoir vue, je vois bien qu'elle était tout à fait charmante' (I, ii), showing himself to possess 'des yeux pour découvrir dans la lecture tout le jeu du Théâtre'. In this example, we can begin to see how narcissists, like Scapin, can indeed prove talented in the theatre, and this is a subject I will address in the following chapter.

Considering Freud's characterisation of narcissistic 'criminals and humourists' as 'great', it is therefore the mark of an empathizer to be modest about one's intelligence and imagination. We have seen how narcissists seek to isolate themselves intellectually and physically from others (for example, Alceste); thus, it would seem natural for the more empathetic to seek commerce with those less gifted. On this subject, Moore writes,

'The most fruitful exercise of the mind, to my thinking', said Montaigne, 'is intercourse with others'. It is, therefore, natural to find French comedy seeking its subject in those forces which sunder men from such intercourse, to find subject for criticism and amusement in the crank, the exception, especially in the man whose vanity causes him to set himself apart and above his fellows. Distinction of mind and brain is not in the French view worth separation from those less gifted. 'Un homme d'esprit serait souvent embarrassé sans la compagnie des sots'. Molière would seem to take the same view as La Rochefoucauld.<sup>23</sup>

An instance of this arrives in *Les Amants magnifiques*, when Aristione asks Sostrate to share his thoughts about astrology. He obliges, showing humility about his own intellect, saying,

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<sup>22</sup> Molière, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Forestier and Bourqui, I, p. 603.

<sup>23</sup> Moore, *Molière: A New Criticism*, p. 123.

Madame, tous les esprits ne sont pas nés avec les qualités qu'il faut pour la délicatesse de ces belles Sciences, qu'on nomme curieuses, et il y en a de si matériels, qu'ils ne peuvent aucunement comprendre ce que d'autres conçoivent le plus facilement du monde. (III, i)

Moreover, Sostrate views himself as very small, while explicitly connecting his mind and his eyes; he says, 'Comme mon sens est si grossier qu'il n'a pu rien comprendre, mes yeux aussi sont si malheureux qu'ils n'ont jamais rien vu' (III, i). However, Sostrate is both imaginative (in aspiring to the love of a princess whose position he acknowledges is far above his own) and actively empathetic (in rescuing Aristione, risking his life for hers).

On the contrary, Monsieur Diafoirus devalues imagination, stating frankly of his son, 'Il n'a jamais eu l'imagination bien vive, ni ce feu d'esprit qu'on remarque dans quelques-uns' (II, v). He admits that Thomas Diafoirus had great difficulty in learning to read, but excuses it, saying, 'cette lenteur à comprendre, cette pesanteur d'imagination est la marque d'un bon jugement à venir' (II, v). Thus, he denigrates *imagination* and vaunts *réflexion* all at once.

Similarly, Orgon is marked by a 'pesanteur d'imagination', to which Dorine draws attention by highlighting her own cognition. When she combats him over his plan to marry Tartuffe to his daughter, Orgon demands, 'tout résolument, je veux que tu te taises' (II, ii, 554), to which Dorine barks back, 'Soit. Mais ne disant mot, je n'en pense pas moins' (II, ii, 555). She recognizes that, in silencing her, Orgon not only attempts to control her mind, but he believes he is stopping it. His imagination fails to grasp that silence does not equal an inactive brain.

For Molière's sympathetic young lovers, the act of *réflexion* translates into a repeated, compulsive need to think about the love object. For instance, abridging the

story of Octave's love for Hyacinthe, Silvestre tells Scapin, 'Il consulte dans sa tête, agite, raisonne, balance, prend sa résolution; Le voilà marié avec elle depuis trois jours' (I, ii). Silvestre's use of multiple verbs to describe Octave's thinking process shows the effort ('penser murement') and repetition that went into his internal debate. Similarly, Cléonte tells Covielle how his mind is completely overwhelmed by Lucile. He says, 'je ne pense qu'à elle, je ne fais des songes que d'elle, je ne respire que par elle, mon cœur vit tout en elle' (*Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, III, ix). His love causes his mind to be occupied completely by another person ('penser plus d'une fois à une chose'). And, providing a subtle example, Cléonice observes to Ériphile, 'On trouvera étrange, Madame, que vous vous soyez ainsi écartée de tout le monde' (*Les Amants magnifiques*, I, v). The princess replies, confident in her preferences, 'Ah! qu'aux personnes comme nous qui sommes toujours accablées de tant de gens, un peu de solitude est parfois agréable, et qu'après mille impertinents entretiens, il est doux de s'entretenir avec ses pensées' (I, v).<sup>24</sup> Like Sostrate, Ériphile is reserved, making them a unique pair among Molière's young lovers. She requires solitude to think, and distances herself from otherwise pleasurable activities to contemplate her love.

Conversely, reflection in the mouth and mind of a narcissistic lover can bring about desolation and abuse. To wit, in answering Done Elvire's pleas for affection, Don Juan insists, 'j'ai ouvert les yeux de l'âme sur ce que je faisais, j'ai fait réflexion [...]' (I, iii). With the speech that unfolds, he rejects her, claiming falsely to have experienced 'le repentir'. Therefore, when Don Juan claims to have done some *réflexion*, he lies to his wife, plunging her into despair, whilst plotting his next seduction.

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<sup>24</sup> After Euryale has watched the *Princesse d'Élide* sing and dance, he begins to lose control of his emotions; thus, when she approaches, he flees her presence. Moron explains to her, 'C'est un homme bizarre qui ne se plaît qu'à entretenir ses pensées' (III, iii).

Beyond this, some of Molière's narcissists are marked by a complete absence of *réflexion*, which may lead to consequences even more dire than heartless seduction and abandonment. We see this in the *Lettre sur la comédie de l'Imposteur*, in which the author remarks upon Tartuffe's influence on Orgon, noting: 'le pouvoir vraiment étrange de la Religion sur les esprits des hommes, qui ne leur permet pas de faire aucune réflexion sur les défauts de ceux qu'ils estiment pieux'.<sup>25</sup> For Orgon, indeed, his failure to reflect nearly leads to imprisonment and the destitution of his family. Therefore, while empathetic, imaginative forms of thinking help bring about happy endings in Molière's theatre, narcissistic ones—including the absence of thinking—may lead to disaster.

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### 4.3 Mindreading

#### 4.3.1 Mindreading Without Love

In order to be a successful mindreader, it does not follow that one needs to be sympathetic or even emotionally involved. Indeed, those characters that are less than empathetic can be adept in using 'theory of mind'. This section will explore examples of mindreading in which the subject is not in love with the object; those cases characterized by love; cases of failed mindreading; and finally, cases wherein the contents of the mind are explicitly concealed or exposed.<sup>26</sup>

Generally speaking, narcissists are unmoved by the thinking and feeling of others, even when they do understand them intellectually. For example, Monsieur Filerin in

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<sup>25</sup> Anonymous, p. 1174.

<sup>26</sup> Mary Reilly investigates how Racine's characters manipulate minds in a way that is related to mindreading. She writes, for instance, 'Clearly, before Racine's characters can try to control or indeed suppress the thoughts of others, they must uncover them [...] Accessing the internal world of thought is far from straightforward'. See Mary Reilly, *Racine: Language, Violence and Power* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), p. 25.

*L'Amour médecin* actively exploits human frailty, saying, 'C'est là que va l'étude de la plupart du monde, et chacun s'efforce de prendre les hommes par leur faible, pour en tirer quelque profit' (III, i). Thus, even though his career requires that he come in contact with real pain and suffering, Filerin identifies with some vague majority of men that he alleges is trying to take advantage of other people, which is a way of flattering himself, because to not do so would make him a fool. However, this is not the only variety of mindreading between non-lovers that appears in Molière's plays. By looking at examples of theory of mind wherein romantic love is largely absent, we can observe the mechanism through which Molière's characters mindread: by searching for external signs of thought in demeanour, in the face, and especially in the eyes.

At times, one's ability to locate the feelings of others depends upon a conglomeration of signs that a character seizes upon, like, for example, when speaking with daring familiarity with the *Princesse d'Élide*, Moron observes, 'dans toutes vos actions il est aisé de voir que vous aimez un peu ce jeune Prince' (*La Princesse d'Élide*, IV, v). He enters into sympathy and risks her anger to try to help. Correspondingly, in the opening scene of *Les Amants magnifiques*, while watching Sostrate, Clitidas observes, 'Voilà des soupirs qui veulent dire quelque chose, et ma conjecture se trouvera véritable' (I, i). And in a more quarrelsome context, Dorante asks Lysidas for his opinion of *L'École des femmes*, and when the poet professes that he liked it, Dorante mindreads correctly and confronts him. Dorante chortles, 'Hom, hom, vous êtes un méchant diable, Monsieur Lysidas; vous ne dites pas ce que vous pensez' (*La Critique*, vi). He uses his mindreading skills to detect disingenuousness.

Solicitous questioning indicates both mindreading and perhaps empathy as a consequence. Near the conclusion of *L'Avare*, Anselme's first words on stage are a question and an observation about Harpagon's emotional state (Harpagon has just told his daughter he would prefer her death to the continued loss of his wealth). Anselme asks, 'Qu'est-ce, Seigneur Harpagon, je vous vois tout ému' (V, v). Likewise, when Scapin first appears on stage, he questions Octave, saying, 'Qu'est-ce, Seigneur Octave, qu'avez-vous? Qu'y a-t-il? Quel désordre est-ce là? Je vous vois tout troublé' (*Les Fourberies de Scapin*, I, ii). However, while this makes Scapin seem sympathetic to the audience, we also learn quickly that seeking out trouble to confront is how Scapin nourishes his own ego. Thus, his questioning is perhaps less about Octave's distress and more about his own glory. Likewise, this is evident when, in the following scene, Scapin implies that Hyacinte's tears are manipulative; Scapin notes, admiringly, 'Elle n'est pas tant sotté' (I, iii). His reaction to a young girl crying, which as we saw in the last chapter is a mechanism for stirring sympathy between lovers and in making a young female character sympathetic to the audience, is to assume she is feigning her emotional display, which in turn shows that Scapin himself is not exactly in sympathy with the young people he nonetheless aids.

Frequently, if someone mindreads and finds the other person to be out of sympathy, it leads to profound disappointment, such as moments after the arrival of Done Elvire, when she tells Don Juan, 'vous êtes surpris à la vérité, mais tout autrement que je ne l'espérais, et la manière dont vous le paraissez me persuade pleinement ce que je refusais de croire' (*Don Juan*, I, iii). She sees that they are not in sympathy, even though she resists believing it. And this failure of emotional synchronisation can also cause

anger. Furious at La Thorillière for wasting his troupe's time, the fictionalized Molière of *L'Impromptu* hisses, 'J'enrage, ce bourreau vient, avec un air tranquille vous faire des questions, et ne se soucie pas qu'on ait en tête d'autres affaires' (ii), thus, attributing to him tranquillity, which Molière views as inappropriate given his actors' rehearsal jitters. Indeed, La Thorillière's demeanour mirrors Freud's aforementioned 'blissful state of mind', in that he shows a quality of coolness that Molière the character, in that frantic moment, seems to envy. Alternatively, this mindreading without sympathy arises in cases of unrequited love. For instance, Arsinoé claims insider knowledge of Célimène's feelings for Alceste, opining that they are 'de feintes douceurs' (*Le Misanthrope*, III, v, 1115), which seems correct. However, this causes him to bristle, 'on ne voit pas les Cœurs; | Mais votre charité se serait bien passée | De jeter, dans le mien, une telle pensée' (III, v, 1116-8). Thus, he doubts her capability in theory of mind, while presenting the expression 'voir dans les cœurs' as a synonym for empathy.

Sometimes when love is absent, theory of mind can be employed as a subtle weapon, like when Angélique resists the suit of Thomas Diafoirus. Her stepmother, Béline, hints, 'Elle a peut-être quelque inclination en tête' (II, vi), thereby using her intuition to surmise the truth. When Béline tells Argan that she would place Angélique in a convent, the latter balks, and Béline meets her objections by saying, 'C'est-à-dire que vos pensées ne sont que pour le mariage; mais vous voulez choisir un Époux à votre fantaisie' (II, vi). They mindread in order to viciously attack each other's relationship with Argan. Likewise, in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, Dorante's combination of effective mindreading and cruelty becomes apparent during his interactions with Madame Jourdain, during which he threatens her pride. Left alone with her and Nicole, Dorante

perceives the matron's marital insecurities, forthwith paying her a passive-aggressive compliment. He says, 'Je pense, Madame Jourdain, que vous avez eu bien des Amants dans votre jeune âge, belle et d'agréable humeur comme vous étiez' (III, v). His ability to comprehend her perspective—she is concerned about the passing of her youth and beauty—makes it all the more possible for him to sting her for combatting his financial machinations, thus illustrating the ironic position of the narcissistic empathizer.

And in some cases, theory of mind can be used for a large-scale assault, like a coup-d'état. Marie-Claude Canova-Green writes of Anaxarque in *Les Amants magnifiques*, 'Aveuglement, mensonge et illusionnisme sont en revanche le partage d'Anaxarque, qui, en voulant jouer les Prospéro, se rend coupable d'une usurpation et d'une subversion de l'autorité royale'.<sup>27</sup> He manipulates Aristione, but he is an astute observer of character and recognizes that Ériphile is not so easily influenced. Anaxarque warns his son about the young princess's mind: 'c'est un esprit que je redoute, et qui n'est pas de trempe à se laisser mener, ainsi que celui de sa Mère' (IV, iii). And conversely, this skill is also serviceable as a defence mechanism, as in this case: after nearly drowning, Sganarelle strongly criticizes Don Juan for pursuing another seduction plot so soon, but then, mid-sentence, Sganarelle reads from Don Juan's demeanor that he is displeased, and he stops himself, exclaiming, 'paix, coquin que vous êtes, vous ne savez ce que vous dites, et Monsieur sait ce qu'il fait' (II, ii).

When narcissists mindread, they often do so with the intent of shoring up their own self-esteem, and the consequences can be damaging. Confronted by Cléante for accepting Orgon's estate, super narcissist Tartuffe defends himself by invoking the

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<sup>27</sup> Marie-Claude Canova-Green, 'Le Roi, l'astrologue, le bouffon et le poète, figures de la création dans *Les Amants magnifiques* de Molière', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 18 (1996), 121-31 (p. 126).

thoughts of unnamed others; he says, ‘Ceux qui me connaîtront, n’auront pas la pensée | Que ce soit un effet d’une âme intéressée’ (*Le Tartuffe*, IV, i, 1237-8). This is ironic, given that no one knows Tartuffe’s true self intimately, but it also shows that, in spite of his lack of empathy, Tartuffe realizes that mindreading is an important tool in influencing others. Correspondingly, while advising Philaminte to oppose her sister’s engagement to Clitandre, Armande (correctly) anticipates how others might read her own privately held motivations, saying, ‘On me ferait grand tort d’avoir quelque pensée, | Que là-dessus je parle en Fille intéressée’ (*Les Femmes savantes*, IV, ii, 1141-2). Between Tartuffe and Armande, we see how narcissists have an overweening self-consciousness coupled with a sense of being on display. When they bother to consider what others are thinking, it is only in relation to themselves.

Often, the perception of the feelings of others arrives through a supposition founded on a facial expression. In this way, when Chrysalde arrives to dine with Arnolphe and Agnès, he inquires with concern, ‘Serait-il point, compère, à votre passion, | Arrivé quelque peu de tribulation? | Je le jurerais presque à voir votre visage’ (*L’École des femmes*, IV, viii, 1222-4). In this instance, Chrysalde observes the emotions in Arnolphe’s face, just as Frosine comprehends Mariane’s frazzled state when she arrives in *L’Avaro*, telling her, ‘je connais à votre mine, que le jeune Blondin dont vous m’avez parlé, vous revient un peu dans l’esprit’ (*L’Avaro*, III, iv). And for the narcissistic prince Iphicrate in *Les Amants magnifiques*, his observation of Sostrate’s countenance permits him to see through the latter’s ruse; when Sostrate claims his ‘friend’ loves Ériphile, Iphicrate replies, ‘Vous auriez bien la mine, Sostrate, d’être vous-même cet ami dont vous prenez les intérêts’ (III, i). He sees that Sostrate is hiding his own feelings.

More specifically, a dramatic change in the face can spur a moment of mindreading. For example, in *Le Mariage forcé*, after she delivers a speech to Sganarelle about her desire for a freewheeling marriage, Dorimène observes a change in his emotional state, asking, ‘Mais qu’avez-vous? je vous vois tout changé de visage’ (ii). This, however, does not induce her to share his distress; on the contrary, she wishes for his swift demise. Also, when Alcmène tells her husband that they slept together the previous night, his face changes. She queries, ‘D’où vous vient à ce mot, une rougeur si grande?’ (*Amphitryon*, II, ii, 1023). Alcmène reads her husband’s mind by way of his involuntary physical response (blushing) to her recounting the previous nights events. Of the connection between blushing and the mind, Darwin writes,

If, then, there exists, as cannot be doubted, an intimate sympathy between the capillary circulation in that part of the brain on which our mental powers depend, and in the skin of the face, it is not surprising that the moral causes which induce intense blushing should likewise induce, independently of their own disturbing influence, much confusion of mind.<sup>28</sup>

The distraught husband wastes no time informing her, ‘Non, ce n’était pas moi, pour ma douleur sensible’ (II, ii, 1025), which she, indeed, attributes to a ‘confusion of mind’, telling him he is suffering from a *vapeur*, of which Richelet writes interestingly, ‘Ce mot en parlant du corps humain signifie fumée d’un sang échauffé qui monte au cerveau’.<sup>29</sup> As we have seen above between Dorante and the Marquis in *La Critique*,<sup>30</sup> Molière draws a connection between overheated blood infiltrating the brain and narcissistic behaviour, and essentially, Alcmène accuses Amphitryon of being self-centred by publicly besmirching her honour.

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<sup>28</sup> Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, p. 326.

<sup>29</sup> The Académie française defines *vapeur* as, ‘les fumées qui s’eslevent de l’estomac, ou du bas ventre vers le cerveau’, and Furetière defines it as, ‘une humeur subtile qui s’eleve des parties basses des animaux, & qui occupe & blesse leur cerveau’.

<sup>30</sup> See Section 4.2.1.

Remarking upon facial expressions is also a strategy for discrediting an antagonist, as when, debating with Climène in *La Critique*, Uranie says,

[I]l y avait l'autre jour des Femmes à cette Comédie, vis-à-vis de la Loge où nous étions, qui par les mines qu'elles affectèrent durant toute la Pièce; leurs détournements de tête; et leurs cachements de visage, firent dire de tous côtés cent sottises de leur conduite, que l'on n'aurait pas dites sans cela. (iii)

From an opposing point of view, Armande believes that Henriette is crowing because she has got under Armande's skin (which, of course, she has by planning to marry Clitandre). She accuses, 'Vous triomphez, ma Sœur, et faites une mine | À vous imaginer que cela me chagrine' (*Les Femmes savantes*, I, ii, 179-80). In this exchange, she fits into Gabbard's description of 'hypervigilant' narcissists, of which he writes, 'They tune into the facial expressions of others and listen carefully to what they say for any evidence of a critical reaction. They are prone to feel slighted when others have no intent whatsoever to be critical'.<sup>31</sup> In this way, Armande uses theory of mind to attribute boastful arrogance to her sister.

The eyes as 'miroirs de l'âme' were a great theme of writing in the *âge classique*, and as Baron-Cohen claims, they are essential for attributing mental states to other human beings.<sup>32</sup> In Molière's theatre, when involved in situations with narcissists, bereft of romantic love, seeking the feelings of others through their eyes reveals signs of anger, as when Sganarelle observes of the Statue, 'il jette des regards sur nous qui me feraient peur si j'étais tout seul, et je pense qu'il ne prend pas plaisir de nous voir' (*Don Juan*, III, v). Similarly, when fighting with Amphitryon in the guise of Sosie, Mercure mocks

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<sup>31</sup> Gabbard, p. 130-1.

<sup>32</sup> For instance, Baron-Cohen writes, 'In evolutionary terms, it is clearly highly adaptive to become aware that another organism has you within its sights'. For his work on how eyes contribute to theory of mind, see Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, pp. 31-58.

Amphitryon's eyes, taunting, 'Si des regards on pouvait mordre, | Il m'aurait déjà déchiré'. (*Amphitryon*, III, ii, 1525-6).

In the case of Don Juan, his overconfidence in his understanding of signs given by eyes ironically plays a role in his undoing. Vaunting hypocrisy, Don Juan tells Sganarelle that for the hypocrites, 'quelque baissement de tête, un soupir mortifié et deux roulements d'yeux rajustent dans le monde tout ce qu'ils peuvent faire' (V, ii). However, this reveals his blindness, showing how the Statue ultimately fools Don Juan into letting his guard down, by silently bowing his head.

For the envious female narcissists of *Psyché*, the fact of other women seeking out their eyes proves a source of bitterness and increased jealousy. For instance, venting her frustrations over her mortal rival, Vénus says of her divine competition, Junon and Pallas,

*Je les vois s'applaudir de mon inquiétude,  
Affecter à toute heure un ris malicieux,  
Et d'un fixe regard chercher avec étude  
Ma confusion dans mes yeux.*<sup>33</sup>  
(*Prologue*, 128-31)

This shows how theory of mind functions through the eyes; she is aware of her jealous rivals searching for her perturbation in hers.

In introducing Psyché to her new home, L'Amour informs her, 'De cent Beautés vous y serez servie, | Qui vous adoreront sans vous porter envie' (*Psyché*, III, iii, 1161-2).

This comment provides an insight into Aglaure's slanted mindreading later, when she tells Cidippe,

Mille beautés s'empresment autour d'elle,

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<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Baron-Cohen devotes a section in *Mindblindness* to a literary analysis of poetic descriptions of searching in the eyes of others as evidence of the eyes' role in theory of mind. He concludes, 'Clearly the poets are constructing cultural meanings here, and these might well vary from age to age or from culture to culture; however, the fascination with the eyes and the attraction to them that run through these passages seem to be universal'. See Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, pp. 109-14.

Et semblent dire à nos regards jaloux,  
 Quels que soient nos attraits, elle est encor plus belle,  
 Et nous qui la servons le sommes plus que vous.  
 (IV, i, 1303-6)

Aglaure exaggerates the quantity of her non-envious female attendants, turning the number of beautiful handmaidens from ‘cent’ to ‘mille’. This also suggests that Aglaure is a liar, especially to herself. Jealousy infects her judgment, warping her perceptions in a way that allows her to feed her resentment and further justify her rage. Thus, through these examples, we can see that, while mindreading without love can promote sympathy, it can also generate many of the most deleterious human passions, as well.

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#### 4.3.2 Mindreading in Love

Between Molière’s young lovers, theory of mind is characterized largely by the mingling of uncertainties and the language of eyes. Cases occur wherein the text only offers an indication of a general impression: reconciling Valère to Mariane, Dorine tells the lovers, ‘Vous vous aimez tous deux plus que vous ne pensez’ (*Le Tartuffe*, II, iv, 784). This interplay of signs constitutes the point of departure for potential sympathy.

Let us investigate what consequences may follow. They can be found in a feeling of uneasiness over the possibility of a misunderstanding. Expressing his doubts that their feelings are synchronized, empathetic Clitandre tells Lucinde, ‘Ah, Madame! que je serais heureux! s’il était vrai que vous sentissiez tout ce que je sens, et qu’il me fût permis de juger de votre âme par la mienne’ (*L’Amour médecin*, III, vi). When Myrtil and Mélicerte appear on stage together, he rapidly reads her emotional state, asking, ‘[...] Mais, Ciel, d’où vient cette tristesse?’ (*Mélicerte*, II, iii, 392). He sees the external signs she gives, below the level of language, and exhibits a caring emotional response. He

further implores her, '[...] Et ne blessez-vous pas notre amour aujourd'hui, | De vouloir me voler ma part de votre ennui?' (II, iii, 405-6). For Clitandre and Myrtil, respectively, to feel certain of love, it must be characterized by reciprocity.

The cause but also the effect of these uncertainties is often associated with *la mélancolie*. In this way, Valère identifies Élise's emotional state at the start of *L'Avare*. He implores, 'Hé quoi, charmante Élise, vous devenez mélancolique, après les obligeantes assurances que vous avez eu la bonté de me donner de votre foi?' (I, i). Writing about a heretofore division between models of thought about this phenomenon, Dandrey explicates, 'dans les années 1630, le modèle médical de la mélancolie, dont la bipolarité est à peu près identique, fut sollicité pour justifier et désigner l'unité fragile et encore un peu hésitante entre les voies jadis divergentes'.<sup>34</sup> These previously separate ways of thinking that came together in the form of *la mélancolie* were the 'passions de l'âme' and the 'physiologie du désir'.<sup>35</sup> Complicating this troubled state of soul and body, Freud writes that the melancholic personality is afflicted with 'an extraordinary diminution in self-regard, an impoverishment of his ego on a grand scale'.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, in her state of loving Valère and seeing him play a servant, Élise is in a fragile state of impoverished self-regard.

Through his social machinations, Clitidas is able to awaken Ériphile to the possibility of loving Sostrate. He predicts that Ériphile will resist the suggestion due to their difference in social rank; thus, he tells Ériphile that Sostrate is in love with Arsinoé, but then he quickly backtracks. Irritated by the joke, Ériphile chides him, 'vous vous

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<sup>34</sup> Dandrey, *La Médecine et la maladie dans l'œuvre de Molière*, I, p. 554.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia' [1917], in *The Freud Reader*, ed. by Peter Gay (London: Vintage, 1995), pp. 584-589 (p. 584).

mêlez de vouloir lire dans les âmes; de vouloir pénétrer dans les secrets du cœur d'une Princesse' (*Les Amants magnifiques*, II, ii). The expressions 'lire dans les âmes' and 'pénétrer dans les secrets du cœur' effectively convey the understanding and mindreading component of empathy. Indeed, Clitidas himself uses a similar expression later in this conversation, when he tells her that Sostrate did not verbally confess his feelings. Clitidas explains, 'j'ai tiré de son cœur par surprise un secret qu'il veut cacher à tout le monde, et avec lequel il est, dit-il, résolu de mourir. Il a été au désespoir du vol subtil que je lui en ai fait' (II, ii). So, the mindreading component of empathy in this scene is distilled down to the acts of 'lire dans les âmes'; 'pénétrer dans les secrets du cœur'; 'tirer de son cœur'; and a 'vol subtil'.

For lovers engaged in wordless communication, the eyes are a source of uncertainty but also its cure. For example, at the start of *Le Sicilien*, Hali reminds Adraste, 'Mais il est, en Amour, plusieurs façons de se parler; et il me semble, à moi, que vos yeux, et les siens, depuis près de deux mois, se sont dit bien de choses' (ii). Worried, Adraste counters, 'Et que sais-je, après tout, si elle entend bien tout ce que mes regards lui disent? Et si les siens me disent ce que je crois, parfois, entendre?' (ii). His self-questioning, which registers as the inverse of cockiness, renders him sympathetic.

Similarly, again in *Les Amants magnifiques*, Clitidas teases Sostrate, saying of Anaxarque, 's'il a la science de lire dans les Astres la fortune des hommes, j'ai celle de lire dans les yeux le nom des personnes qu'on aime. Tenez-vous un peu, et ouvrez les yeux' (I, i). After Clitidas identifies Ériphile as his love object, the general begs him to keep his secret, and Clitidas tells him flatly, 'Les belles, croyez-moi, sont toujours les plus clairvoyantes à découvrir les ardeurs qu'elles causent, et le langage des yeux et des

soupirs se fait entendre mieux qu'à tout autre à celles à qui il s'adresse' (I, i), suggesting a particular female adeptness at mindreading in love. Of the adjective *clairvoyant*, Furetière writes, 'Qui a l'esprit fin & penetrant, qui decouvre les choses obscures, qui prevoit les futurs', giving Clitidas's description of 'les belles' a quality of precognition. And, seeming to confirm this feminine talent, in *L'Amour médecin*, Lucinde describes to Lisette how Clitandre communicates with her wordlessly, saying, 'ses regards et ses actions m'ont toujours parlé si tendrement' (I, iv), conveying confidence in her comprehension of her lover's eyes.

Likewise, Psyché tells L'Amour, 'Ne les détournez point, ces yeux qui m'empoisonnent, | Ces yeux tendres, ces yeux perçants, mais amoureux; | Qui semblent partager le trouble qu'ils me donnent' (III, iii, 1065-7). For his part, L'Amour tells Psyché that her eyes reveal to him, 'tout ce qui se passe en vous' (III, iii, 1114). Putting this observation into action, L'Amour observes the change in Psyché's mood after she has seen her sisters; he queries, 'Mais d'où vient qu'un triste nuage | Semble offusquer l'éclat de ces beaux yeux?' (IV, iii, 1445-6). This dimming of the eyes is easily perceived by the embodiment of love.

Frequently heralded by dark gazes, anger is conducive to conflict, which is evident in Molière's emblematic narcissistic couple. When Alceste and Célimène come face to face after he has read her letter to Oronte, she takes one look at him and asks, 'Ouais, quel est donc, le trouble, où je vous vois paraître? | Et que me veulent dire, et ces Soupirs poussés, | Et ces sombres Regards que, sur moi, vous lancez?' (*Le Misanthrope*, IV, iii, 1278-80). Yet, Alceste expects Célimène to reciprocate his affections. In the opening scene, Philinte asks him, 'Vous croyez être, donc, aimé d'elle?' (I, i, 236), and

Alceste replies, ‘Je ne l’aimerais pas, si je ne croyais l’être’ (I, i, 237). He is risk-averse. Contrary to the social code that prevents young women from expressing their desires to young men, he expects the woman he loves to risk revealing her feelings first.

...

#### 4.3.3 Failed Mindreading

But in opposition to the effects of potential sympathy, there are numerous cases of incorrect interpretations. Thus, this can lead to censure, like when Orgon tells Elmire, ‘Vous étiez trop tranquille enfin, pour être crue’ (*Le Tartuffe*, IV, iii, 1321), rather than considering that her calmness implied that she might have confronted illicit seduction attempts before.

Misinterpretations are often a phenomenon of comic characters. Harpagon erroneously interprets the unspoken communication between Cléante and Élise. He says to himself, ‘Euh? je crois qu’ils se font signe l’un à l’autre, de me voler ma bourse’ (I, iv). For Harpagon, since his money is an extension of his body, his thoughts invariably bring him back to himself. And in *George Dandin*, the servant Claudine fails to read Lubin’s eyes; he asks her to face him, and then demands, ‘Hé là, ne sais-tu pas bien ce que je veux dire?’ (II, i). Flatly, she replies, ‘Non’, to which he answers, ‘Morgué je t’aime’. Either he fails to convey his romantic mood, or she fails to pick up on it.

There is, consequently, incomprehension, and conflicts spring from these false interpretations. Thus, in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, Cléonte recounts Lucile’s snub, which amounted to the reverse of empathy. He says, ‘ma joie éclate sur mon visage; je vole avec ravissement vers elle; et l’infidèle détourne de moi ses regards, et passe brusquement comme si de sa vie elle ne m’avait vu!’ (III, ix). Thus, she has seen his

feelings and responded with icy detachment. Incidentally, when Lucile finally explains her reaction to him as having been guided by the cumbersome presence of a prim aunt, it shows to what extent she occupies his mind, not to mention his field of vision. He sees only her and misses her aunt entirely.

Indeed, the possibility of being fooled by oneself arises in narcissists, and in the unfortunate case of Done Elvire, who, late in *Don Juan*, seeks ‘le pardon de l’aveuglement où m’ont plongée les transports d’une passion condamnable’ (IV, vi). In an inverse situation, narcissistic Armande, casting aspersions on Clitandre’s mental competence in *Les Femmes savantes*, tells her sister, ‘croyez, quand il dit qu’il me quitte et vous aime, | Qu’il n’y songe pas bien, et se trompe lui-même’ (I, i, 114-6). Unlike Done Elvire, who displays hard-won self-knowledge, Armande projects onto Clitandre a trait that she herself exhibits.

But this can also kindle a charge of inaccurate mindreading. The detached confidant of Mélicerte, Corinne causes her distress, and then tells Mélicerte, ‘En vérité, je ne sais comment faire, | Et de tous les côtés je trouve à vous déplaire’ (*Mélicerte*, II, i, 355-6). In reply, Mélicerte gives a definition of empathy; she tells her, ‘C’est que tu n’entres point dans tous les mouvements | D’un cœur, hélas rempli de tendres sentiments’ (II, i, 357-8). Although Mélicerte herself is in a state of anxiety, her words do not imply that empathy only occurs in situations of suffering. And she proffers yet another empathetic expression: ‘entrer dans tous les mouvements d’un cœur rempli de tendres sentiments’.

Similarly, Amphytrion describes his fruitless search for Alcmène’s brother, during which he meets many people who misread his emotional state, and to whom he

has difficulty responding. He narrates, ‘Mille Fâcheux cruels, qui ne pensent pas l’être, | De nos faits, avec moi, sans beaucoup me connaître, | Viennent se réjouir, pour me faire enrager’ (III, i, 1445-7). He adds, ‘Et tandis qu’à l’ardeur de leurs expressions, | Je réponds d’un geste de tête; | Je leur donne, tout bas, cent malédictions’ (III, i, 1454-6). Thus, even those who mean well and sympathize are capable of being wrong in attributing emotional states to others.

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#### 4.3.4 Concealing/Revealing the Mind

These interpretative undertakings are connected to a game of dissimulation and revelation of secret thoughts. And this takes a specific turn according to the division of the sexes. Owing to a code of feminine reticence, many of Molière’s most unreadable characters are female. In *L’Étourdi*, Célie exerts control over others’ ability to read her emotions. Consequently, Mascarille tries to tease out her feelings for Lélie in Trufaldin’s presence, and Célie plays along, speaking of herself in the third person. She explains her own self-containment, saying, ‘Elle sait conserver une noble fierté, | Elle n’est pas d’humeur à trop faire connaître, | Les secrets sentiments qu’en son cœur on fait naître’ (I, iv, 158-60). For her, secrecy is directly related to *conservation*. Similarly, throughout *L’Avare*, Élise conceals her feelings. Though she loves Valère, she hides it to the point that her brother, Cléante, is completely unaware of it. Obliviously, he comments to her, ‘vous n’aimez pas. Vous ignorez la douce violence qu’un tendre amour fait sur nos cœurs’ (I, ii). Like Célie, Élise keeps her own counsel as a way of guarding her romantic future.

And this protocol extends to what is appropriate to say to a woman, especially if she is of higher status than the speaker. For instance, when Iphitas reconciles Moron to

the *Princesse*, Moron assures him, ‘Seigneur, je serai meilleur Courtisan une autre fois, et je me garderai bien de dire ce que je pense’ (*La Princesse d’Élide*, V, ii). Thus, Moron’s last words in the play, ‘ce que je pense’, emphasize the risks of speaking one’s mind. And since he is the character who guides both lovers and steers the action, his final words seal the overall emphasis on thought (rather than feeling) that permeates *La Princesse d’Élide* (both the play and the character). But more importantly, this ‘ce que je pense’ refers to information that he gleaned via mindreading: literally, a ‘vol subtil’.

However, there are exceptions to these mores. Boldly defying this code for women, Isidore tells Don Pèdre candidly,

Quoi qu’on en puisse dire, la grande ambition des Femmes est, croyez-moi,  
d’inspirer de l’amour. Tous les soins qu’elles prennent, ne sont que pour cela; et  
l’on n’en voit point de si fière, qui ne s’applaudisse, en son cœur des Conquêtes  
que font ses yeux. (vi)

Similarly, after declaring their love for Myrtil to Lycarsis in *Mélicerte*, Daphné acknowledges, ‘C’est un peu librement expliquer sa pensée’ (I, iv, 165), and fellow shepherdess Éroxène elaborates, ‘La bienséance y semble un peu blessée’ (I, iv, 166). Each one is so convinced of her eventual romantic success that they are unconstrained by the desire for self-preservation exhibited by Célie and Élise.

Instances of discovered letters unearth the question of hidden thoughts perceived as the truth. This is evident in *L’École des femmes*, when Agnès knowingly shares her private thoughts with Horace (and unknowingly with Arnolphe) by writing her letter and hurtling it from her window. She begins the letter by stating what she wants—‘*Je veux vous écrire*’ (III, iv)—and she both starts and ends it by asserting the existence of her own thoughts, writing, ‘*J’ai des pensées que je désirerais que vous sussiez*’, and ‘*comme*

*je suis sans malice, vous auriez le plus grand tort du monde, si vous me trompiez; Et je pense que j'en mourrais de déplaisir*'.

But the import of letters becomes more complex in the case of *Le Misanthrope*. In the final scene, Célimène alienates her entire flock of suitors, when her letter is read aloud (against her will). What does Célimène truly think? What she assures Alceste in person, or what she writes in her letters, which are subsequently discovered and betray her duplicity? Dissimulation appears to be a necessity of social life. In the opening scene, Philinte challenges Alceste's predilection for brutal honesty, questioning, 'Serait-il à propos, et de la Bienséance, | De dire à mille Gens tout ce que d'eux, on pense?' (I, i, 77-8). Further on, Alceste complains to Arsinoé about how his honesty would be an albatross for him in courtly life, saying, 'Et qui n'a pas le don de cacher ce qu'il pense, | Doit faire, en ce Pays, fort peu de résidence' (III, v, 1089-90).

A possible answer comes from Éliante, who shows that feminine guilefulness is not always deliberate. Speaking to Philinte of Célimène's affections, she observes, 'Son Cœur, de ce qu'il sent, n'est pas bien sûr lui-même; | Il aime, quelquefois, sans qu'il le sache bien, | Et croit aimer, aussi, parfois, qu'il n'en est rien' (IV, i, 1182-4). Thus, Éliante's mindreading ability is weakened by the fact that Célimène perhaps does not love her object so much as she loves the *idea* of being in love, which simply turns her own feelings of affection back to herself. It is interesting to contrast Célimène's heart with Agnès's, in that the uneducated teenager has greater self-knowledge and frankness than the worldly noblewoman. In the end, Agnès is transformed into a loving woman with her eyes open, on the threshold of a happy marriage. Conversely, while Célimène's social status remains the same at the dénouement of *Le Misanthrope*, her having rankled

all of her suitors renders her potential for happiness less likely. And the meaningful difference between Agnès's metamorphosis and Célimène's stasis lies in the poisonous self-love of the latter.

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#### 4.4 Potential for Change

##### 4.4.1 Change Through Thinking

Cases of cognition revealed through letters lead to the question: can a narcissist be rescued from his self-love, either through thinking or feeling? Can he gain self-knowledge and become capable of empathy, or is he doomed to worship at the altar of his false self? In the estimation of a narcissist like Arnolphe, change *is* something that can be taught—thus, the solution to subverting change is to prevent education. Distraught by Agnès's newfound *esprit*, Arnolphe claims that she must have been taught in some excellent school, grumbling, ‘Votre simplicité qui semble sans pareille, | Demande si l'on fait les Enfants par l'oreille, | Et vous savez donner des rendez-vous la nuit’ (*L'École des femmes*, V, iv, 1492-4). But the most interesting part of this moment is that it reveals just how threatening change—meaning the positive development of an individual human being—is to a malignant narcissist. Change in Agnès is what he dreads most.

However, an interesting companion view comes from Gros-René in *Le Dépit amoureux*, in what is an openly misogynist—and risible—rant. Having been rebuffed by Marinette, he complains acidly about women's mercurial brains, saying, ‘un certain Grec dit, que sa tête passe | Pour un sable mouvant’ (IV, ii, 1253-4). He concludes by comparing women's minds to ‘la mer, quand l'orage s'accroît’ (IV, ii, 1276). If one extrapolates his comments as applicable to the entire human race, rather than simply

women, it would seem that, indeed, change in human beings—positive and negative—is as natural as the wind, and is, furthermore, driven in large part by what transpires in their heads. Thus, if narcissists are indeed incapable of changing, this immobility isolates them even further from their fellow men.

In 1936, F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote, ‘the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function’,<sup>37</sup> and in a related manner, one way to explore the potential for change amongst Molière’s characters is through their ability, in non-romantic contexts, to adopt the perspective or best interests of another character. On the subject of ‘perspective-taking’, Pinker writes,

The most powerful exogenous sympathy trigger would be one that is cheap, widely available, and already in place, namely, the perspective-taking that people engage in when they consume fiction, memoir, autobiography, and reportage. So the next question in the science of empathy is whether perspective-taking from media consumption actually engages sympathy for the writers and talking heads, and for members of the groups they represent.<sup>38</sup>

For the ‘consumers’ of his ‘media’ (his audience), Molière offers a variety of examples of such behaviour, which frequently come in the form of relationships between masters and subordinates, parents and children, and young people and the lovers they have rejected, or in unhappy marital situations.

One instance that exposes both true perspective-taking and its utter collapse comes in the pairing of Orgon and Dorine. The master’s blindness about Tartuffe’s intentions prevents him from seeing where his best own interests—and those of his family—truly lie, while sympathetic, feisty Dorine takes on his perspective herself,

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<sup>37</sup> F. Scott Fitzgerald, ‘The Crack-Up’ [1936], in *The Crack-Up*, ed. by Edmund Wilson (New York: New Directions Books, 2009), pp. 69-84 (p. 69).

<sup>38</sup> Pinker, p. 586.

thereby giving the audience the keys for understanding and judging him. Objecting to his plan to wed Mariane to the *faux dévot*, Dorine puts her perspective-taking to Orgon directly, telling him, ‘Je n’en parle, Monsieur, que pour votre intérêt’ (II, ii, 543). Moments later, when he argues, ‘Je ne veux pas qu’on m’aime’ (II, ii, 545), she barks at him, ‘Et je veux vous aimer, Monsieur, malgré vous-même’ (II, ii, 546). She actively fights for him and his daughter’s future, in spite of his rejection of his own wellbeing. In *Les Amants magnifiques*, Molière presents Clitidas, who is not even directly in the employ of Sostrate, but who takes on his interest, regardless. The *plaisant* describes Sostrate to Ériphile, saying, ‘En vérité c’est un homme qui me revient, un homme fait comme je veux que les hommes soient faits [...] Enfin, c’est un homme pour qui je me sens de l’inclination, et si j’étais Princesse il ne serait pas malheureux’ (II, ii). In promoting Sostrate to her, Clitidas is putting himself in his place, as well as taking on the perspective of the princess (‘si j’étais Princesse’).

In a strikingly dissimilar situation, Amphytrion, furious with Sosie for failing to do what he asked, moderates his own irritation; he says, ‘Ça, je veux étouffer le courroux qui m’enflamme, | Et, tout du long, t’ouïr sur ta Commission’ (II, i, 700-1). He tries to see from Sosie’s perspective and to encourage a mental state in Sosie that is less marked by ‘extravagance’ (II, i, 697). Discussing differences in social station, Chwe argues that, ‘not having to take another person’s perspective is a mark of social superiority over that person. Thus a superior remains clueless about an inferior to sustain the status difference’.<sup>39</sup> This underscores that for the general to alter his own feelings to accommodate his valet takes an enormous effort of self-mastery. In contrast, narcissists

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<sup>39</sup> Michael Suk-Young Chwe, *Jane Austen, Game Theorist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 3.

prefer to see themselves as superior; therefore, narcissism induces an incapacity to evolve. We see this in *Le Malade imaginaire*, when Monsieur Purgon punishes Argan for the smallest sign of rebellion; in fact, he literally deems Argan's refusal of a *clystère*: 'une étrange rébellion' (III, vi). This shows an authoritarian impulse and intolerance for change. Narcissism is as brittle in a profession as it is in a personality.

Conflicts between parents and children are myriad in Molière's theatre, but instances where one of the two litigants steps back and attempts to see the quarrel from the other's perspective are more rare. For instance, when Myrtil defies his father, Lycarsis, about Mélicerte, his ability to employ theory of mind enables him to moderate his own emotional state in order to best approach his father's anger. He reasons, 'Oui, j'ai tort, il est vrai, mon transport n'est pas sage: | Pour rentrer au devoir, je change de langage' (*Mélicerte*, II, v, 511-2). And in turn, this conscious shift in tone coaxes a positive response from Lycarsis, who says, 'Aux douleurs de son âme il me fait prendre part' (II, v, 525): a startling expression of empathy from a risible character. Since *Mélicerte* is unfinished, it is unclear whether Lycarsis remains sympathetic towards his son, but at least for a moment, perspective-taking engenders a small change in a narcissist.

Similarly, showing sympathy for the duped G ronte in *Le M decin malgr  lui*, L andre brings Lucinde back rather than eloping with her, but only after he learns that he has inherited money from a deceased uncle—in other words, when he has gained a more exalted social position. In a conciliatory manner, he tells G ronte, 'je ne pr tends point vous voler votre Fille, et ce n'est que de votre main que je veux la recevoir' (III, xi). He takes on the viewpoint of the man who has tried to foil his own personal desires, and

Géronte responds, like Lycarsis above, in a positive way. Whether Geronte does this because of Léandre's newfound wealth or because of his 'procédé plus honnête' (III, xi) is unclear, but again, perspective-taking begets a shift in position.

Resistance to change can manifest itself as intellectual stodginess and refusal to contemplate new information in Molière's narcissists. For example, praising his son, Monsieur Diafoirus says, 'mais sur toute chose, ce qui me plaît en lui, et en quoi il suit mon exemple, c'est qu'il s'attache aveuglément aux Opinions de nos Anciens' (*Le Malade imaginaire*, II, v). Clearly, neither Monsieur Diafoirus nor his son is willing to consider anything but an established idea. And this inflexible outlook is further demonstrated by Thomas Diafoirus, who illustrates that he only knows how to recite from memory, and even this he does poorly. Upon Béline's arrival, Thomas Diafoirus attempts to recite her praises, but a stage direction for him reads that he, '*commence le récit d'un Compliment qu'il avait étudié, mais la mémoire lui manquant il ne peut le continuer*' (II, vi). She then interrupts him, and he stammers, 'Madame, vous m'avez interrompu dans le milieu de ma période, et cela m'a troublé la mémoire' (II, vi), thus complaining that she has impeded his performance. Live theatre is characterized by the possibility of the unexpected<sup>40</sup> and the flexibility to adapt to change as needed, and Thomas Diafoirus illustrates how comic characters are often unable to do so.

For more sympathetic characters, rejecting a lover is an unpleasant undertaking. Thus, although her affections lie with Lélie, Célie in *L'Étourdi* does not wish to hurt Andès. She confides in Mascarille,

Si Lélie a pour lui l'amour et sa puissance,

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<sup>40</sup> Mamet writes, 'The truth of the moment is another name for what is actually happening between two people on stage. That interchange is always unplanned, is always taking place, is always fascinating'. See Mamet, *True and False*, p. 20.

Andrès pour son partage a la reconnaissance,  
 Qui ne souffrira point que mes pensers secrets,  
 Consultent jamais rien contre ses intérêts.  
 (V, vii, 1875-8)

Thus, she shows her ability to set aside her own desires, and consider another person's *intérêt* as her own.

Similarly, upon learning of Chrysale's bankruptcy, Clitandre offers Henriette's family his own money, an action which Philaminte calls 'ce trait généreux' (*Les Femmes savantes*, V, iv, 1733). But Henriette then objects to marrying him, saying, 'Non, ma Mère, je change à présent de pensée' (V, iv, 1736), wishing to spare Clitandre her family's newfound indigence, literally articulating that a change in her thinking trumps her feelings, which are unchanged. She reasons, 'Je vous chéris assez dans cette extrémité, | Pour ne vous charger point de notre adversité' (V, iv, 1745-6). She argues against her own financial and emotional needs, as well as the emotional needs of her love object.

In the eyes of the manipulative, the ability to hold others' perspectives can prove a liability. Elmire is capable of appreciating a viewpoint she disagrees with, and super narcissist Tartuffe exploits this trait. When she asks him if he's worried that she will inform her husband of his lechery, he asserts, 'vous m'excuserez sur l'humaine faiblesse | Des violents transports d'un amour qui vous blesse' (*Le Tartuffe*, III, iii, 1009-10). Clearly, he employs her empathy against her. The counterpoint of this finds form in Arnolphe, who agrees to help Horace to manage his father. Horace tells him, 'vous êtes du monde, et dans votre sagesse | Vous savez excuser le feu de la jeunesse' (V, ii, 1444-5). Therefore, Horace assumes the older man will take on *his* perspective; he is, as of yet, unaware of Arnolphe's private motivations. Thus, change through the cognitive act of

perspective-taking appears to be within the purview of empathetic personages; this realm of change largely eludes Molière's narcissists.

...

#### 4.4.2 Change Through Love

But can a narcissist, trapped in a cycle of addiction to praise, be rescued from his self-love via object love? Hopefully, Freud writes, 'It is only when someone is completely in love that the main quantity of libido is transferred on to the object and the object to some extent takes the place of the ego'.<sup>41</sup> However, what makes narcissists so brittle and apparently fixed is that they only really love themselves, and what they love of themselves is a chimera. Thus, being incapable of love makes it seemingly impossible to change into someone capable of it.

Self-pityingly, Polichinelle in *Le Malade imaginaire* cries out, '*pauvre Polichinelle, quelle Diable de fantaisie t'es-tu allé mettre dans la cervelle?*' (*Premier intermède*), about being in love. But he then proceeds to rationalize his behaviour, commenting, '*on n'est pas sage quand on veut, et les vieilles cervelles se démontent comme les jeunes*'. Shortly thereafter, Archers beat him on the head, and he objects, '*Ah, Messieurs, ma pauvre tête n'en peut plus, et vous venez de me la rendre comme une pomme cuite*'. That his *cervelle* is quite literally *démontée* seems to drive home the truth of his words: that being in love inherently requires change in the subject, but that it does not necessarily lead to a pleasant outcome.

Nonetheless, Molière shows us cases where the simple fact of being transformed by love—and of, thereby, substantiating one's capacity for change—is reason for mirth

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<sup>41</sup> Sigmund Freud, *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. by James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1949), p. 8.

and wonderment. Marvelling at Agnès's surprising creativity, Horace praises the effects of love to Arnolphe, musing,

Il le faut avouer, l'amour est un grand maître,  
 Ce qu'on ne fut jamais il nous enseigne à l'être,  
 Et souvent de nos mœurs l'absolu changement  
 Devient par ses leçons l'ouvrage d'un moment.  
 De la nature en nous il force les obstacles,  
 Et ses effets soudains ont de l'air des miracles,  
 D'un avare à l'instant il fait un libéral:  
 Un Vaillant d'un Poltron, un Civil d'un Brutal.  
 Il rend agile à tout l'âme la plus pesante,  
 Et donne de l'esprit à la plus innocente.  
 (III, iv, 900-9)

Indeed, in listing the different transformations that are made possible by love, Horace's words foreshadow Éliante's speech in *Le Misanthrope* about the transformative power of love ('l'absolu changement'). When Éliante describes the ways that people in love soften the faults of their love objects (II, iv, 711-30), she is at the apogee of empathetic understanding. She imagines herself in the place of a lover confronted with 'undesirable' traits. She says, 'Jamais, leur Passion n'y voit rien de blâmable, | Et dans l'Objet aimé, tout leur devient aimable' (II, iv, 713-4). First, she addresses physical defects, then personality and character flaws, telling how lovers view such defects as charms. For instance, she offers that, 'La Malpropre, sur soi, de peu d'Attraits chargée, | Est mise sous le nom de Beauté négligée' (II, iv, 721-2). In Éliante's estimation, there are two changes that take place—the seeing of the lover is altered, as is the image of the love object. Thus, she, like Freud, presents an avenue of hope—that if someone (even a narcissist) is truly loved by another, he is materially transformed in the eyes of that person.

Being in love often turns the subject into an inventive thinker, like Euryale, who, after observing the *Princesse*'s behaviour towards her suitors, confides in Moron,

Je vois trop que son cœur s'obstine à dédaigner  
 Tous ces profonds respects qui pensent la gagner,  
 Et le Dieu qui m'engage à soupirer pour elle  
 M'inspire pour la vaincre une adresse nouvelle:  
 Oui, c'est lui d'où me vient ce soudain mouvement,  
 Et j'en attends de lui l'heureux événement.  
 (*La Princesse d'Élide*, I, iv, 319-24)

His idea is to reverse her suitors' strategy in order to change her reaction. After listening to her other suitors declare their intentions to win her, Euryale claims, 'Comme j'ai fait toute ma vie profession de ne rien aimer, tous les soins que je prends ne vont point où tendent les autres' (II, iv).

Moreover, the spark of affection can imbue the lover with a capacity for precognition. On the traits that differentiate humans from other primates, Hrdy writes,

[T]hey are able to translate hunches about how another animal will react into full-scale speculation about what others are thinking, and articulate their concerns both to themselves and to others. In this way, humans transform ingenious capacities of observation into the sophisticated capacity to care what happens to others, even those they have never met.<sup>42</sup>

We see this 'sophisticated capacity' at work when, recounting the story of how she met Cléante, Angélique asks Toinette, 'Ne trouves-tu pas que cette action d'embrasser ma défense sans me connaître, est tout à fait d'un honnête Homme?' (*Le Malade imaginaire*, I, iv). As we saw in the first chapter, empathy is an integral part of the early modern *honnête homme*.

And yet, change can be met with reticence, as with Cléonte in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*. Coaching a despondent Cléonte after his rejection by Monsieur Jourdain, Covielle asks him, 'Ne voyez-vous pas qu'il est fou? et vous coûtait-il quelque chose de vous accommoder à ses chimères?' (III, xiii). Indeed, Cléonte is forced to change his

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<sup>42</sup> Hrdy, p. 529.

approach (as well as his appearance and language) in order to directly contend with the narcissist standing in the way of his love.

Reticence in the face of change resonates when Psyché contemplates the dramatic metamorphosis of her fortunes, after her sisters abandon her alone to die. Transformation and moving forward often mean leaving something behind. Confronted with her solitude and mortality, she says,

Enfin, seule, et toute à moi-même,  
Je puis envisager cet affreux changement,  
Qui du haut d'une gloire extrême  
Me précipite au monument.  
(*Psyché*, II, iii, 785-8)

As we see in a comical context with *Polichinelle*, change through love often necessitates pain and loss. But ultimately, for Psyché, this proves to be a gateway to knowledge and experience; she tells L'Amour, 'Je ne sais ce que c'est, mais je sais qu'il me charme' (III, iii, 1059). The question here is of one's reaction to a fundamental change; hence, she shifts from fear and ambivalence to ardour and abandoning herself to that change.

Likewise, in *Mélicerte*, love is a vehicle for growth. Myrtil tells Lycarsis, Éroxène, and Daphné that he is in love with someone else. His father asks him, 'Et savez-vous, morveux, ce que c'est que d'aimer?' (I, v, 286) to which Myrtil replies, 'Sans savoir ce que c'est, mon cœur a su le faire' (I, v, 287). Therefore, he attributes an inborn capacity for knowledge to his heart.

As we see in *Don Juan*, even love-starvation induces change. During her second appearance on stage, Done Elvire implores her husband to save himself from the wrath of God, telling him there is hope, and claiming, 'il est en vous de l'éviter par un prompt repentir' (IV, vi); she then explains, 'je suis revenue, grâce au Ciel, de toutes mes folles

pensées' (IV, vi). She believes he is capable of becoming a different person, which reveals more about the effect love has on her heart than it does about his potential for a complete transformation of his character. Additionally, the noun 'repentir' is spiritual in nature: it refers to a change exhorted by religion. Thus, this instance is not solely about love. And love also prevents a different kind of change, when Psyché finds herself on the border between life and death. She says of L'Amour, 'Il garde la tendresse où son feu le convie, | Et prend soin de me rendre une nouvelle vie, | Chaque fois qu'il me faut mourir' (*Psyché*, V, i, 1705-7).

But for lovers who also happen to be narcissists, their self-love stands in the way of any kind of meaningful metamorphosis. For instance, in order to prevent his being rejected, Élise counsels Don Garcie to bend to Elvire's wishes, telling him,

Et cent devoirs font moins que ces ajustements,  
 Qui font croire en deux cœurs les mêmes sentiments.  
 L'art de ces doux rapports fortement les assemble,  
 Et nous n'aimons rien tant, que ce qui nous ressemble.  
 (*Don Garcie de Navarre*, IV, vi, 1190-3)

However, in the end, Don Garcie is incapable of learning from her advice, and the 'happy marriage' is enabled by Elvire's pitying him. This in large part contributes to the unsatisfactory nature of this play, which was not a success with Molière's audience.

Also, there exist feigned, imitations of change. After Done Elvire entreats Don Juan to save himself, he tells Sganarelle, 'Sais-tu bien que [...] ses larmes ont réveillé en moi quelques petits restes de feu éteint?' (IV, vii), to which Sganarelle replies, 'C'est-à-dire que ses paroles n'ont fait aucun effet sur...' (IV, vii). And when ultimately confronted by Don Carlos, Don Juan insists, 'je n'ai point d'autre pensée maintenant que de quitter entièrement tous les attachements du monde, de me dépouiller au plus tôt de

toutes sortes de vanités' (V, iii). Don Carlos counters, 'la compagnie d'une femme légitime peut bien s'accommoder avec les louables pensées que le Ciel vous inspire' (V, iii). Rejecting this suggestion, Don Juan claims that he and Done Elvire are of one mind; he says of her, 'elle a résolu sa retraite, et nous avons été touchés tous deux en même temps' (V, iii). Thus, Don Juan claims to empathize with his erstwhile wife, even though what the audience has witnessed between them could not be any further from mutual understanding. When she is willing, he rejects her; when she is unavailable, he desires her.

And this is borne out even in delusional hopes for change: Alceste expresses his belief that the strength of his love will alter Célimène according to his fancy, saying, 'sans doute, ma flamme | De ces Vices du Temps pourra purger son âme' (*Le Misanthrope*, I, i, 233-4). However, he is wrong, for Célimène, as his narcissistic double, is just as rigid as he is.

Yet another metamorphosis that Molière presents is a change in love object. Although in his earlier plays, this kind of transfer is treated with suspicion, by the chronological end of his work, it is presented as a life-saving possibility for a character emotionally entangled with a narcissist. Prior to *Les Femmes savantes*, there is no second love triumphant on Molière's stage. In *L'Étourdi*, Léandre returns to first love Hippolyte, and in *Don Garcie*, Don Alphonse returns to first love Done Ignès. In the latter case, Done Elvire lectures Don Alphonse about the primacy of first love, saying, 'il faut perdre grandeurs, et renoncer au jour, | Plutôt que de pencher vers un second amour' (III, ii, 914-5). However, a corollary of love's power to change non-narcissists is its boundlessness. It can be sparked more than once, which is what befalls Clitandre, and what proves so

devastating for a narcissist like Armande. She wants to be worshipped like a deity; she tells Henriette, ‘Et l’on peut pour Époux refuser un mérite | Que pour adorateur on veut bien à sa suite’ (*Les Femmes savantes*, I, i, 103-4). She does not anticipate that when she rejects Clitandre, he will find someone else to love, rather than chastely pining for her for the rest of his days. Armande lectures Clitandre, ‘il faut perdre fortune, et renoncer au jour, | Plutôt que de brûler des feux d’un autre amour’ (IV, ii, 1171-2). Essentially, Armande is a would-be murderer, as Vénus is with Psyché; she would prefer Clitandre’s death to his marrying another woman. To her, he is a hunting trophy. Armande cannot accept change. While Lélie in *L’Étourdi* simply wants to prevent his rival from possessing Célie if he cannot, Armande wants Clitandre to die.

Counterintuitively, some of Molière’s most problematic narcissistic personages are mothers,<sup>43</sup> namely Philaminte in *Les Femmes savantes* and super narcissist Vénus in *Psyché*, and their immobility is manifested through their opposition to the changes that happen in marriage and childbirth. Arguing the importance of motherhood in the development of empathy, Kohut writes,

The groundwork for our ability to obtain access to another person’s mind is laid by the fact that in our earliest mental organization the feelings, actions, and behaviour of the mother had been included in our self. This *primary empathy* with the mother prepares us for the recognition that to a large extent the basic inner experiences of other people remain similar to our own. Our first perception of the manifestations of another person’s feelings, wishes, and thoughts occurred within the framework of a narcissistic conception of the world; the capacity for empathy belongs, therefore, to the innate equipment of the human psyche and remains to some extent associated with the primary process.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> In the previous chapter, I noted Herzog’s emphasis on the importance of father figures for male children in the development of normal levels of narcissism. See Section 3.4.2.

<sup>44</sup> Kohut, *The Search for the Self*, I, p. 451-2.

Thus, the way Molière presents Philaminte's daughters perfectly illustrates her bifurcated position as a wife and mother who looks down on matrimony and motherhood. Speaking of the word *mariage*, Armande asks Henriette, 'De quelle étrange image on est par lui blessée? | Sur quelle sale vue il traîne la pensée?' (I, i, 11-2). Socially speaking, there is a transformative power in marriage, as Mademoiselle Molière complains of her husband's treatment of her, 'C'est une chose étrange, qu'une petite cérémonie soit capable de nous ôter toutes nos belles qualités, et qu'un Mari, et un Galant regardent la même personne avec des yeux si différents' (*L'Impromptu de Versailles*, i). Evoking a different image, Henriette replies, 'Les suites de ce mot, quand je les envisage, | Me font voir un Mari, des Enfants, un Ménage' (*Les Femmes savantes*, I, i, 15-6). Using her capacities for *réflexion* and *imagination*—the Académie française describes the verb *envisager* as referring to 'Toutes les choses sur lesquelles on porte sa réflexion, & que l'on considère en esprit',<sup>45</sup>—Henriette describes a sequence of sweeping changes, which narcissistic Armande cannot fathom. Also, she reminds Armande that 'son noble génie | N'ait pas vaqué toujours à la Philosophie' (I, i, 79-80), pointing out they are Philaminte's children. Hrdy claims,

By the third trimester a [foetus] can hear noises beyond the womb, can process affective quality of the speech, and differentiate whether mother or someone else is speaking. This provides the [foetus] his first clues about the world. It marks the beginning of feeling 'embedded' in a social network and the sensation of belonging that gradually develops, after birth, into the capacity to experience empathetic feelings for others. The capacity to combine such feelings with our uniquely human ability to guess what someone else must be thinking and feeling is the main difference between humans and other animals.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> The Académie française also writes of this verb: 'Regarder une personne au visage'.

<sup>46</sup> Hrdy, p. 527-8.

Therefore, it follows that Philaminte would, in giving ‘first clues about the world’ during her pregnancy, encourage stasis in her firstborn daughter: this leads one to surmise that Philaminte gave birth to children in a marriage to a man she did not love. Such a hypothesis is supported by the reciprocal lack of respect she and Chyrsale demonstrate for one another, and indeed, by the violence of their disagreement over Henriette’s choice of husband. But Molière also shows us an inversion of Philaminte, wanting immobility in her child, in a maternal figure that will force someone to love, but as a punishment resulting from envy. In an ironic case in *Psyché*, love goddess and super narcissist Vénus instructs L’Amour: ‘Fais que jusqu’à la rage elle soit enflammée, | Et qu’elle ait à souffrir le supplice cruel | D’aimer, et n’être point aimée’ (*Prologue*, 156-8). This chastisement would engineer Psyché into a kind of solipsistic, narcissistic ‘rage’: loving and yet trapped within herself. In light of this, it is worth recalling that, although in the scientific literature, it is estimated that most narcissists are men, the influence of female narcissists, and those who become mothers in particular, ought not be taken lightly.

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#### 4.5 Conclusion

In view of the evidence, while some narcissists are able to grasp the thoughts of others, they are nonetheless unable to adopt their perspectives or to enter into sympathy. Thus, cognition does not help them, and in fact, it can at times feed their addictions to flattery. Consequently, they are incapable of change. Furthermore, the change that takes place through thinking is of a less profound nature than kind that is created by love. One could say that the only narcissist who does achieve a genuine transmutation on stage is Don Juan, but in a way that is paradoxical. In the penultimate scene, a *spectre* appears before

the master and valet, and obviously, it changes its form, because, frightened, Sganarelle exclaims, ‘Ô Ciel! voyez, Monsieur, ce changement de figure’ (V, v). Don Juan refuses to believe his own eyes, saying, ‘Non, non, rien n’est capable de m’imprimer de la terreur, et je veux éprouver avec mon épée si c’est un corps ou un esprit’ (V, v). Don Juan constantly changes lovers, but that is a superficial change. He is in constant pursuit of a new woman who does not know him. The only change open to the narcissist appears to be death.

What is revealed in the case of Don Juan is, therefore, that in the face of the obstinacy of narcissists, only a superior power can, not make them ‘change’, strictly speaking, but catch them in traps of their own making. In this way, a grain of hope comes in the Exempt’s words at the conclusion of *Le Tartuffe*; he tells Orgon’s family, ‘Venant vous accuser, il s’est trahi lui-même’ (V, vii, 1921). In other words, someone like Tartuffe will eventually do himself in, even when it seems inevitable that he will succeed in his antisocial behaviour. Narcissists are in fact their own worst enemies, and when left to act unrestrained, they bring about their own downfalls. They experience no personal development and merely damage themselves and others. However, this highlights the importance in civil society that those in positions of authority and those who enforce justice should be capable mindreaders and empathizers. *Le Tartuffe* ends with the image of ‘La flamme d’un Amant généreux, et sincère’ (V, vii, 1962), and celebrating such a person is perhaps the greatest antidote to narcissism and encouragement for empathy of all. Like *Don Juan*, *Le Tartuffe* ends with an image of transformative fire. Moreover, the fact that the two male super narcissists are also both religious anti-heroes, impenitent in

their respective hypocrisies, highlights that in the context of faith, 'le repentir' is an additional form of change that narcissists cannot achieve.

But this all leads to the question, how does one cope with challenging, self-obsessed people, for whom there is little hope for change in a positive direction? More specifically, how can society at large manage such people without constant recourse to authoritarian arbiters (god and king)? In a theatrical context, changeability is a positive attribute, and a path that appears to be open to anyone, given its pretend nature. For example, when coaching an anxious Mademoiselle du Parc, the Molière of *L'Impromptu* reassures her about her acting, saying of a previous job in which she incarnated a *façonnière*, 'vous vous en êtes acquittée à merveille, et tout le monde est demeuré d'accord qu'on ne peut pas mieux faire que vous avez fait, croyez-moi, celui-ci sera de même, et vous le jouerez mieux que vous ne pensez' (i). The director's appraisal shows how it is possible to transform, in spite of oneself, in performance. Hence, metatheatre will be the subject of the final investigation of this thesis.

## Chapter 5

### Spectacle and the Public:

#### *Double énonciation, Empathy, and the Meaning of Theatrical Pleasure*

##### 5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter examined how empathetic and narcissistic modes of thinking influence Molière's characters' potential for beneficial change. Beyond these cognitive phenomena, metaperformance and metaspectatorship in his comedies give the reader and spectator yet another source for understanding these characters and this particular set of issues. Specifically, they highlight the differing motivations of empathizers and narcissists, and how, for the narcissist, the garnering of narcissistic supply to bolster his false self is an almost irresistible incentive for action.

A concept introduced by the psychoanalyst Otto Fenichel,<sup>1</sup> 'narcissistic supply' is the positive feedback human beings, including those with more average levels of self-love, seek from each other. However, for narcissists, the need for this supply is addictive, and they can seek it in a theatrical context through celebrity and applause. Connecting cognition explicitly to the theatrical, Bénichou claims, 'Toute pensée, chez Molière, se présente avec une auréole d'approbation publique dont on ne peut la séparer sans la déformer à quelque degré'.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, we must consider the theatre as one of the various forms of public ceremony. On this subject, Dissanayake writes,

[P]articipation in art-filled ceremonies psychologically unifies members of a group. Beliefs are reinforced as they are enacted in extravagant, memorable, sensorially rich, and emotionally gratifying ways. Moving and vocalizing together in temporal sequence, even vicariously, enacts iconically a

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<sup>1</sup> Otto Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1945), p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Bénichou, p. 212.

psychological unity, resulting in reduction of stress hormones and the production of opioids and other neurochemicals that contribute to the feelings of social bondedness.<sup>3</sup>

For less narcissistically afflicted personalities, engagement in the performing arts has the effect of constructing fellow-feeling. Conversely, for narcissists, such engagement bolsters their senses of superiority compared to those around them—in this context, cast, crew, and other theatrical practitioners. However, we also see the emergence in narcissistic personalities of the potential for artistic creation. They can, in fact, be very talented on stage, perhaps more so in acting than in singing or dancing. Just as an empathizer can *imagine* himself in the place of another person, the narcissist can fill himself with another character, because he lacks a true self in the first place. Molière communicates, especially in dénouements like that of *Le Malade imaginaire*, that keeping the narcissist in the realm of theatrical performance and make-believe is a salutary strategy for handling such personalities in reality.<sup>4</sup>

Seemingly, the amalgamation of these effects of group performance—‘emotional gratification’, ‘reduction of stress hormones’, and ‘production of opioids’—is pleasure. But do narcissists seek pleasure? If they do, it is not through spectatorship, but rather through the eliciting of narcissistic supply, fueling their false, grandiose self-images. After stating directly that ‘le plus grand plaisir d’un homme orgueilleux est de contempler l’idée qu’il se forme de lui-même’,<sup>5</sup> Nicole notes of

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<sup>3</sup> Dissanayake, ‘*Fons et Origo*’, p. 321.

<sup>4</sup> Paglia puts forward a related thesis about the relegation of specifically *beautiful* narcissists to the realm of entertainment: ‘Byron, the Romantic exile, did England a favour. Energy and beauty together are burning, godlike, destructive. Byron created the youth-cult that would sweep Elvis Presley to uncomfortable fame. In our affluent commercial culture, this man of beauty was able to ignore politics and build his empire elsewhere. A ritual function of contemporary popular culture: to parallel and purify government. The modern charismatic personality has access to movies, television, and music, with their enormous reach. Mass media act as a barrier protecting politics, which would otherwise be unbalanced by the entrance of men of epochal narcissistic glamour. Today’s Byronic man of beauty is a Presley who dominates the imagination, not a [George Villiers, first Duke of] Buckingham who disorders a state’. See Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 364.

<sup>5</sup> Nicole, p. 209.

man, ‘il ne forme pas seulement son portrait sur ce qu’il connoît de soi par lui-même, mais aussi sur la vûe des portraits qu’il en découvre dans l’esprit des autres’.<sup>6</sup> And so, *amour-propre*, like the notion of narcissistic supply, is fed by others.

If we consider Molière’s entire lexis of empathy and narcissism (see Appendix 4), we notice that *La Jalousie du Barbouillé* is the only play in which the nouns *amour* and *plaisir* are not spoken. In a sense, Molière’s lexis begins to take shape without love and pleasure, but it concludes with an abundance of both, as *Le Malade imaginaire* contains 17 mentions of *amour* and 17 mentions of *plaisir*. Molière contrasts the natural concerns of a head of state with pleasure, writing in *La Critique*’s dedication *À la reine mère* that she ‘de ses hautes pensées, et de ses importantes occupations, descend si humainement dans le plaisir de nos spectacles, et ne dédaigne pas de rire de cette même bouche, dont elle prie si bien Dieu’.<sup>7</sup> His use of the verb *descendre* identifies the enjoyment of pleasure and laughter in spectatorship as being the rightful state of ordinary human beings. In their open confrontation in *L’École des femmes*, Agnès confesses that she loves Horace, and asks Arnolphe to explain to her, ‘Le moyen de chasser ce qui fait du plaisir’ (V, iv, 1527), again emphasising that the pursuit of pleasure is instinctual. Accordingly, this chapter will end with a discussion of forms of pleasure offered by Molière’s theatre.

For this, it is necessary to turn to the support of the metatheatrical<sup>8</sup> indications in Molière’s works themselves. Obviously, *L’Impromptu de Versailles* is the most explicit example of metatheatre in Molière’s work, casting light on the rhythm of a rehearsal under time-constraints; the interactions between the playwright-director and

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>7</sup> Molière, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Forestier and Bourqui, I, p. 485.

<sup>8</sup> Metatheatre is the subject matter of Jeanne-Marie Hostiou’s doctoral thesis. See Jeanne-Marie Hostiou, ‘Les Miroirs de Thalie. Le théâtre sur le théâtre et la Comédie-Française (1680-1762)’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Paris-III-Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2009).

his actors and how he coaches them; how the actors—those ‘étranges animaux à conduire’ (i)—handle pressure, memorization, stage fright, and criticism; and the challenges and benefits of having a king as an intimidating, yet ultimately generous, spectator. However, there are many other examples of theatre-within-the-theatre in Molière’s oeuvre. And the fact that Molière in *L’Impromptu* shares his empathy level with Anaxarque of *Les Amants magnifiques* and his narcissism level with Argan of *Le Malade imaginaire* (see Appendix 8), shows how, as a character, Molière does not consider himself above or superior to some of his more narcissistic creations.

Molière offers his audience and readers examples of good and bad performers, performances, and spectators; and whether or not these performers, performances, and spectators are seen in a positive light derives from individuals’ levels of narcissism and empathy. For the purposes of this section, I will consider characters to be acting whether they are staging a play within Molière’s play, or whether they are acting in their fictional lives. Campbell, Brunell, and Finkel write of narcissists, ‘Their fantasies, for example, involve an imagined audience, and their predilection to talk about themselves may be as much for themselves as it is for the public’.<sup>9</sup> This chapter adopts an order of topics that follows the natural flow of a production schedule: metaperformance, from rehearsing, direction, masks, and music and dance; to metaspectatorship; and finally, the raw, non-verbal responses of spectators in laughter, silence, and pleasure. And so, this chapter is situated on the border of anthropology and sociology, in that it investigates the behaviours of individual metaperformers and metaspectators, as well as metatheatrical casts, choirs, and audiences as social groups and institutions.

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<sup>9</sup> Campbell, Brunell, and Finkel, p. 63-4.

## 5.2 Metaperformance

### 5.2.1 Rehearsal, Direction, and Philosophy of Acting

In observing what Molière shows of behind-the-scenes theatre preparation and production, we are confronted with something counterintuitive: the potential for genuine theatrical talent in narcissists and for insincerity in empathizers. But first, an investigation into the coaching Molière gives his troupe in *L'Impromptu* reveals the similarities between an actor's preparation and a basic model for empathy. When instructing Mademoiselle du Parc in how to approach her role, which she claims could not be more different from herself in reality, Molière explains to her,

Cela est vrai, et c'est en quoi vous faites mieux voir que vous êtes excellente Comédienne de bien représenter un personnage, qui est si contraire à votre humeur: tâchez donc de bien prendre tous le caractère de vos roles, et de vous figurer que vous êtes ce que vous représentez. (i)

According to the Académie française, the verb *se figurer* means, 'Se représenter dans l'imagination, S'imaginer'. Therefore, convincing acting in the 'naturalistic style' Molière is often thought to promote<sup>10</sup> demands imaginative work from the actor, and as we have seen in the previous chapter, imaginative thinking figures highly in the cognitive processes of the empathetic. Molière's dictum, 'tâchez donc de bien prendre tous le caractère de vos roles, et de vous figurer que vous êtes ce que vous représentez', is a directive for strong performing and for empathy. In this, we see the functioning of *double énonciation*.<sup>11</sup> 'Les concepts énonciatifs', writes Barbara Havercroft, 'permettent également de réfléchir aux divers plans du texte théâtral: celui

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<sup>10</sup> For a treatment of Molière's acting styles that, in part, challenges this view, see Sabine Chaouche, *L'Art du comédien. Déclamation et jeu scénique en France à l'âge classique (1629-1680)* (Paris: Honoré-Champion, 2001). And for a related study of tragic declamation, see Eugène Green, *La parole baroque* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> Defining 'double enunciation', Forman writes, 'All speech in drama effectively operates on two levels: the characters address each other, and their remarks are conveyed to (or overheard by) an audience'. See Edward Forman, *Historical Dictionary of French Theater* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2010), p. 103.

du personnage, celui de l'auteur et celui de la mise en scène et de la représentation'.<sup>12</sup>

Through metatheatrical direction, Molière communicates this message of empathetic acting to both his troupe in the drama and the real audience.

However, Molière's philosophy of becoming someone else through acting can be honed further by viewing narcissistic Mascarille in *Les Précieuses ridicules* as an acting coach. When vaunting the superiority of the 'grands Comédiens' (ix) to Cathos and Magdelon, he says, 'les autres sont des Ignorants, qui récitent comme l'on parle, ils ne savent pas faire ronfler les Vers et s'arrêter au bel endroit'. Since Mascarille is risible, the audience is clearly intended to understand from his words that the best way to act is to 'réciter comme l'on parle'. Thus, even though Molière's acting approach involves imaginatively becoming someone else, this does not simply involve delivering the lines in a singular manner—it is an approach that requires some study and understanding of the rhythms and intonations with which people really speak.

Even though immense self-love prevents narcissists like Mascarille from achieving real satisfaction through reciprocal relationships, it is not to say that it prevents them entirely from being effective directors. To this end, when preparing his household for Mariane's visit in *L'Avare*, Harpagon is also not unlike Molière in *L'Impromptu*. He acts as a director preparing for the production of a play, assigning the actors their roles (casting); and telling them where to stand (blocking), what to do (characterization), and how to dress (costuming). In other words, he attends to the variety of concerns that fall to the discretion of a director. While Molière tells his actors, 'De grâce mettons-nous ici, et puisque nous voilà tous habillés, et que le Roi ne doit venir de deux heures, employons ce temps à répéter notre affaire, et voir la

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<sup>12</sup> Barbara Havercroft, 'Énonciation et énoncé', in *Le dictionnaire du littéraire*, Paul Aron, Denis Saint-Jacques, and Alain Viala, eds (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002), pp. 188-90 (pp. 189-90).

manière dont il faut jouer les choses' (i), Harpagon starts by saying, 'Allons. Venez çatous, que je vous distribue mes ordres pour tantôt, et règle à chacun son emploi' (III,

i). Likewise, in *Les Amants magnifiques*, extolling his theatrical production,

Anaxarque tells his son,

[N]otre Vénus a fait des merveilles; et l'admirable Ingénieur qui s'est employé à cet artifice, a si bien disposé tout, a coupé avec tant d'adresse le plancher de cette Grotte, si bien caché ses fils de fer et tous ses ressorts, si bien ajusté ses lumières, et habillé ses Personnages, qu'il y a peu de gens qui n'y eussent été trompés. (*Les Amants magnifiques*, IV, iii)

In a sense, he is correct to feel pride in this achievement, because the accumulated effect of the setting ('le plancher de cette Grotte'), the staging ('ses fils de fer'), the lighting ('ses lumières'), and the costuming ('habillé ses Personnages') is that Aristione is utterly convinced of its truth, and prepared to set the course of her daughter's life based on it. Thus, even though there are narcissists who are poor directors (like Mascarille), there are other narcissists who are actually very effective (notably Anaxarque).

To wit, one of Molière's greatest metadirectors is vainglorious Scapin, who prepares Octave for a confrontation with his father, coaching his delivery and body language and helping him grapple with stage fright. For his part, Octave is a weak actor, which at first blush seems surprising, given his previously noted intense empathy for Hyacinte's grief and tears. Encouraging the young lover, Scapin tells him, 'Répétons un peu votre rôle, et voyons si vous ferez bien. Allons. La mine résolue, la tête haute, les regards assurés' (*Les Fourberies de Scapin*, I, iii). Clearly, Octave fails to convince him, because Scapin urges, 'Encore un peu davantage'. Additionally, we see Scapin as a director casting a role when planning with Silvestre to extract money from Argante. He auditions Silvestre, telling him, 'Tiens-toi un peu. Enfonce ton bonnet en méchant Garçon. Campe-toi sur un pied. Mets la main au côté.

Fais les yeux furibonds. Marche un peu en Roi de Théâtre. Voilà qui est bien' (I, v). Silvestre worries about his safety in taking on the part, but Scapin reassures him with, 'nous partagerons les périls en Frères', therefore announcing a sort of empathy, in that he partakes in Silvestre's imperilment. Moreover, the contrast between the rehearsals of Octave (a poor actor) and Silvestre (a strong actor) reveals not only their respective talents, but also Scapin's flexibility as an acting coach, and his willingness to undertake difficult projects. This all illuminates the shared-risk in a theatrical performance between an actor and director; however, in the end, narcissistic Scapin is swift to claim the renown for these undertakings for himself.

Of course, narcissists are just as capable of ruining theatrical performances. For instance, we can see that LÉlie, the titular *Étourdi*, is an incompetent actor. When rehearsing his role as an Armenian with Mascarille, he is impatient, unfocused, and overconfident. He tells his valet, 'Ces répétitions ne sont que superflues. | Dès l'abord mon esprit a compris tout le fait' (IV, i, 1348-9). His overvaluation of his own memorization repeatedly spoils his chances for happiness, pointing to the truth in the words of the Exempt at the conclusion of *Le Tartuffe*: 'il s'est trahi lui-même' (V, vii, 1921). Contrastingly, *Amphitryon*'s Sosie rehearses with gusto for his imminent exposition for Alcmène; he is far more diligent in preparing than LÉlie. First, he sets the stage for himself, saying, 'Voici la Chambre, où j'entre en Courier que l'on mène, | Et cette Lanterne est Alcmène, | À qui je me dois adresser' (I, i, 202-4). Thus, having set the stage, Sosie performs a lengthy speech in which he rehearses three roles: himself, Alcmène, and a wheedling audience. In Alcmène's voice, he asks questions about Amphitryon. As himself, he gives a fictional eye-witness account of Amphitryon's battle, boasting, 'sans m'enfler de gloire, | Du détail de cette victoire | Je puis parler très savamment' (I, i, 235-7). In the guise of an audience, Sosie gives

himself nothing but praise, exclaiming for instance, ‘Peste! où prend mon Esprit toutes ces gentillesses?’ (I, i, 226), marvelling at his perceived creativity and actual insincerity, since everything he prepares to tell her is a lie. And this is a crucial moment, because Sosie is at once a case of extreme empathy (putting himself in the place of Alcmène, a woman eager to learn her husband’s fate at war), and of a narcissist strutting his stuff in his rehearsal; he thus makes himself ridiculous and easier to swindle.

But theatricality is not always seen as a dubious stratagem: in *La Critique*, Élise is an actress of the first order, and she clearly associates empathy with acting. First, she professes to sympathize with Climène, telling her, ‘j’entre dans tous vos sentiments, et suis charmée de toutes les expressions, qui sortent de votre bouche’ (iii). She flatters Climène, while showing her own philosophy of acting; she cozens, ‘Vos paroles, le ton de votre voix, vos regards, vos pas, votre action, et votre ajustement ont je ne sais quel air de qualité, qui enchante les gens’ (iii). Her creative method is to study her subject to the point of being consumed. In fact, she tells Climène, ‘Je vous étudie des yeux et des oreilles; et je suis si remplie de vous, que je tâche d’être votre singe, et de vous contrefaire en tous’ (iii). She is at once sincere and insincere—a possible definition of acting: being truthful in a fiction. Also, the state described by the combination of the terms *entrer dans tous les sentiments de quelqu’un* and *être rempli de quelqu’un* is empathy and acting rolled into one.

So then, this ‘playing’ is often a necessary skill: actively instilling sympathy in others is something Valère in *L’Avare* has trained himself to do, and this is very evident in his ingratiating behaviour towards Harpagon. With respect to her father, he tells Élise,

Vous voyez comme je m’y prends, et les adroites complaisances qu’il m’a fallu mettre en usage, pour m’introduire à son service; sous quel masque de

sympathie, et de rapports de sentiments, je me déguise, pour lui plaire, et quel personnage je joue tous les jours avec lui, afin d'acquérir sa tendresse. (I, i)

His feelings for Harpagon are not truly sympathetic, but rather a 'masque de sympathie'. Furthermore, Valère has a carefully considered philosophy of humanity; he claims,

[I]l n'y a rien de si impertinent, et de si ridicule, qu'on ne fasse avaler, lorsqu'on l'assaisonne en louange. La sincérité souffre un peu au métier que je fais: mais quand on a besoin des Hommes, il faut bien s'ajuster à eux; et puisqu'on ne saurait les gagner que par là, ce n'est pas la faute de ceux qui flattent, mais de ceux qui veulent être flattés. (I, i)

He argues that empathetic behaviour is highly attractive, and his is the strategy that *La Critique*'s Élise takes with Climène. The metaphor of swallowing something that has been seasoned 'en louange' portrays narcissistic supply as a kind of life-preserving sustenance, which Valère is willing to dole out in order to attain his love.<sup>13</sup>

This speech leads us towards a kind of situational limit. Indeed, it places Valère at odds with Clitandre of *Les Femmes savantes*, who tells his beloved Henriette that he cannot force himself to act for her mother, Philaminte, protesting, 'Mais je ne puis du tout approuver sa chimère, | Et me rendre l'écho des choses qu'elle dit | Aux encens qu'elle donne à son Héros d'esprit' (I, iii, 228-30). 'Se rendre l'écho' is at root a possible definition for all theatre, and in Bergson's view, it is a necessary precondition for laughter.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Valère's eating conceit recalls how Christopher Lasch writes of, 'the character traits associated with pathological narcissism, which in less extreme form appear in such profusion in the everyday life of our age: dependence on the vicarious warmth provided by others combined with a fear of dependence, a sense of inner emptiness, boundless repressed rage, and unsatisfied oral cravings'. See Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979), p. 33.

<sup>14</sup> Bergson writes, 'On ne goûterait pas le comique si l'on se sentait isolé. Il semble que le rire ait besoin d'un écho'. See Bergson, p. 4.

But Clitandre's invocation of *écho* brings Molière's work back to the myth of Narcissus.<sup>15</sup> Chronologically, the noun *narcisse* appears at the very beginning of Molière's work, in *Le Médecin volant*, and the noun *écho* appears at the very end in *Les Femmes savantes* (see Appendix 4); thus, the two principals in Narcissus's story frame Molière's theatre. Moreover, it was Ovid who added the nymph Echo to the Narcissus myth, and Pellizer claims that his idea was to 'produire un double du motif de la *réflexivité visuelle* opérée par le miroir sous la forme d'une *réflexivité vocale*'.<sup>16</sup> In pointing this out, Pellizer highlights another reason why the study of narcissism is uniquely relevant to the theatre, adding that, 'Une voix qui reflète et renvoie en arrière se pose en symétrique, et fournit le pendant tout à fait approprié à une image renvoyée par la surface d'un miroir'.<sup>17</sup>

Likewise, making a psychologically complex commentary on the dynamic between Echo and Narcissus in Nicolas Poussin's 1630 painting *Realm of Flora*, Panofsky writes,

As an acoustic mirror, so to speak, unable to answer him except in his own words, the 'inamorata infelice' has made it no less impossible for him to escape from his ego than to escape from the optical mirror of the water. In Poussin's group, self-love and self-negation are locked into one diagram of mutual extinction.<sup>18</sup>

Considering Clitandre as a foil, Valère does appear to hold up 'an acoustic mirror' to Harpagon. His speech shows him to be an avowed manipulator, but in his case, it is a conscious, and limited, strategy rather than a compulsion or an addition to doomed love. Therefore, all of Molière's theatre can be viewed as a double 'acoustic mirror', as it were.

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<sup>15</sup> Ovid writes of Echo, 'She merely repeats the concluding phrases of a speech and returns the words she hears'. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses: Books I-VIII*, p. 151.

<sup>16</sup> Pellizer, p. 70.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Dora Panofsky, 'Narcissus and Echo: Notes on Poussin's Birth of Bacchus in the Fogg Museum of Art', *The Art Bulletin*, 31, 2 (1949), 112-20 (p. 116).

Starting from such a definition, we can also measure the risks of the theatre, with recourse to a comparison. When Sganarelle in *Le Médecin malgré lui* renders his assessment of the medical profession to Léandre, after confessing to the young man that he himself is not a doctor, he reveals how medicine deviates sharply from the philosophy of drama to which Molière himself adheres. Doctors, in his estimation, are completely unaccountable to the men they serve. In this way, he shows playwrights, actors, directors and other theatrical workers to be more like artisans or craftsmen.<sup>19</sup> Sganarelle says of his newfound vocation,

Je trouve que c'est le Métier le meilleur de tous: car soit qu'on fasse bien, ou soit qu'on fasse mal, on est toujours payé de même sorte. La méchante Besogne ne retombe jamais sur notre Dos: et nous taillons, comme il nous plaît, sur l'Étoffe où nous travaillons. Un Cordonnier en faisant des Souliers, ne saurait gâter un morceau de Cuir, qu'il n'en paye les Pots cassés: mais ici, l'on peut gâter un Homme sans qu'il en coûte rien. Les Bévues ne sont point pour nous: et c'est toujours, la faute de celui qui meurt. Enfin le bon de cette Profession, est qu'il y a parmi les Morts, une honnêteté, une discrétion la plus grande du Monde: et jamais on n'en voit se plaindre du Médecin qui l'a tué. (III, i)

By placing these words in Sganarelle's mouth, Molière is showing by contrast the risks of his own profession: in writing plays, success is not guaranteed, but rather, it is directly tied to the quality of the product, unlike in various other lines of work. This relates to Molière's quarrels and the opponents he faced, for instance, in the *querelle de L'École des femmes*, who considered plays to be successful even if they failed to please the theatre-going public. For example, Lysidas in *La Critique* belittles popular comedies as 'ces bagatelles', unworthy of 'la beauté des pièces sérieuses' (vi). But still, as he bleats, 'on voit une solitude effroyable aux grands ouvrages, lorsque des sottises ont tout Paris'. He paints a forlorn image of himself sitting alone in a theatre, watching an undoubtedly disappointed cast of actors bereft of a reacting audience.

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<sup>19</sup> This is a view that is strongly supported by Mamet, in that he encourages actors and other theatre workers to eschew schooling in favour of work. See Mamet, *True and False*, pp. 17-22.

This brings us back to Dissanayake's point about communal, empathy-building ceremonies—narcissists, like Lysidas, eschew them in favour of *la solitude*.<sup>20</sup> And obviously, unlike deceased patients or an audience empty but for a lone, narcissistic intellectual (Lysidas), spectators tend not to be silent in displeasure.

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### 5.2.2 Masks

The theatre, as evidenced in *L'Impromptu de Versailles* when Molière coaches Mademoiselle Béjart, 'ayez toujours ce caractère devant les yeux pour en bien faire les grimaces' (i), assumes the employment of *grimaces*, hence false gestures, sometimes disguises, and even masks. A mask, according to Louis Marin, is 'un opérateur de **mé-connaissance**, de **non-connaissance** ou de **fausse connaissance** d'autrui et de soi'.<sup>21</sup> And as Moore writes, 'The effect of assuming a mask, whether of roguery, pedantry, or fear, is to separate the wearer from his fellows, to put him on another plane, to isolate him'.<sup>22</sup>

Concealments, masks, and disguises are, generally speaking, associated with negative values: it is a matter of deception. We have seen this with *Les Précieuses ridicules*, and we find it again when Don Juan initially presents his new mask to his father, Don Louis. Following this encounter, he explains his strategy to Sganarelle, saying, 'il y en a tant d'autres comme moi, qui se mêlent de ce métier, et qui se servent du même masque pour abuser le monde' (V, ii). In the same way, Célièmène describes Arsinoé as wearing masks of feminine modesty and of friendship, when she tells Acaste and Clitandre, 'Elle tâche à couvrir d'un faux Voile de Prude, | Ce que, chez elle, on voit d'affreuse Solitude' (*Le Misanthrope*, III, iii, 861-2).

<sup>20</sup> As cited in my investigation of negative *amour*, Dandrey views *amour-propre* as resulting in 'l'isolement de l'amoureux de soi dans la solitude du délire'. See Section 2.4.3.

<sup>21</sup> Louis Marin, 'Masque et portrait', *Pictura/Edelweiss*, 3 (1983-4), 88-96 (p. 89).

<sup>22</sup> Moore, *Molière: A New Criticism*, p. 122.

Nowhere are masks more troubling than in situations of romantic love. For instance, Toinette cautions Angélique about the masks of young men; she advises, ‘Les grimaces d’amour ressemblent fort à la vérité; et j’ai vu grands Comédiens là-dessus’ (*Le Malade imaginaire*, I, iv). Acting in love is thus dangerous. Afterwards, Thomas Diafoirus implies that Angélique herself is an actress, alleging that her resistance to him is a façade and, alarmingly, part of a rape fantasy. He claims, ‘Nous lisons des Anciens, Mademoiselle, que leur coutume était d’enlever par force de la maison des Pères les Filles qu’on menait marier, afin qu’il ne semblât pas que ce fût de leur consentement qu’elles convolaient dans les bras d’un homme’ (II, vi). Balking at this suggestion, Angélique stands up for herself and her own volition, saying, ‘Les grimaces ne sont point nécessaires dans notre Siècle; et quand un mariage nous plaît, nous savons fort bien y aller, sans qu’on nous y traîne’ (II, vi). Hence, having absorbed Toinette’s earlier warning about *grimaces*, Angélique positions herself against their use.

Such concealments are legion, including where they are not necessarily expected. Thus, in *Psyché*, the Zéphire and L’Amour discuss the ‘grand changement’ in the latter’s physical appearance. The Zéphire comments, ‘Cette taille, ces traits, et cet ajustement, | Cachent tout à fait qui vous êtes’ (III, i, 934-5). L’Amour confirms the purpose of his new physical identity: to hide ‘ce que je puis être | Aux yeux qui m’imposent des lois’ (III, i, 943-4). Literally, L’Amour puts Psyché into the position of not knowing the identity of her love object, not unlike Narcissus himself.

But a mask can also connote positive values. Thus, Euryale’s entire courtship strategy in *La Princesse d’Élide* is predicated upon his donning a mask of his former self. He labours to appear untouched by love, but in the end, he admits, ‘il faut lever le masque, et dussiez-vous vous en prévaloir contre moi, découvrir à vos yeux les

véritables sentiments de mon cœur. Je n'ai jamais aimé que vous, et jamais je n'aimerai que vous' (V, ii). Similarly, speaking to Orgon, Elmire resolves:

Je vais par des douceurs, puisque j'y suis réduite,  
Faire poser le masque à cette âme hypocrite,  
Flatter, de son amour, les désirs effrontés,  
Et donner un champ libre à ses témérités.  
(*Le Tartuffe*, IV, iv, 1373-6)

Elmire prepares to give a performance for a specific and demanding and hostile audience, her husband, and for a separate audience, Tartuffe, as well as for the public audience, which is, here, prepared to have the right interpretation of her behaviour. By 'masking' her own emotions, she will cause the mask of the hypocrite to fall.

Curiously, Molière's theatre begins and ends with masks of death applied by female characters that perfectly illustrate the negative and positive uses of masks. In the first instance, the mask further estranges a married couple, and in the last, it reconciles a father and daughter. At the climax of *La Jalousie du Barbouillé*, Angélique pretends to kill herself for her husband's benefit; she is acting, and he and the real audience are all her spectators. A stage direction for Angélique reads, '*faisant semblant de se frapper*' (xi), and then she cries out, 'Adieu donc, aië je suis morte'. The Barbouillé checks on his wife and is subsequently locked out and furious. What transpires at the chronological end of Molière's work is far more subtle: to avoid being thrashed by Argan for lying, Louison cries out, 'Ah, mon Papa, vous m'avez blessée! attendez je suis morte' (*Le Malade imaginaire*, II, viii). This statement is followed by the stage direction, '*Elle contrefait la morte*'. Playing along, Argan wails, 'Ah, malheureux, ma pauvre Fille est morte. Qu'ai-je fait, misérable?'. She then tells him, 'Là, là, mon Papa, ne pleurez point tant, je ne suis pas encore morte tout à fait'. Thus, through acting out a small drama, father and daughter are reconciled, and a

great narcissist's rage is mollified. She softens him by playing dead, prompting him to feign tears, which in turn cause her to unmask herself to comfort him.

The theatre is an art of appearances, and, in this, it puts into action humankind's capacity for perceiving and interpreting, as we have seen in the previous chapter. Hence, the spectator's engagement with the perception of masks provides a means of exercising his mindreading equipment; and an added benefit appears to be that for narcissistic personages, playing with masks can cause them, at least momentarily as with Argan, to forget themselves, which leads to the next section.

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### 5.2.3 Dance and Music

The simple presence of this lyric: 'Est-il des yeux qu'il ne ravisse? | Il passe en beauté feu Narcisse | Qui fut un blondin accompli' (*Pastorale comique*, ii), humorously employing the adjective *blondin*—which according to Furetière indicates 'Qui a les cheveux blonds, ou une perruque blonde. Les coquettes aiment fort les *blondins*',<sup>23</sup> describing a vain object of desire—performed by an ensemble of singers shows that the singing in the *comédies-ballets* is important to this study, and in various ways.

It goes without saying that in music and dance, solo performances are opportunities to show off skill and mastery, imparting a pleasure of appreciation to an audience. However, when the soloist has neither skill nor mastery, but possesses nonetheless great confidence in his ability, such performing is often risible and indicative of ego. In this respect, the benchmark is set by Monsieur Jourdain, in both music and dance. Asserting his vacuous aesthetic taste to his cultivated instructors, Monsieur Jourdain tells them of a song he likes with 'du Mouton dedans' (*Le*

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<sup>23</sup> The *Dictionnaire* of the Académie française gives two definitions for the word *blondin*; first, 'Qui a les cheveux blonds', and subsequently, 'On appelle, *Blondins*, Les jeunes galans qui font les beaux, parce qu'ils portent d'ordinaire des perruques blondes'. Richelet writes, 'Jeune homme à cheveux blonds, galand à perruque blonde. [Elle aime les blondins]'.

*Bourgeois gentilhomme*, I, ii), and then, suddenly remembering the complete lyrics, he bursts into song:

*Je croyais Janneton  
Aussi douce que belle;  
Je croyais Janneton  
Plus douce qu'un Mouton:  
Hélas! hélas!  
Elle est cent fois, mille fois plus cruelle,  
Que n'est le Tigre aux Bois.  
(I, ii)*

In a follow-up performance, Monsieur Jourdain dances for his teachers, claiming, 'Ah les Menuets sont ma Danse, et je veux que vous me les voyiez danser' (II, i). Both of these impromptu displays of bravado are meant to incite laughter by showing Jourdain's absurd overconfidence.

However, when songs and dances are performed by groups, the dynamic changes. While these performances may still be funny, they also serve a more directly harmonizing function. Recalling once again Dissanayake's observations about 'art-filled ceremonies',<sup>24</sup> the music, dancing, and singing that are the chief distinguishing attributes of *comédies-ballets* are building blocks of shared feelings. And this is borne out by some fascinating recent research in psychology, notably that of a group of Swedish researchers who find that choral performance synchronizes the heart rates of singers. They explain,

From the perspective of *joint action* and entrainment, we claim that external and visible joint action corresponds to an internal and biological joint action. Entrainment between two dancers, for example, depends on analogue representations of rhythm (stimulated by the music) in their nervous systems. It is tempting to reverse this logic and consider how synchronized internal events affect external action. Choir singing coordinates the neurophysiological activity for timing, motor production of words and melody, respiration and [heart rate variability]. It has been proposed that joint action leads to joint perspectives and joint intentions. In this context it is interesting to note that synchrony rituals benefit cooperation. In other words, singers may change their egocentric perspective of the world to a *we-perspective* which causes

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<sup>24</sup> See Section 5.1.

them to perceive the world from the same point of view (of for example religion, politics or football team) and thus defining who *we* are.<sup>25</sup>

But do singing and dancing in Molière's *intermèdes* really create a 'we-perspective' between the performers?

The answer appears to be yes, and that these performances also feature the exclusion of narcissists from this *we*. The *Mamamouchi* ceremony for Monsieur Jourdain provides such an example. It is a vast undertaking, involving the efforts of a large number of performers (at least 18, according to the stage directions). Covielle disguised as the 'Mufti' sings first, asking Monsieur Jourdain, '*Mi star Mufti | Ti qui star ti*' (*Quatrième intermède*), cutting to the bone of Monsieur Jourdain's narcissism: that he does not know who he really is. By endowing him with Turkish nobility, the 'Mufti' and the other actors strengthen his rejection of his true self. Thus, the ceremony enhances the unity of the group surrounding the *bourgeois* by further isolating him—they know they are pretending, but he does not.

But the dynamic of the final *intermède* in this *comédie-ballet*, the *Ballet des nations*, is somewhat different. The stage directions demand upwards of 40 performers, first playing an audience, and then singing about love in Spanish, Italian, and French. At the very end, a stage direction states, 'Tout cela finit par le mélange des trois Nations, et les applaudissements en Danse et en Musique de toute l'assistance'. They all sing together, '*Quels Spectacles charmants, quels plaisirs goûtons-nous | Les Dieux mêmes, les Dieux, n'en ont point de plus doux*'. This exhibition of unity and pleasure achieved through art is profound, although it must be noted that it requires the 'Spanish' and 'Italian' performers to adopt the French language and to dance 'les Menuets', a very French dance. It is also significant in

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<sup>25</sup> Björn Vickhoff, Helge Malmgren, Richard Åström, Gunnar Nyberg, Seth-Reino Ekström, Mathias Engwall, Johan Snygg, Michael Nilsson, and Rebecka Jörnsten, 'Music structure determines heart rate variability of singers', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 4, 334 (2013), 1-16 (p. 13).

that, in the *Mamamouchi* ceremony, Jourdain takes on a Turkish identity, and his new identity is not one of those united in peace in the *Ballet des nations*. But in spite of this, the large, multinational group that is unified by this ballet does appear to *include* narcissistic Monsieur Jourdain at its centre. Of this whole sequence, Defaux claims,

[L]a seule présence de Jourdain, sa naïveté et son aveuglement complices, suscitent irrésistiblement le rire, engendrent, pour ainsi dire spontanément, l'amour, le plaisir et la joie. Littéralement, la fête naît sous ses pas, et la comédie, dont il est non seulement la dupe et le prétexte, mais aussi bien l'âme, l'acteur et le metteur en scène inspiré. Devenue palais des mille et une nuits puis théâtre, élargie aux dimensions de l'univers, la maison de Jourdain est finalement emportée, comme le reste, dans les folles arabesques du Ballet des Nations. Le rêve a disposé de la réalité.<sup>26</sup>

However, the fact that he is presented with a metaaudience in which the *bourgeois* spectators are excluded complicates his status within the play's final 'we-perspective' (I will return to this later in this chapter).

Like *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, *Le Malade imaginaire* and *Psyché* also conclude with choral singing that invokes the divine, while the title character undergoes a significant, plot-resolving transition. While Argan becomes a fake doctor, locking him into his fantasy world, *Psyché* is deified, marking an actual transformation by means of love and the aid of an ultimate authority (Jupiter). For the *Troisième intermède* of *Le Malade imaginaire*, the cast includes at least 47 performers; therefore, the stage is crowded. It is a dauntingly large group of dancers and singers to have moving together. Indeed, anyone who has ever sung with a large choir or danced in the chorus of a musical could testify to the difficulties inherent in this. The master of ceremonies sings the renown of the medical profession, noting, '*Totus mundus currens ad notros remedios, | Nos regardat sicut Deos*', clearly appealing to Argan's vanity and isolating him, since they know their enterprise is make-believe. Conversely, at the end of *Psyché*, a group of gods assembled sings as a

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<sup>26</sup> Defaux, p. 274.

choir, ‘Chantons, répétons, tour à tour, | Qu’il n’est point d’Âme si cruelle | Qui tôt ou tard ne se rende à l’Amour’ (V, vi, 2043-5). In this instance, she is folded into a group, all of whom give themselves over to love. Hence, large-scale *spectacles* of music and dance serve to both strengthen the group against intrusion from pernicious narcissists, while facilitating the ‘we-perspective’ between young lovers.

Moreover, this effect is also evident in the smallest of singing groups, the duet. For example, in *Le Malade imaginaire*, it is the singing of a duet that permits Angélique and Cléante to proclaim their love to each other. Ecstatic, Cléante sings, ‘Dieux, Rois, qui sous vos pieds regardez tout le monde, | Pouvez-vous comparer votre bonheur au mien?’ (II, v). Like with Psyché, reciprocated love has an ennobling power for Cléante, lifting him into the company of the divine, as it were. Describing the empathy-imbuing properties of musical expression, Davies writes,

Above all, we hear in music humanly created emotional expression. The *image* of human expressiveness is often as evocative as the real thing. There are good biological reasons for this fact. Our first reaction as social creatures that rely on our mindreading abilities is to respond to the outward show as a window on the human soul. That is how (and why) we react to expressiveness in music: it is no less a human form of expression, though it is a far more sophisticated one, than weeping is.<sup>27</sup>

We have seen in previous chapters how Molière employs the perception of crying to stir empathy and romantic love between characters, as when Octave tells Scapin of Hyacinthe’s sorrows, which prompted his surge of compassion. But in the singing of Angélique and Cléante, we are drawn into their romance in a more visceral way. Furthermore, for an actor, singing on stage is easy in ways that crying is not, making it a more reliable tool. Therefore, making use of *double énonciation*, Molière’s group

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<sup>27</sup> Stephen Davies, ‘Infectious Music: Music-Listener Emotional Contagion’, in *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, ed. by Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 134-48 (p. 141).

music takes the weeping effect a step further; in exposing his real audience to the duet of Angélique and Cléante, we ‘fall in love’ with them, as well.

The third *intermède* of *Les Amants magnifiques* is ‘une petite comédie en musique’ that presents a play within a play within a play. When Tircis, a shepherd,<sup>28</sup> wins over the woman he loves, they perform a duet affirming their affections, and he sings, ‘*Oh Ciel! Bergers! Caliste! ah je suis hors de moi! | Si l’on meurt de plaisir je dois perdre la vie*’ (*Troisième intermède*, iv). Therefore, the effect of revealing love through music is to draw the lover into a different state of being by way of pleasure. As previously noted, Freud claims that when someone is in love, ‘the main quantity of libido is transferred on to the object’,<sup>29</sup> which describes a similar action of emptying one’s being. And Bergson describes a process of artistic creation using, again, very similar terms; he writes, ‘Pour bien lire, il suffit de posséder la partie intellectuelle de l’art du comédien; mais pour bien jouer, il faut être comédien de toute son âme et dans toute sa personne. Ainsi la création poétique exige un certain oubli de soi’.<sup>30</sup> Thus, reciprocal confessions of love render the individual ‘hors de soi’, and this could be said as well of the transporting effects of music and dance in Molière’s *comédies-ballets*.

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### 5.3 Metaspectatorship

#### 5.3.1 Theatrical Spectatorship and Criticism

This state of being ‘hors de soi’ is also visible in Molière’s metaaudiences, where we see yet again a division between the empathetic and the narcissistic. The former are

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<sup>28</sup> The Maître à danser in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* instructs Monsieur Jourdain about matching social status to sung dialogue, saying, ‘Lorsqu’on a des Personnes à faire parler en Musique, il faut bien que pour la vraisemblance on donne dans la Bergerie [...] il n’est guère naturel en Dialogue, que des Princes, ou des Bourgeois, chantent leurs passions’ (I, ii).

<sup>29</sup> Freud, *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis*, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> Bergson, pp. 80-1.

more prone to abandon themselves to spectacle and love, while the latter avoid coming to self-knowledge through spectatorship. Unlike the previous section, which discovered some benefits to putting narcissists on stage, the presence of such characters in the audience tends to be galling and disruptive to the actors, their fellow metaspectators, and to the real audience.

But first, it is useful to know Molière's stance towards the audience, as presented in his most obvious work of metatheatre. In *L'Impromptu*, he claims that he feels a great deal of pressure over the success or failure of this new play, but with respect to his critics, he asks his troupe, 'Est-ce moi, je vous prie, que cela regarde maintenant; et lorsqu'on attaque une pièce qui a eu du succès, n'est-ce pas attaquer plutôt le jugement de ceux qui l'ont approuvée, que l'art de celui qui l'a faite?' (v). According to his logic, his success as a playwright transfers his audience into his place, because it is their judgment that is attacked by jealous poets, rather than he himself. Therefore, any upheaval surrounding his play—specifically *L'École des femmes*—has nothing to do with him. In posing these questions, Molière adopts the opposite of a narcissistic stance, by diverting attention away from himself. Moreover, this position is analogous to his role selection, as Descotes writes, 'Le prestige de Don Juan a rejeté au second plan le personnage de Sganarelle. Le personnage d'Orgon a subi le même sort. Et pourtant les deux rôles furent, à la création, tenus par Molière'.<sup>31</sup> In casting himself in parts that are less prestigious, because they are not eponymous, Molière is consistent with his statements that deflect attention from himself, shining a spotlight on the judgment of his public.

Owing to this splitting of himself that Molière accomplishes in separating the man from the actor, he is able to rise above his quarrels in ways that some of his more

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<sup>31</sup> Descotes, p. 184.

narcissistic and ridiculous characters cannot. For instance, after Vadius's departure in *Les Femmes savantes*, Trissotin tries to excuse his angry outburst, raising a similar issue to the one that Molière raises in *L'Impromptu* when he discusses handling his critics. Correspondingly, he informs Philaminte, 'À mon emportement ne donnez aucun blâme; | C'est votre jugement que je défends, Madame, | Dans le Sonnet qu'il a l'audace d'attaquer' (III, iv, 1045-7). He thus shifts the embarrassment of Vadius's criticisms from himself onto her—the folly isn't to have created a bad work of art, but to have appreciated it. The greatest differences between *L'Impromptu*'s Molière and Trissotin lie in their respective success and rage (Molière possesses the former, and Trissotin, the latter). When Mademoiselle Béjart stops the actors' rehearsal to give her opinion of Molière's handling of his detractors, she says, 'Tout le monde attend de vous une réponse vigoureuse' (v). But it is Trissotin who responds vigorously and with contempt to Vadius; we do not see Molière the character do this, but rather, he justifies avoiding this. For Molière, the conflict has little to do with him, but for Trissotin, the narcissist, it does. In this way, Molière elevates the status of the audience, by diverting attention to it.

Just as singing can promote the recognition of love, Molière also shows that being in an audience can provide the spark for love. And as we have seen in the previous chapter, love is a force that can actually affect positive change in an individual personality. The theatre, thus, provides both a physical place and a psychic space for affection to take root. Consequently, casting himself in the role of a shepherd, Cléante in *Le Malade imaginaire* recounts the story of his meeting the weeping, afflicted spectator Angélique, saying, 'Un Berger était attentif aux beautés d'un Spectacle qui ne faisait que de commencer, lorsqu'il fut tiré de son attention par un bruit qu'il entendit à ses côtés' (II, v). He rescues a shepherdess from the abuse of

another man—a disruptive spectator—and then falls under the spell of her tears, as Octave does for Hyacinthe in *Les Fourberies de Scapin*. Cléante continues, ‘Tout le Spectacle passe sans qu’il y donne aucune attention: mais il se plaint qu’il est trop court, parce qu’en finissant il le sépare de son adorable Bergère’ (II, v). Although he is painfully conscious of its duration, he is otherwise unaware of what occurs on stage. In this way, Molière shows himself to be forgiving in terms of theatrical etiquette—he does not mind when his drama creates moments of empathy between his metatheatrical spectators.

In fact, he reveals the powerlessness of lovers in concealing their affections in the theatrical arena, especially through Sostrate’s avoidance of spectatorship. In *Les Amants magnifiques*, Iphicrate claims that Sostrate skipped their *fête* because, ‘Sostrate est de ces gens, Madame, qui croient qu’il ne sied pas bien d’être curieux comme les autres, et il est beau d’affecter de ne pas courir où tout le monde court’ (I, ii). This description parallels how Célimène describes Alceste as swimming against the tide of public opinion.<sup>32</sup> It is intended to diminish Sostrate, implying that he is the kind of spectator who bases his artistic judgments on the reactions of others he views as beneath himself. However, for Sostrate, unlike Alceste, this is untrue, because he sequesters himself to hide his true feelings for Ériphile.

In addition to creating the potential for revealing feelings one would rather hide, spectatorship carries other risks, like the possibility of falling victim to the manipulations of a cabal. Hence, Mascarille invites the *Précieuses ridicules* to attend a new play with him, but first instructs them in audience etiquette, saying,

Mais je vous demande d’applaudir, comme il faut, quand nous serons là. Car je me suis engagé de faire valoir la Pièce, et l’auteur m’en est venu prier encore ce matin. C’est la coutume ici, qu’à nous autres gens de condition, les

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<sup>32</sup> Célimène informs her guests about Alceste’s critical disposition, saying, ‘Le Sentiment d’autrui, n’est jamais, pour lui plaire’ (*Le Misanthrope*, II, iv, 673).

Auteurs viennent lire leurs Pièces nouvelles, pour nous engager à les trouver belles, et leur donner de la réputation, et je vous laisse à penser, si quand nous disons quelque chose le Parterre ose nous contredire. (ix)

Mascarille's words move in concert with Trissotin's, in that they draw attention away from the audience and back to the playwright, to accord him 'de la réputation',<sup>33</sup> or celebrity. Also, his claim that the *parterre* would not dare disagree with him shows him to be a genuine bully.

Furthermore, certain spectators are vulnerable to flattery, which clouds their vision and thinking. Aristione enters the stage while commenting on the theatrical spectacle she has just been treated to by the prince Timoclès. She tells him that his production displayed 'à nos yeux quelque chose de si noble, de si grand, et de si majestueux, que le Ciel même ne saurait aller au-delà, et je puis dire assurément qu'il n'y a rien dans l'Univers qui s'y puisse égaler' (*Les Amants magnifiques*, I, ii). This is interesting, because we, the audience, have also seen the spectacle of which she speaks—it was the *Premier intermède*, during the course of which several putti sing the lyrics, 'Ah que ces Princesses sont belles!' and 'La plus belle des Immortelles, | Notre Mère, a bien moins d'appas'. Therefore, *double énonciation* permits the real audience to know, from the moment of her entrance on stage, that Aristione is susceptible to sycophancy, and enjoyed the suggestion that she and her daughter are more beautiful than Vénus. Thanking Timoclès and Iphicrate yet again, Aristione says, 'vous prenez soin l'un et l'autre de nous y combler de tous les divertissements qui peuvent charmer les chagrins des plus mélancoliques' (I, ii). Thus, she sets up compliments as a method for combatting *la mélancolie*, at least with respect to unguarded, high-status spectators. In this case, flattering the audience, though

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<sup>33</sup> The *Dictionnaire* of the Académie française defines the noun *reputation* as, 'Renom, estime, opinion publique'.

momentarily effective as a manipulative strategy, ultimately comes to nought for these two narcissistic princes.

Moreover, spectators can even be the victims of public opinion. The Marquis of *La Critique* depends on the judgments of others to fashion his own. He loathes the notion of sharing the opinion of the *parterre*, but he desires to embrace the views of the scholarly. After Lysidas admits he does not like *L'École des femmes*, the Marquis gloats to Dorante, 'Tu vois que nous avons les Savants de notre côté' (vi). Since his reaction is preconceived, it does not even matter whether or not he actually attends the theatre. We see this in action when Lysidas and Dorante debate the specific merits of *L'École des femmes*, whilst the Marquis, Climène, and Élise (wearing a mask) play an audience, applauding everything Lysidas says and rebuking Dorante. Discussing Arnolphe's emotional behaviour in his quarrel with Agnès, the Chevalier asks, 'Mais enfin si nous nous regardions nous-mêmes, quand nous sommes bien amoureux?...' (vi), to which the Marquis replies, 'Je ne veux pas seulement t'écouter'. Even though Arnolphe is decidedly risible, empathetic Dorante attempts to see from his perspective, whilst the narcissistic Marquis (again, as a spectator, watching Lysidas and Dorante) effectively puts an end to his performance, because he is unwilling to 'se regarder soi-même'. Thus, we see how public opinion can aid narcissistic spectators, by obviating their need to actually watch and listen to drama to form a judgment.

And Molière extends this psychological critique of subpar spectators to a social one. Éraste's exhaustive opening monologue in *Les Fâcheux*—comprised of 106 *alexandrins*, a taxing effort for an actor, mirroring the irritating situation he recounts—tells of a recent experience of theatre attendance, during which he was confronted with a boor, whose actions are calculated to attract attention. He tells his

valet of a man who barges noisily into a theatre, distracting the actors on stage and causing a ‘grand fracas’ (I, i, 19), pushing Éraсте to wonder of his fellow Frenchmen,

[E]t faut-il, sur nos défauts extrêmes,  
 Qu’en théâtre public nous nous jouions nous-mêmes,  
 Et confirmions ainsi, par des éclats de fous,  
 Ce que chez nos voisins on dit partout de nous!  
 (I, i, 23-6)

He sees this spectator’s disruptive behaviour—talking loudly, blocking others’ views of the stage—as not only annoying, but an embarrassing reflection of his peers. Like Dorante sympathizing with Arnolphe, Éraсте uses the pronoun ‘nous’ with reference to himself and this man—he does not see himself as superior. One very curious detail Éraсте shares is how, ‘jusques à des vers qu’il en savait par cœur, | Il me les récitait tout haut avant l’Acteur’ (I, i, 57-8). It is perplexing how a spectator so little concerned with what is happening on stage could possibly have memorized any lines, which suggests that he attends the play in question frequently enough for some dialogue to have lodged in his brain, further showing how much he desires the spotlight: that he repeatedly goes through the motions of attending the theatre. Éraсте explains that the boor’s last action in the audience is to make an early exit, ‘Car les gens du bel air pour agir galamment | Se gardent bien, surtout, d’ouïr le dénouement’ (I, i, 61-2). However, Éraсте’s explanation seems like a half-truth. More likely, this bad spectator leaves early, not to be fashionable, but merely to be conspicuous, just as he was in arriving late.

Furthermore, Molière’s narcissists often gloat about such behaviour. Wearing his conceits proudly on his sleeve, Acaste tells Clitandre of his theatrical acumen, boasting,

Pour de l’Esprit, j’en ai, sans doute, et du bon goût,  
 À juger sans Étude, et raisonner de tout;  
 À faire aux Nouveautés, dont je suis idolâtre,  
 Figure de Savant, sur les Bancs du Théâtre;

Y décider, en Chef, et faire du Fracas  
 À tous les beaux Endroits qui méritent des *Has*.  
 (*Le Misanthrope*, III, i, 791-6)

He gives a revealing description of himself as a spectator, and one that figures prominently into his conception of his own identity as a man with every reason to be ‘content de soi’ (III, i, 804).

Sometimes setting himself up as a reference, Molière nonetheless makes an appeal to the spirit and shrewd judgment of his good public through metatheatrical Alceste opposes the non-discriminating, and after he releases a wave of criticism upon the human race, Philinte comments with insight,

Je ris des noirs accès où je vous envisage;  
 Et crois voir, en nous deux, sous mêmes soins nourris,  
 Ces deux Frères que peint *L’École des maris*,  
 Dont...  
 (*Le Misanthrope*, I, i, 98-101)

At this point, Alceste halts Philinte’s analogy by interjecting, ‘Mon Dieu, laissons là vos comparaisons fades’ (I, i, 101). Philinte gives proof of being an attentive audience member; he has seen *L’École des maris* and digested it. Molière shows the audience the disparity he envisions between genteel Philinte, who eagerly identifies with the relaxed attitude of Ariste in *L’École des maris*, and Alceste, who resembles Sganarelle and yet is unable to bear the thought of it.

The aggregate of these elements is distilled in a significant scene in *Le Misanthrope*. When Oronte recites his sonnet, his delivery is interspersed at turns by Philinte’s praise and Alceste’s whispered censure. After hearing four lines, Philinte tells the would-be poet, ‘Je suis déjà charmé de ce petit morceau’ (I, ii, 319), prompting Alceste to ask his friend, ‘Quoi! vous avez le front de trouver cela beau?’ (I, ii, 320). Thus, in two lines, Molière has displayed a microcosm of the interactions between stage and audience, with an actor encouraged by a non-critical spectator, and

a critical spectator who is blisteringly conscious of his co-spectator's every polite gesture. Yet, Oronte is also aware of Philinte's code of spectatorship. In fact, he depends upon the in-place social mores that require genteel praise in his attempt to gain narcissistic gratification. At the outset of this scene, Oronte does not believe he is risking exposure to any real criticism. However, the layers of Alceste's psychology run deeper. Bergson offers this scene as an example of one where 'tout l'intérêt [...] est dans un personnage unique qui se dédouble',<sup>34</sup> adding that 'le secret de l'effet produit' lies in 'la comédie intérieure que cette scène ne fait que réfracter'.<sup>35</sup> This internal splitting, between Alceste as a *misanthrope* and as a *gentilhomme*, leads him to become enraged, 'non pas contre Oronte, comme il le croit, mais contre lui-même',<sup>36</sup> writes Bergson perspicaciously. Hence, if Alceste truly hates mankind (a view which Rousseau doubted, as we have seen in the first chapter<sup>37</sup>), this misanthropy is simply an extension of his own self-loathing.

Indeed, comparing Alceste's internal life to that of greedy Harpagon, Moore states that, 'Alceste is a symbol of something much more interesting and complicated'.<sup>38</sup> He plumbs Alceste the *gentilhomme*, writing,

It is a natural human tendency to cover and defend one's actions by the appeal to a standard outside oneself. Conversely, we often fail to see how much our adherence to such a general standard is a consequence of self-interest and vanity. A prominent member of a church choir will presumably account for his activity by claiming that he is anxious to contribute to worship. What he does not say, and may not even realize, is that he may also be obeying deep urges of display and exhibition that are active in his subconscious self.<sup>39</sup>

If we accept that this certain 'something much more interesting and complicated' is his narcissism, and that his desire to adhere to a code of conduct—'Je veux qu'on soit

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<sup>34</sup> Bergson, p. 57.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>37</sup> See Section 1.2.

<sup>38</sup> Moore, *Molière: A New Criticism*, p. 124.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

sincère' (I, i, 35)—is really 'a consequence of self-interest and vanity', then it helps explain the situational insincerity of a number of Molière's greatest empathizers, as we have seen earlier in this chapter. In other words, there is a distinct place for acting in a person's empathetic conduct, both on stage and in reality.

Spectacle, therefore, always occurs in a situation where narcissism is in play. This guides us towards the question of the theatre within the theatre. Between scenes vii and viii of *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas*, all of the characters on stage become an audience together, and Monsieur Harpin crosses between being a member of this audience and almost becoming a member of the real audience of Molière's play. He bursts onto the stage, interrupting the *comédie* offered by the Vicomte, and accuses the Comtesse of infidelity. She rebuffs him, saying, 'Mais vraiment, on ne vient point ainsi se jeter au travers d'une Comédie, et troubler un Acteur qui parle' (I, viii), to which the incensed lover replies, 'Eh têtebleu la véritable Comédie qui se fait ici, c'est celle que vous jouez' (I, viii). This is an electrifying instance of a spectator halting a performance to draw attention to his intimate personal problems. On the one hand, the previous scenes have set up the real audience to laugh at the Comtesse d'Escarbagnas. However, one would tend to agree with her that it is wrong to interrupt a show. For him, the simple fact of her and her guests watching a comedy together without him affords him a great deal of information about her. It is a rejection, and even though she entreats him, 'venez prendre place pour voir la Comédie', and he declines, saying, 'Voilà ma Scène faite, voilà mon rôle joué', before walking out with his wounded pride. Narcissistic Harpin is willing to suffer embarrassment for the sake of having all eyes on him.

But Molière also knows how to show that spectacle necessarily establishes a situation of voyeurism, with all its intrinsic dangers. During the scenes of Elmire's

entrapment of Tartuffe, Orgon's failure to stop the thrust of their conversation suggests that he actually wants to watch Tartuffe engage in sexual relations with his wife. Orgon nearly transforms himself and the real audience into viewers of pornography. When she asks Tartuffe to check and see if her husband is outside the room, he responds with a searing truth, not unlike when he confesses his sins to Orgon and Damis, as discussed in the third chapter.<sup>40</sup> Tartuffe explains, 'je l'ai mis au point de voir tout, sans rien croire' (*Le Tartuffe*, IV, v, 1526). He claims he has brainwashed her husband—unknowingly insulting the man to his face—and yet Orgon remains hidden. His inaction at overhearing this statement indicates that Tartuffe is right, especially given Orgon's own explosive temper and his previous comment to his wife that her own reaction to Tartuffe was too sedate.

Such voyeurism takes a macabre turn when, upon meeting Angélique in *Le Malade imaginaire*, Thomas Diafoirus entreats her, 'je vous invite à venir voir l'un de ces jours pour vous divertir, la Dissection d'une femme sur quoi je dois raisonner' (II, v). It is fitting that Thomas Diafoirus would find participating in such a ghoulish spectacle pleasurable, in that, he himself seems corpse-like.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, there is an element of commonality between Orgon's preparedness to watch Tartuffe cuckold him and Thomas Diafoirus's desire for his future bride to watch him presiding over the disassembling of another woman's body. Needless to say, his words are ripe for Toinette's mockery; she pipes up, 'Il y en a qui donnent la Comédie à leurs Maîtresses; mais donner une Dissection est quelque chose de plus galant', thus drawing the comparison explicitly between such a gruesome event and the theatre.

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<sup>40</sup> See Section 3.4.2.

<sup>41</sup> In a production of *Le Malade imaginaire* performed at the Comédie-française in 2011, the actor Alexandre Pavloff played Thomas Diafoirus in a way that was strongly suggestive of a corpse. Made-up to be extremely pale, Pavloff dramatically restricted his facial and corporeal motion.

The counterbalance of this voyeurism, or more exactly put, its profound *raison d'être*, is a desire for the exaltation of the self, the desire for celebrity. As the Vicomte did in the opening scene of *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas*, Monsieur Tibaudier recites poetry he has written for the object of his affections. Speaking to the Comtesse, he reads,

*Une personne de qualité  
Ravit mon âme,  
Elle a de la beauté,  
J'ai de la flamme;  
Mais je la blâme  
D'avoir de la fierté.  
(I, v)*

The Comtesse is pleased; she offers as commentary, 'Le premier Vers est beau, *Une personne de qualité*' (I, v), showing herself to be a solipsistic spectator, not unlike Aristione at the start of *Les Amants magnifiques*.

Likewise, Mascarille tells Magdelon, 'vous avez toute la mine d'avoir fait quelque Comédie' (*Les Précieuses ridicules*, ix), which she takes as a compliment. Clearly, she is keen to think of herself at center stage. Why? On the one hand, because, as Bénichou writes, 'La discussion morale qui s'engage au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle autour de la préciosité a pour objet principal l'amour, dont on se demande quelle est la définition véritable, et quelle doit être la place dans la vie',<sup>42</sup> and she appreciates what she perceives as admiring male attention, although she wants this admiration for her talent and *esprit* more than for physical beauty. But the larger issue for Magdelon and Cathos is that they see witty banter about love as a means for cultivating fame within a crowd of spirited nobility. If love is what can alter a narcissist, then the girls are lost, because their ultimate goal is celebrity. When Marotte announces Mascarille's arrival, Magdelon exclaims breathlessly to Cathos, 'C'est sans doute un

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<sup>42</sup> Bénichou, p. 247-8.

bel esprit, qui aura ouï parler de nous' (vi). Subsequently, she confesses to Mascarille about their dearth of visitors, 'Hélas nous ne sommes pas encore connues' (ix). The desire for fame is explicit.

Similarly, the final point the Maître de musique makes before the arrival of Monsieur Jourdain is that, 'il nous donne moyen de nous faire connaître dans le Monde' (*Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, I, i). This statement reverberates with Magdelon's aspirations. Thus, finally at the end of their debate over their employer, the music teacher states what it is that the two artists truly desire: 'de se faire connaître dans le monde'. Any narcissist has the same ambition, and clearly, even the less narcissistic are susceptible, as well.

And with Alceste, this drive becomes megalomaniacal when he tells Philinte that the outcome of his lawsuit will settle, 'Si les Hommes auront assez d'effronterie, | Seront assez méchants, scélérats et pervers, | Pour me faire injustice aux yeux de l'Univers' (*Le Misanthrope*, I, i, 197-200). He yearns to have all eyes on him. Moreover, throwing light on the dangers of mixing narcissists and the law, Robert Simon writes that,

To a narcissistically injured individual with [trauma-associated narcissistic symptoms], the loss of a lawsuit can be devastating. It will likely be perceived as a great injustice. Additionally, narcissistic individuals may vastly overestimate their chances of prevailing in litigation, especially when they deny obvious responsibility in contributing to their injury.<sup>43</sup>

Indeed, Alceste does overestimate his odds of winning and does view his loss as an *injustice*; and yet, these feelings are mixed with the exhilaration of having the whole world for an audience.

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### 5.3.2 Musical Spectatorship and Criticism

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<sup>43</sup> Robert I. Simon, 'Distinguishing Trauma-Associated Narcissistic Symptoms from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: A Diagnostic Challenge', *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*, 10, 1 (2002), 28-36 (p. 35).

As we have seen, the state of being ‘hors de soi’ is clearly affirmed in Molière’s oeuvre. And it contributes to the effects of sympathy, but also in the revelation of self-knowledge—and this is visible in the reactions of his metaspectators to music and dance, in that the more empathetic welcome such performances, while the more narcissistic reject them.

Let us first examine the rather striking example of the seventh *entrée* in *Pastorale comique*. It features Orphée, another Ovidian figure<sup>44</sup> and, in this *comédie-ballet*, a role originated by Lully. Molière writes,

On fait paraître Orphée fils de cette Muse, qui par les divers sons de sa Lyre, exprimant tantôt une douleur languissante, et tantôt un dépit violent, inspire les mêmes mouvements à ceux qui le suivent, et entre autres une Nymphé que le hasard a fait rencontrer sur l’un des rochers qu’il attire après lui, est tellement transportée par l’effet de cette harmonie, qu’elle découvre sans y penser les secrets de son cœur par cette Chanson. (*Septième entrée*)

Hence, the nymph discovers her love through instrumental music, ‘l’effet de cette harmonie’. The expression that describes this experience is *être transporté*; and indeed, according to the Académie française, the verb *transporter* means, ‘Porter d’un lieu à un autre’, adding, ‘On dit, que *La colere, la joye transporte un homme*, pour dire, qu’Elle le met hors de luy-mesme’. Thus, we yet again see music lifting one beyond oneself.

This episode of musical metaspectatorship is especially interesting when considered side-by-side with Euryale’s narration of the transformation he undergoes while watching the Princesse sing and dance. He effuses to Moron and Arbate of her performance,

[L]es sons merveilleux qu’elle formait passaient jusqu’au fond de mon âme, et tenaient tous mes sens dans un ravissement à ne pouvoir en revenir. Elle a fait éclater ensuite une disposition toute divine, et ses pieds amoureux sur l’émail d’un tendre gazon traçaient d’aimables caractères qui m’enlevaient hors de

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<sup>44</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses: Books IX-XV* [8 CE], trans. by Frank Justus Miller, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 65-127.

moi-même, et m'attachaient par des nœuds invincibles aux doux et justes mouvements dont tout son corps suivait les mouvements de l'harmonie.  
(III, ii)

Both of these passages describe how love is facilitated by *harmonie*, which according to the Académie française, means, 'Concert & accord de divers sons', as well as, 'Un accord parfait & une entière correspondance de plusieurs parties ensemble de quelque nature qu'elle soient'.<sup>45</sup> And for Euryale, this overall impression of the *accord* between her dancing and the music leads to an emptying out of his ego. In a sense, the expression *enlever hors de soi-même* is the inverse of the term *être rempli de quelqu'un* as it is used by Élise in *La Critique*.<sup>46</sup> While her singing charms him, it is her dancing that causes him to forget himself and transports him. Enraptured, Euryale continues, 'j'ai pensé plus de vingt fois oublier ma résolution pour me jeter à ses pieds, et lui faire un aveu sincère de l'ardeur que je sens pour elle'. As her spectator, rendered 'hors de soi', he nearly loses control of his body. Conversely, Moron (wrongly) informs the Princesse that Euryale had no reaction to her performance, and she is enraged, telling the *plaisant*, 'je ne puis souffrir cette hauteur étrange de ne rien estimer' (III, iii). Nonchalantly, Moron replies, 'Il n'estime, et n'aime que lui'. For this narcissist who spurns all of her suitors, his conduct is magnetic. As an unloving person, she is attracted to a reflection of herself.

Indeed, a clear distinction between empathetic and narcissistic spectators of music and dance emerges between Ériphile in *Les Amants magnifiques* and the eponymous *Princesse d'Élide*, when each one seeks solace in the performing arts. After Ériphile has told Sostrate that she loves him, Cléonice comforts her asking,

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<sup>45</sup> Furetière defines the noun *harmonie* as, 'Musique, mélange de plusieurs voix ou sons d'instruments qui font ensemble un accord agréable à l'oreille', also noting that it 'se dit figurément en Morale des choses qui ont de l'union, de l'intelligence, qui tendent à même fin'. Richelet remarks solely upon its musical denotation, writing, 'L'harmonie est une convenance & un accord de sons différents de plusieurs parties'.

<sup>46</sup> See Section 5.2.1.

‘vous plaît-il que vos danseurs, qui expriment si bien toutes les passions, vous donnent maintenant quelque épreuve de leur adresse?’ (IV, v). This confident assertion suggests strong empathetic qualities in dancers: that they can recognize the passions they see in others, imitate them, and mirror them, irrespective of whether they feel those passions themselves. As Naomi Cumming asserts of music, using Bach as an example, ‘recognition promotes empathy’.<sup>47</sup> Contrastingly, when Moron has presumptuously told her that she loves Euryale, the haughty and offended Princesse demands to be sung to, entreating Clymène and Philis, ‘Ô vous, admirables personnes, qui par la douceur de vos chants avez l’art d’adoucir les plus fâcheuses inquiétudes, approchez-vous d’ici de grâce, et tâchez de charmer avec votre Musique le chagrin où je suis’ (IV, vi). While Ériphile is motivated to spectatorship through feelings of hopelessness in love, the Princesse is motivated through wounded pride.

Fittingly, the reactions of the two young princesses diverge sharply. While Ériphile allows the *pantomimes* to complete their dance, in spite of her professed ‘sombre mélancolie’ (V, i), the Princesse d’Élide actually interrupts the duet that she requested in the first place, telling the singers, ‘quelque douceur qu’aient vos chants, ils ne font que redoubler mon inquiétude’ (*Cinquième intermède*). If one accepts the premise from *Pastorale comique* that music imparts self-knowledge by means of rendering the listener *transporté*, then in her rejection of spectatorship, the Princesse d’Élide is avoiding recognition of her true sentiments with respect to Euryale.

The final musical performance of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* begins with the presentation of the audience of the *Ballet des nations*, showing individual spectators jockeying for attention. Departing the theatre, a *bourgeois* declares with indignation,

*S’il me prend jamais envie  
De retourner de ma vie*

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<sup>47</sup> Naomi Cumming, ‘The Subjectivities of “Erbarne Dich”’, *Music Analysis*, 16, 1 (1997), 5-44, p. 17.

À Ballet ni Comédie,  
Je veux bien qu'on m'estropie.  
(Première entrée)

His wife implies that their absence will be noticed, saying, '*Ils seront bien ébaubis | Quand ils nous verront partis*'. Once again, those spectators who are entirely self-focused appear to avoid confronting song and dance, by literally fleeing the theatre. Narcissistic spectators actively evade being taken 'hors de soi'.

The final musical performance of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* begins with the presentation of the metaaudience of the *Ballet des nations*, showing individual spectators jockeying for attention. And within this obstreperous group, the individuals that are excluded from the overall 'we' are the *bourgeois*. Departing the theatre, a *bourgeois* declares with indignation,

S'il me prend jamais envie  
De retourner de ma vie  
À Ballet ni Comédie,  
Je veux bien qu'on m'estropie.  
(Première entrée)

Then, his wife implies that their shared absence will be noticed, saying, '*Ils seront bien ébaubis | Quand ils nous verront partis*'. Socially, this *bourgeois* family is left out, and they exit because they are not given the respect to which they feel entitled. Perhaps their unity with one another is reinforced by their exclusion from the rest of the metaaudience, but nonetheless, they present the real audience and Monsieur Jourdain and his guests alike with an image of isolation from a larger, unified social community. For Jourdain especially, who ends on a triumphant note, his status within the 'we-perspective' is overshadowed with ambiguity by the exclusion of the *bourgeois* metaspectators, since he himself is the *bourgeois-gentilhomme-spectator*.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Canova-Green writes, 'Les intermèdes des trois premiers actes de la pièce, et notamment ceux dont Monsieur Jourdain lui-même est l'acteur (la chanson de Janneton, le menuet et l'habillement en cadence), de même que le divertissement final, s'il n'était détourné à d'autres fins par Dorante,

And once again, those metaspectators who are entirely self-focused appear to avoid consuming song and dance, by literally fleeing the theatre. Narcissistic spectators actively evade being carried ‘hors de soi’.

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## 5.4 Non-Verbal Responses

### 5.4.1 Laughter

Laughter establishes a double dynamic. As Bergson shows in *Le Rire*, the comic assumes a separation and a union all at once: separation between the one(s) who laugh(s) and the object of laughter, and union between those who laugh together at the same thing. For example, he claims, ‘Le comique naîtra, semble-t-il, quand des hommes réunis en groupe, dirigeront tous leur attention sur un d’entre eux, faisant taire leur sensibilité et exerçant leur seule intelligence’.<sup>49</sup> Hence, there is a kind of empathy in the second case, and possibly a sort of narcissism in the first, when the object of laughter refuses to laugh at himself and thereby cuts himself off from a social group to which he might otherwise belong. Such cases are numerous in Molière.

As with being brought ‘hors de soi’ by music, the narcissistic often refuse laughter. When pressed about why he finds *L’École des femmes* to be detestable, the Marquis of *La Critique* confesses, ‘Il ne faut que voir les continuels éclats de rire que le Parterre y fait: je ne veux point d’autre chose, pour témoigner qu’elle ne vaut rien’ (v). The Marquis is more interested in looking around than in being swept away by what unfolds on stage. Dorante tells an audience-watching anecdote, in which he

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viendront alors marquer le passage à l’acte d’une image du moi en puissance, le moment précis de la réalisation de cette image par sa transformation en rôle social, même si ce moment est aussi celui où s’accusera paradoxalement l’écart irréductible entre cette image et les qualités réelles du moi’. See Canova-Green, ‘*Ces gens-là se trémoussent bien...*’: *Ébats et débats dans la comédie-ballet de Molière* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 2007), pp. 138-9.

<sup>49</sup> Bergson, p. 6.

spotted an acquaintance actively disdaining the enjoyment of his fellow-spectators, displaying, ‘un sérieux le plus sombre du monde’ (v). In this way, Dorante sets himself up as an audience-within-an-audience, telling the others that, ‘Ce fut une seconde Comédie, que le chagrin de notre ami’ (v), showing his own laughter to be doubled: he laughs with the audience at the comedy on stage, as well as laughing at his fellow spectator who separates himself from those around him.

Even more isolated, during his frenzied search for his money, Harpagon tries to draw the audience into his panic. He wails, ‘N’est-il point caché là parmi vous? Ils me regardent tous, et se mettent à rire’ (*L’Avare*, IV, vii). Harpagon’s comment that the spectators are laughing at him is dramaturgically risky, because its success as a laugh line is dependent upon its being the case. In accusing them of committing a crime, he disinclines them towards sympathy. This further accentuates Bergson’s point about laughter as a dividing line between an individual object and a group; and in the eyes of the narcissistic individual, that laughter turns the group into a coterie of criminals. This instance in *L’Avare* is a case where the text deliberately addresses the spectators directly (‘ils rient’), thus blurring the line between the metapublic and the actual public.

Likewise, we see such defensive behaviour in Monsieur de Pourceaugnac. When he first appears on stage, he is being mocked; he has an audience. But he isn’t passive; rather, he fights back their taunts, insisting on his superiority. It is clear from a stage direction that this audience is unseen by the real audience of the play—it reads that Monsieur de Pourceaugnac turns around ‘*comme parlant à des Gens qui le suivent*’ (I, iii). It is unclear whether or not the real audience also can *hear* the fictional one laughing. The *Limosin* says with indignation, ‘Au diantre soit la sottie Ville, et les sottes Gens qui y sont: ne pouvoir faire un pas sans trouver des Nigauds

qui vous regardent, et se mettent à rire!’ (I, iii). By reacting this way, Pourceaugnac increases the distance between himself and this invisible group.

Similarly, when Alceste says he’d like to lose his lawsuit in order to reveal the weakness of humanity, Philinte augurs, ‘On se rirait de vous, Alceste, tout de bon, | Si l’on vous entendait parler de la façon’ (*Le Misanthrope*, I, i, 203-4). Recalling this warning, he himself becomes the performer and the recipient of laughter from the *marquis ridicules* when the Garde demands that Alceste come with him to the *Maréchaux*. Digging in his heels on the subject of Oronte’s poem, he insists that Oronte’s poem is mediocre, and a stage direction follows that reads, ‘À *Clitandre et Acaste, qui rient*’ (II, vi). Perturbed by their laughter, Alceste exclaims, ‘Par la sangbleu, Messieurs, je ne croyais pas être | Si plaisant que je suis’ (II, vi, 773-4). Like Pourceaugnac, Alceste cannot join in with laughter at his own expense.

However, laughter can be unfounded. Célimène puts on an informal performance of monologues for a primarily adoring audience; Alceste, however, finds his fellow spectators repellent. When Clitandre balks at Alceste’s attacks, demanding he censure Célimène rather than her audience, Alceste counters with,

Non, morbleu, c’est à vous; et vos Ris complaisants  
Tirent de son Esprit, tous ces traits médisants;  
Son Humeur Satirique est sans cesse nourrie  
Par le coupable Encens de votre Flatterie.  
(*Le Misanthrope*, II, iv, 659-62)

His point complicates the one made by the character Molière in *L’Impromptu* when he claims that a successful play reflects more strongly on the audience than on the playwright.

In an inverse situation, the narcissist may fancy himself a one-man audience, laughing at the expense of an entire group to which he does not wish to belong. Yet,

this still achieves the result of isolating him from a larger community. Writing about the side of laughter that is not ‘très flatteur pour nous’,<sup>50</sup> Bergson explains that,

Nous verrions que le mouvement de détente ou d’expansion n’est qu’un prélude au rire, que le rieur rentre tout de suite en soi, s’affirme plus ou moins orgueilleusement lui-même, et tendrait à considérer la personne d’autrui comme une marionette dont il tient les ficelles. Dans cette présomption nous démêlerions d’ailleurs bien vite un peu d’égoïsme, et, derrière l’égoïsme lui-même, quelque chose de moins spontané et de plus amer, je ne sais quel pessimisme naissant qui s’affirme de plus en plus à mesure que le rieur raisonne davantage son rire.<sup>51</sup>

The banner example of such a one-man audience—‘rentré en soi’ rather than ‘hors de soi’—is Arnolphe, when he asks Chrysalde, ‘Enfin ce sont partout des sujets de Satire, | Et comme Spectateur, ne puis-je pas en rire?’ (*L’École des femmes*, I, i, 43-4). In response, Chrysalde warns him, ‘Oui: mais qui rit d’autrui, | Doit craindre, qu’en revanche, on rie aussi de lui’ (I, i, 45-6). His approach is an insurance policy against narcissistic wounding. Owing to his laughter, Chrysalde tells Arnolphe bluntly, ‘vous risquez diablement’ (I, i, 66). Arnolphe’s spectatorship is precarious because he privileges laughter without considering how he himself is laughable.

Exactly what Chrysalde warns Arnolphe of at the start of the play—that he may become a source of laughter himself—comes to pass quickly when Horace laughs about the letter Agnès threw to him with the stone. Horace tells Arnolphe, ‘Je ne puis y songer sans de bon cœur en rire. | Et vous n’en riez pas assez à mon avis’ (III, iv, 937-8). Arnolphe comes back with, ‘Pardonnez-moi, j’en ris tout autant que je puis’ (III, iv, 939), after a stage direction that reads, ‘avec un ris forcé’ (III, iv). Arnolphe cannot bear to laugh at himself. Similarly, when they first meet face to face in *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, Zerbinette becomes a performer and Géronte her disgruntled audience, who indeed, recognizes himself in the drama she relates. He

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<sup>50</sup> Bergson, p. 151.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., pp. 151-2.

hears her laughing and inquires why she is doing so, to which she replies, ‘Cela ne vous regarde point, et je ris toute seule d’un conte qu’on vient de me faire, le plus plaisant qu’on puisse entendre. Je ne sais pas si c’est parce que je suis intéressée dans la chose’ (III, iii), suggesting with her use of the adjective *intéressé* that pleasure derived from laughter may be personal. And like Horace in *L’École des femmes*, who observes that Arnolphe is not laughing sufficiently, Zerbinette tells Géronte, ‘Mais il me semble que vous ne riez point de mon conte’ (III, iii).

In contrast to these examples of the isolated narcissist who cannot laugh at himself, we see the narcissist, when engaged in a deception, barely able to contain his laughter. For example, in *L’Amour médecin*, Sganarelle, acting along with Clitandre, pretends that he wants his daughter Lucinde to marry the young man. He has difficulty not breaking character, and at one point, a stage direction for Sganarelle reads, ‘s’étouffant de rire’ (III, vi). In this way, Molière does not hesitate to teeter on the line between actor and spectator.

Conversely, those who are sociable and thus open to sympathy, even empathy, defend laughter. Uranie defends the comic genre, arguing, ‘La Tragédie, sans doute, est quelque chose de beau quand elle est bien touchée; mais la Comédie a ses charmes, et je tiens que l’une n’est pas moins difficile à faire que l’autre’ (*La Critique*, vi). Dorante goes further, claiming that comedy—‘d’entrer comme il faut dans le ridicule des hommes’—is certainly more difficult. He reasons,

En un mot, dans les pièces sérieuses, il suffit, pour n’être point blâmé, de dire des choses qui soient de bon sens, et bien écrites: Mais ce n’est pas assez dans les autres; il y faut plaisanter; et c’est une étrange entreprise que celle de faire rire les honnêtes gens. (vi)

Moreover, we see Molière’s appreciation for a well-executed joke. When quarrelling with Anaxarque in *Les Amants magnifiques*, Clitidas observes, ‘Bien mentir, et bien plaisanter sont deux choses fort différentes, et il est bien plus facile de tromper les

gens, que de les faire rire' (I, ii). This runs parallel to the conflict between simply acting and acting for laughs. In a word, well-founded laughter assumes an empathy of which it is the sign and the realization, at once.

...

#### 5.4.2 Silence

In the theatre, there can be strength and strategy in silence and in the absence of an emotional reaction. And many of Molière's characters—both empathetic and narcissistic—promote being taciturn, albeit with divergent motivations. To begin with, knowing how to keep quiet can be a sign of high quality of mind. For instance, Élise in *La Critique* speaks of a writer, Damon, noting with admiration, 'sa naturelle paresse à soutenir la conversation' (ii). Recounting his appearance at a dinner party, she says of the other guests, 'Ils pensaient tous qu'il était là pour défrayer la Compagnie de bons mots [...] Mais il les trompa fort par son silence' (ii). They anticipated being his audience and wanted Damon to perform; however, in reality, it was the other way around, and Damon stands in for Molière, listening to others and taking note. Hence, his laconic comportment is both a writerly tool and a means for provoking a surprise.

Later in *La Critique*, placing the concept of silence into an explicitly theatrical context, Dorante augments Élise's promotion of it, whilst enumerating traits that characterize poor spectatorship. He lectures the ridiculous Marquis, 'n'apprêtez point à rire à ceux qui vous entendent parler; et songez qu'en ne disant mot, on croira, peut-être, que vous êtes d'habiles gens' (v). His conclusion is to advise silence as a

technique for concealment of one's weak thinking and poor judgment in aesthetic matters.<sup>52</sup>

Consequently, and especially in the *comédies-ballets*, we see characters policing each other's behaviour in this area. Thus, preventing Monsieur Jourdain from pestering Dorimène, 'narcissistic empathizer' Dorante educates him in good spectatorship and self-abnegation, saying before their musical entertainment, 'Monsieur Jourdain, prêtons silence à ces Messieurs; ce qu'ils nous diront, vaudra mieux que tout ce que nous pourrions dire' (IV, i). Likewise, following the unrefined departure of Monsieur Harpin in *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas*, the Vicomte tells the Comtesse, 'Les jaloux, Madame, sont comme ceux qui perdent leur procès, ils ont permission de tout dire. Prêtons silence à la Comédie' (I, viii). Through this statement, he draws a parallel between the noisy objections of a Monsieur Harpin and the caterwauling of an Alceste ('ceux qui perdent leur procès'), since both types impede the silence necessary for a theatrical.

Nevertheless, when spectator silence is the result of coercion, trouble may ensue. After having listened to the performance of the fake Vénus in *Les Amants magnifiques*, Aristione tells Ériphile, 'Ma Fille, les Dieux imposent silence à tous nos raisonnements' (IV, ii). For these two women, Anaxarque's theatrical offering was intended to render them inert and end their debate. Furthermore, were it not for Sostrate's genuine selflessness, the fake Vénus would have forced an unwanted husband on Ériphile.

And yet, one's capacity to keep silent or at least to control one's reactions can constitute a sign of vanity. A case that contrasts with Aristione and Anaxarque appears in the form of Arnolphe. In one of the two mentions of *vanité* (see Appendix

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<sup>52</sup> Molière offers related advice in other circumstances. For instance, Philinte advises Alceste about his lawsuit, 'Ma foi, vous ferez bien de garder le silence' (*Le Misanthrope*, I, i, 182).

4) in *L'École des femmes*, he attributes imprudence individually to Horace, but also to his fellow Frenchmen, conveniently excluding himself. He admonishes,

Voilà de nos Français l'ordinaire défaut.  
 Dans la possession d'une bonne fortune,  
 Le secret est toujours ce qui les importune;  
 Et la vanité sotté a pour eux tant d'appas,  
 Qu'ils se pendraient plutôt que de ne causer pas.<sup>53</sup>  
 (III, iii, 835-9)

This relates to exhibitionism and celebrity, and, here, silence is aligned with guarding sensitive information. Arnolphe takes discretion to a pathological extreme by suggesting that it is never to one's benefit to share one's good fortune with others. Of course, this relates directly to Arnolphe's own personal affairs and his plan to forcibly marry an unwilling girl. Accusing *all* Frenchmen ('nos Français') of prattling about their happiness out of vanity indicates that he is overcompensating; Arnolphe must hide his intentions to maintain his self-image. Later on, Horace shines light on this sort of vanity when he recounts to Arnolphe his hiding in Agnès's cupboard. He rhapsodizes to the older man, 'Et goûtât-on cent fois un bonheur tout parfait, | On n'en est pas content si quelqu'un ne le sait' (IV, vi, 1178-9). It should be noted that these words appear at the end of 39 *alexandrins*, and that Arnolphe does not speak one word to Horace in the scene. In his silence, Arnolphe in fact models behaviour that would have benefitted Horace. Silence for Horace would mean the protection of his own interests. In this comportment, Arnolphe has the upper hand.

This dialectic of silence and of speech undoubtedly finds its most fully-fledged expression in *Les Femmes savantes*, where it indicates at once the quality of *esprit* and the state of sympathy or antipathy. The presence of Henriette during Trissotin's poetry performance proves threatening to the other women in that she has

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<sup>53</sup> There is no more obvious evidence of the truth in his words, not as he applies them to the French, but rather to humanity, than the existence of online social media. I will return to this topic in the conclusion of this thesis.

no reaction. Disapprovingly, Bélise asks, ‘Quoi, sans émotion pendant cette lecture?’ (III, ii, 819). This entire scene, of an enraptured audience containing one dissenter, is an interesting analogue to the previously mentioned audience Dorante describes in *La Critique*, with the one spectator who ‘écouta toute la Pièce avec un sérieux le plus sombre du monde’ (v). Clearly, the difference between Henriette and the *Critique*’s pretentious spectator lies in their motivations. The former seeks to hide, while the latter wishes to be conspicuous. Henriette’s cold judgment of Trissotin is all the more disturbing, particularly to Armande and Bélise, because their behaviour during Trissotin’s recitation shows that for them, poetry is a replacement for sexual activity. By seeking to marry, Henriette actively pursues a real sexual life. Philaminte, in encouraging frigidity in her sister and young daughter, while being a married woman with children herself, is simply a hypocrite.

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#### 5.4.3 Pleasure

‘C’est un plaisir de Prince, et des tours que je vois, | Je me donne souvent la Comédie à moi’ (*L’École des femmes*, I, iv, 297-8), declares Arnolphe when he meets Horace, holding forth on the flirtatious women and duped husbands in his city. Arnolphe considers himself a continuous spectator; furthermore, he is a voyeur and his extreme pleasure (‘plaisir de Prince’) consists of his voyeurism. Therefore, the main question is that of the nature of pleasure, and especially in the case of the theatre, what sort of pleasure is shared (or not) by the audience and shared (or not) between the audience and the characters. This point is central in the quarrels surrounding the quality of Molière’s works, as we have seen in the first chapter, and in the metatheatrical discourses in his plays. Of course, there could be an entire study done on the forms of theatrical pleasure in Molière, but this exceeds the aims of this research. Also, in the

framework of these aims, this thesis emphasizes just two points associating the pleasures of laughter and love, and, at the same time, proposes a strategy of pleasure.

When Lysidas in *La Critique* berates Molière for his disregard for ‘les règles de l’art’ (vi), Dorante asserts a different principle; he says,

Je voudrais bien savoir si la grande règle de toutes les règles n’est pas de plaire; et si une pièce de Théâtre qui a attrapé son but n’a pas suivi un bon chemin. Veut-on que tout un public s’abuse sur ces sortes de choses, et que chacun n’y soit pas juge du plaisir qu’il y prend? (vi)

Thus, pleasure in the theatre is, at root, something deeply individual that each spectator must adjudicate for himself. Driving his point further, Dorante advises casting aside guidelines that are ‘mal faites’ and demands a different standard for public judgment in artistic matters, saying, ‘Laissons-nous aller de bonne foi aux choses qui nous prennent par les entrailles, et ne cherchons point de raisonnements pour nous empêcher d’avoir du plaisir’ (vi). His suggestions are the opposite of what Arnolphe demands of Agnès in *L’École des femmes*; he teaches her to distrust her gut reactions. Dorante’s brand of critical judgment turns away from thinking and towards feeling; and this feeling encompasses the spectator’s body as well as his emotions.

Additionally, this act of letting go, ‘se laisser aller de bonne foi’, is a variant of being taken ‘hors de soi’, showing that empathy is a component of theatrical pleasure. In response to Mademoiselle de Brie’s demands for more rehearsal time, Molière replies, ‘nous ne devons jamais nous regarder dans ce qu’ils désirent de nous, nous ne sommes que pour leur plaire’ (*L’Impromptu*, i). This is an emptying of ego, or consciously setting aside one’s own desires. Therefore, the actors must shed their narcissism in order to ignite pleasure in their spectators.

The Maître de musique of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* points out that what is important is that Monsieur Jourdain pays them well, but the Maître à danser replies

with a lengthy description of the invaluable remuneration supplied by a sophisticated audience; he explains,

Il y a plaisir, ne m'en parlez point, à travailler pour des Personnes qui soient capables de sentir les délicatesses d'un Art; qui sachent faire un doux accueil aux beautés d'un Ouvrage; et par de chatouillantes approbations, vous régaler de votre travail. (I, i)

For him, the pleasures of performance come from the recognition of talent and greatness from a trustworthy source. Furthermore, this illustrates a moment of sharing pleasure between people 'capables de sentir les délicatesses d'un Art' and the performers, alike. The Maître de musique counters him, saying, 'cet Encens ne fait pas vivre'. This teacher desires real, life-giving sustenance, the kind of which can be purchased, not with connoisseurship, but with money.

In this way, pleasure becomes a barometer for the attributes of a work, as well as a barometer for the people who see it. And this pleasure is, in and of itself, narcissistic, and it turns the spectators into performers themselves. When Trissotin recites his banal sonnet, Philaminte, Bélise, and Armande respond with rapturous praise, becoming his echoes, literally repeating his words. Furthermore, their physical responses—hearts racing, shortness of breath, moaning, pretenses of fainting and death—have an undeniably, and embarrassingly, sexual timbre. Before Trissotin even starts reading, Bélise raves, 'Je sens d'aise mon cœur tressaillir par avance' (III, ii, 756). When he recites his second stanza, Philaminte claims, 'On se sent à ces vers, jusques au fond de l'âme, | Couler je ne sais quoi qui fait que l'on se pâme' (III, ii, 778-9). When Trissotin finishes reciting, the women are at their most ecstatic. Philaminte cries, 'On n'en peut plus!' (III, ii, 810); Armande emotes, 'On se meurt de plaisir' (III, ii, 810); and Philaminte adds, 'De mille doux frissons vous vous sentez saisir' (III, ii, 811). Each woman makes an exhibitionistic showcase of the depths of her poetic (and, covertly, sexual) sensitivity. Thus, even though they are the

spectators, it is really the women who are putting on a performance of receiving pleasure. Collectively, the *Femmes savantes* fake orgasms. Their narcissism blocks any real bliss. And this confusion between sex and the theatre, resulting in a representation of 'bad pleasure', contrasts sharply with the 'legitimate pleasure' felt by Molière's more empathetic spectators.

Moreover, genuinely felt collective pleasure is a necessity. When Don Pèdre makes his complaint to the Sénateur, the latter is single-mindedly lost in the production of his 'Mascarade' and in offering 'le divertissement au Peuple' (*Le Sicilien*, xix). Concluding the play, the Sénateur declares, 'Je ne veux point, aujourd'hui, d'autres affaires que de plaisir'. All at once, he values freedom and pleasure in spectatorship, and the necessity of pleasure, because sharing it creates unity in the public. But for this to come about, the pleasure must be characterized by specific properties: in particular, that of 'la surprise'. For instance, in *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, Éraste abstains from telling Julie all the tricks he has planned for her putative fiancé, likening such tricks to the theatre by explaining, 'comme aux Comédies, il est bon de vous laisser le plaisir de la surprise, et de ne vous avertir point de tout ce qu'on vous fera voir' (I, i). Indeed, Biet and Triau claim that, 'le fonctionnement de la représentation théâtrale est donc soumis à la nécessité de la surprise, mais à une surprise à la fois préparée et dépassable, interprétable',<sup>54</sup> explaining,

Dès lors, devant la surprise qu'on lui donne à ressentir, le public devra, par jeu et par intérêt, prendre position, autrement dit, en un instant ou durant l'ensemble de la séance, être saisi et être mis en demeure de mettre en rapport son attente avec ce qu'on lui a donné à voir. C'est de cette façon qu'il pourra triompher de son hésitation, et avoir du plaisir, parce qu'il aura pu dépasser la surprise.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Christian Biet and Christophe Triau, *Qu'est-ce que le théâtre?* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2006), p. 401.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

Thus, processing 'la surprise' leads to a sense of satisfaction. But it also entails a share of imperilment, as when Scapin tells Silvestre that he finds pleasure in *fourberies*, saying, 'Je me plais à tenter des entreprises hasardeuses' (*Les Fourberies de Scapin*, III, i). For Scapin, these efforts involving risks are theatrical, and indeed, performing invariably encompasses risk.

But this is the way to ceaselessly heighten the pleasure, and the notion of increasing pleasure certainly applies to Molière's efforts with regard to his audience. It is at this price that their attention can be captured and captivated. When Hyacinthe and Zerbinette discuss their respective lamentable situations, Scapin offers his view of the course of love, stating (directly to Hyacinthe), 'la tranquillité en amour est un calme désagréable. Un bonheur tout uni, nous devient ennuyeux; il faut du haut et du bas dans la vie; et les difficultés qui se mêlent aux choses, réveillent les ardeurs, augmentent les plaisirs' (III, i). This description of love could also be stated replacing *amour* with *théâtre*; and as such, it is a theory of drama, intended to maximize pleasure. This is because in the theatre, as in love, it is necessary to create empathy between different people, to ensure that, as we have seen above, individuals can be transported 'hors de soi', that is to say, delivered from the risk of withdrawing into oneself, which is the particularity of narcissism. And it is surely no accident that the aforementioned theory of love (and drama) comes from the mouth of Scapin, who, as stated earlier, is one of Molière's virtuosic narcissistic metatheatrical performers. This highlights that the world of the theatre is perhaps an appropriate place for narcissists to inhabit.

But the great pleasure here is that of laughter—laughter, which, as we have seen, creates critical distance between the one(s) laughing and the source(s) of the laughter, and which in turn, creates joy. Audiences laugh *at* the narcissistic and *with*

the sympathetic, thus creating within the audience a shared feeling, a kind of empathy for the empathetic. Declaring it ‘un plaisir’, Bergson claims *le rire* is something that causes men to seize upon ‘la moindre occasion de le faire naître’.<sup>56</sup> Laughter, therefore, corresponds with a de facto choice.

Of course, the evidence of all of this comes from metatheatre, but what were these dynamics of laughter and pleasure really like in practice? This is another subject, which poses questions of sociology (for instance, looking at the difference between audiences composed of the *cour* and the *ville*), and that has been studied extensively by others, notably John Lough and Alain Viala,<sup>57</sup> and that is very difficult. This is not how I have treated Molière’s work, but rather, I have sought to signal that, in his *préfaces* and metatheatre, Molière shows that he is conscious of these questions and of how greatly it is, according to the earlier citation, ‘une étrange entreprise que celle de faire rire les honnêtes gens’ (*La Critique*, vi).

...

### 5.5 Conclusion

Thus, the comic theatre—it would be otherwise with tragedy and the empathy that it creates through shared pity and fear, according to the classical theory, but that is, in and of itself, another subject—or at least the comic theatre of Molière, is an especially strong indicator of the dialectic of narcissism and empathy. We have seen how, in Molière’s work, for actors and spectators lower on the narcissistic spectrum, their involvement in the theatre engages them in a larger community, building empathy, while more narcissistic theatrical participants use their performing and spectatorship to gain narcissistic supply, whether through applause or exhibitionism, which in turn,

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<sup>56</sup> Bergson, p. 78.

<sup>57</sup> See John Lough, *Paris Theatre Audiences in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), and Alain Viala, *La France galante*.

further isolates them from the theatrical community. We can consider this as a kind of general rule: one of pleasure based upon a feeling of justice, of a world in order, where different versions of Narcissus are excluded and where we sympathize with the empathetic.

But the comic genre, as it is practiced by Molière, entails two even more specific elements. Comedy assumes a ‘happy ending’: that is to say, a denouement that satisfies not only the characters on stage but also the spectators. This denouement is normally a marriage, but specifically a marriage between characters that are sympathetic to the public. The empathy between the couple—a condition of their love—must correspond to an empathy between them and the public—a condition of happy laughter. And it is here that the quarrels we have seen in the first chapter take on their most striking sense. Indeed, there are dénouements in Molière that involve some trouble. In this way, if Rousseau criticized *Le Misanthrope*, the problem is that Alceste is excluded at the end and that the marriage between Éliante and Philinte fails to draw his sympathy, even if it draws ours in the audience. This quarrel reveals, then, the lesson of empathy and narcissism: Alceste is actually a narcissist. It is in this capacity that he is punished in the end, the same as Arnolphe, Monsieur Jourdain, or even Don Juan. In such cases, what is involved is an extreme application of the aforementioned general rule. The second important element resides in the richness of the *comédies-ballets*. The pleasure of seeing ‘the world in order’ is heightened with the aid of music and dance. These arts are based on *harmonie*—a concept that was explored extensively in the first half of the seventeenth century by the French philosopher Marin Mersenne,<sup>58</sup> with particular attention to the nature of

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<sup>58</sup> See Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle, contenant la théorie et la pratique de la musique* (Paris: Cramoisy, 1636), in *Gallica* <http://gallica.bnf.fr> [accessed 19 January 2015]

instruments—hence the sympathy between constituent parts.<sup>59</sup> They contribute, with laughter, towards putting the spectator momentarily ‘hors de soi’, thereby rendering him capable of empathy, and in this, of correcting his narcissistic urges.

What I have studied here are the reactions of spectators as Molière has imagined them when staging their intermediaries (in presenting *théâtre dans le théâtre*<sup>60</sup> and metatheatre). Therefore, these are ways through which Molière indicates what he wishes for in spectators and in effects, and as my initial chapter about the *querelles* shows, those who fought with Molière were those who refused to accept the codes that he displays in this way.

Thus, Molière succeeds at situating in agreement the two planes of *énonciations théâtrales* (what happens *sur scène* and what happens between *scène* and *salle*), in imagining an ephemeral sense of ‘sortir de soi’ in his spectators. He offers, in this way, a theatre comprised of a kind of experience of gaining knowledge through feeling.

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<sup>59</sup> At the conclusion of the *Ballets des nations* in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, the last sung verses are, as cited earlier (see Section 5.2.3), ‘*Quels Spectacles charmants, quels plaisirs goûtons-nous, | Les Dieux mêmes, les Dieux, n’en ont point de plus doux*’ (*Sixième entrée*). Of this denouement, Forestier and Bourqui write, ‘Comme c’est l’usage, les deux vers du finale donnent lieu à un chœur développé, dans lequel les voix alternent avec les ritournelles orchestrales. L’harmonie entre les nations se traduit par une écriture strictement homophonique et syllabique, parfaitement intelligible’. See Molière, II, p. 1465, n. 27.

<sup>60</sup> See Georges Forestier, *Le Théâtre dans le théâtre sur la scène française du XVIIe siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1996).

## Conclusion

### 1. Narcissism and Empathy: Two Principal Motivations in Molière's Theatre

The intention of this thesis has been to explore how the notions of empathy and narcissism are treated in Molière's theatre, with recourse to a contemporary psychological framework. The terms narcissism and empathy provide a convenient, yet nuanced language that crystallizes these ideas, and my work has highlighted the importance of a lack of empathy as a defining component of narcissism, which, indeed, was not the case in the seventeenth century. Molière proffers a full scale of narcissistic characters, ranging from the mundane to the actually murderous, as well as a wide array of highly empathetic characters, notably in the form of sympathetic young lovers. Furthermore, as we see in quarrels and metatheatre, he activates a dialectic of empathetic and narcissistic impulses in the audience.

Indeed, in my first chapter, my objective was to show, through the lens of quarrels that were fought over Molière's work in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, how issues surrounding empathy and narcissism were motivating factors in the arguments of Molière's most severe critics. The corpus of this chapter consisted of four of his most censured plays, *Le Misanthrope*, *L'École des femmes*, *Le Tartuffe*, and *Dom Juan*, which display some of Molière's best-known and most easily identifiable narcissistic characters, in addition to some of his most generous and sympathetic ones. In the second chapter, I assembled a compendium of words Molière employs that convey dual meanings related to empathy and narcissism, using the aforementioned quarrelled plays with the addition of four more, *Le Médecin volant*, *Le Médecin malgré lui*, *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, and *Le Malade imaginaire*. In this

sample, the concepts of *intérêt*, *amitié*, and *amour* are revealed to express various dimensions of both empathy and narcissism.

Expanding my corpus to include all of Molière's extant drama, the third chapter investigated the physical characteristics of Molière's greatest empathizers and narcissists, probing their adherence to or breaking of codes of social conduct, based on my analysis of 269 characters, utilizing psychometric questionnaires to measure their levels of empathy and narcissism. On the subject of comprehending someone else's meaning, the fourth chapter explores the relationship between Molière's theatre and cognition, paying special attention to 'theory of mind' or 'mindreading', which refers to the ability to perceive a mental state in another person, and is thus closely related to empathy. Accordingly, Baron-Cohen clarifies this concept by noting that 'mental states are unobservable entities that we use quite successfully to explain and predict [behaviour]'.<sup>1</sup> Parsing the varied capacities of empathizers and narcissists to imagine and reflect, this chapter also addresses the question: can the narcissist change? One quality that emerges is that love for another person renders the subject malleable. Thus, being incapable of love makes it seemingly impossible to transform in a positive direction. Narcissists are rigid and fragile and resistant to change. Consequently, the 'super narcissists'—Don Juan, Tartuffe, Vénus—are neutralized by death, imprisonment, and an appeal to an ultimate authority, respectively.

But for those less pathologically afflicted, their narcissism can be handled by maintaining them inside their illusory self-images. To this end, the purpose of the final chapter was to probe how Molière's forays into metatheatre and metaspectatorship aid characters in dealing with narcissists, and as such, this work falls closer to anthropology rather than sociology, because it focuses on fictional

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<sup>1</sup> Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*, p. 55.

audiences rather than the real public. Certainly, for the resolution of conflict in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* and *Le Malade imaginaire*, metatheatre is essential in that it locks Monsieur Jourdain and Argan into their preferred fantasy worlds of nobility and medicine. Furthermore, it is clear that, especially in the *comédies-ballets*, music has the effect of drawing the non-narcissistic into a state of being ‘hors de soi’. This recalls what Clitandre in *L’Amour médecin*, one of Molière’s chief empathizers, tells Sganarelle when he brings musicians and dancers to his own wedding: ‘Ce sont des gens que je mène avec moi, et dont je me sers tous les jours pour pacifier avec leur harmonie les troubles de l’esprit’ (III, vii). When a play succeeds at pleasing the audience, the actors and viewers together create a ‘we-perspective’ through joining together in observance of this *harmonie*. Thus, Molière’s preoccupation with the primary importance of pleasing his public is inherently an empathy-orientated endeavour.

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## 2. The Curative Virtue of Laughter

Considering that fictional characters are increasingly used in the training of mental health practitioners,<sup>2</sup> it has been one of my aims to inquire if the reversal of this method can prove fruitful in literary study. But does Molière offer psychological knowledge in his texts that justifies their use in understanding the modern human mind and personality? It seems that the answer is yes, because he created ‘speaking images’ that are fundamentally accurate.<sup>3</sup> These literary images are ‘speaking’ because they are theatrical, and theatrical texts, for this reason, are helpful and even essential tools in the study of narcissism. As Bachelard writes,

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<sup>2</sup> See Melinda Beck, ‘Fictional Stars, Real Problems’, *The Wall Street Journal*, 8 June 2010, in <<http://online.wsj.com>> [accessed 8 June 2010]

<sup>3</sup> For further discussion of the meanings of images in the *âge classique*, see Marin, p. 88.

Mais Narcisse à la fontaine n'est pas seulement livré à la contemplation de soi-même. Sa propre image est le centre d'un monde. Avec Narcisse, pour Narcisse, c'est toute la forêt qui se mire, tout le ciel qui vient prendre conscience de sa grandiose image. Dans son livre, *Narcisse*, qui mériterait à lui seul une longue étude, Joachim Gasquet nous livre en une formule d'une densité admirable toute une métaphysique de l'imagination [...]: 'Le monde est un immense Narcisse en train de se penser'. Où se penserait-il mieux que dans ses images?<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, seeing one's own reflection as being 'le centre d'un monde' carries implications that are relevant to the study of theatre and that are important from a global perspective.

But what does this tell us about narcissism in the West? During the years that I have been researching and writing this thesis, both empathy and narcissism have received increasing attention in the English-speaking press and in the popular culture. Much of the discussion has been centred around a few recurrent themes: that people, especially younger generations, are more narcissistic than ever; that the changing technological landscape reflects this growing narcissism; and that humanity faces a crisis in the form of an 'empathy deficit' that forebodes the dissolution of understanding between people from divergent backgrounds. Expressing such concerns directly in relation to mythology, Pellizer deems the story of Narcissus 'une métaphore de la stimulation virtuelle de la passion à travers les formes de la réflexivité et de la vision',<sup>5</sup> and he argues it is this quality that gives the tale:

[S]on inépuisable vitalité, qui le rend aujourd'hui particulièrement actuel, [...] à une époque qui fait et fera toujours plus de l'image audio-visuelle et virtuelle son principal véhicule de communication, et en même temps le possible instrument d'un effondrement global des valeurs existentielles et humaines.<sup>6</sup>

Using this prognostication about 'l'image audio-visuelle et virtuelle' as a bridge, it is important to say a word about online social networks, which entail the creation of

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<sup>4</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *L'Eau et les Rêves. Essai sur l'imagination de la matière* (Paris: José Corti, 1942), p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> Pellizer, p. 181.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

what might be called ‘Narcissus reflections’. These are virtual versions of ourselves, constructed largely by photographs, that magnetically draw our gaze and that we employ to try to elicit admiration from others, our so-called online ‘friends’. Like Narcissus’s pool, the screens through which we view these images are barriers, preventing us from grasping anything real and sentient. In this decade-old ‘Wild West’, boasting and arrogance are rife and the norm, but strangely, the social code that has arisen is similar to that which Oronte relies upon in *Le Misanthrope*: just as he exposes his writing to Philinte and Alceste, anticipating that they will praise him regardless of the quality of his literary product, individuals display photographs of themselves, ‘selfies’, on the internet with the full expectation that their ‘friends’ will respond with gushing words of flattery.

But the true risk lies in the interaction between social media and parenting, an issue that has been ignored by academic and media critics. When babies are born, their parents’ habit of displaying photographs of themselves is transformed into one of displaying photographs of their children, often starting within the first minutes of life of an infant. And this same code of gentility from *Le Misanthrope* applies: ‘friends’ fawn over such photographs. The result is the rearing of a generation that will at some point be confronted by a plethora of images of themselves accompanied by the adulation of strangers. In short, they will have built-in ‘Narcissus reflections’, replete with Echo-like flattery.

Logic would suggest that this is a bad idea. However, it also presents an interesting opportunity to revisit Alceste and his misanthropy. The way in which people direct more and more attention to the virtual world, which pulls them away from reality, could be compared to Alceste’s urge to ‘fuir tous les Humains’ (V, iv, 1762). Consequently, reticence about or even withdrawal from social media would

not mimic an Alceste-like retreat from humanity, but rather, a return to humanity, in three-dimensions.

Nevertheless, the even greater key to avoiding drowning in one's narcissism, as Molière's theatre substantiates, does appear to lie in recognition and in laughter. Conceiving of the laughter Molière generates as a kind of comic 'catharsis', Dandrey views it as the cure to sickness that derives 'de crainte et de narcissisme',<sup>7</sup> expounding, 'le genre comique se caractérise par l'usage du rire cathartique qui purge la tristesse et la crainte immotivées dans un éclair spontané de lucidité désillusionnée et pourtant joyeuse: le rire est l'antidote naturel de la mélancolie'.<sup>8</sup> Bergson also sees a curative function in laughter, writing perspicaciously,

Une étude complète des illusions de la vanité, et du ridicule qui s'y attache, éclairerait d'un jour singulier la théorie du rire. On y verrait le rire accomplir régulièrement une de ses fonctions principales, qui est de rappeler à la pleine conscience d'eux-mêmes les amours-propres distraits et d'obtenir ainsi la plus grande sociabilité possible des caractères. On verrait comment la vanité, qui est un produit naturel de la vie sociale, gêne cependant la société, de même que certains poisons légers sécrétés continuellement par notre organisme l'intoxiqueraient à la longue si d'autres sécrétions n'en neutralisaient l'effet. Le rire accomplit sans cesse un travail de ce genre. En ce sens, on pourrait dire que le remède spécifique de la vanité est le rire, et que le défaut essentiellement risible est la vanité.<sup>9</sup>

While such a complete study of 'les illusions de la vanité' is far beyond the parameters of this work, I hope to have demonstrated how Molière harnesses the truth of Bergson's axiom—that vanity causes laughter, but that laughter is its cure<sup>10</sup>—in his plays, creating through the 'éclair spontané de lucidité' of laughter an as-of-yet

<sup>7</sup> Patrick Dandrey, *Le 'Cas' Argan: Molière et la maladie imaginaire* (Paris: Klincksieck, 2006), p. 185.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Bergson, p. 133.

<sup>10</sup> Again, Defaux claims that Molière moved beyond comedy as a social corrective to a more inclusive form, writing, for instance, that 'ce qu'il nous dit dans *Le Misanthrope*, c'est qu'il s'est trompé, que le monde existe, qu'il ne changera pas, que nous avons seulement le devoir d'y vivre et non celui de lui demander de changer'. See Defaux, p. 291.

inexhaustible wellspring of surprise and pleasure, releasing the spectator 'hors de soi'  
and thereby engendering the smile of empathy.

## Legend and Abbreviations for Appendices

### Legend

It is worth noting from the outset that the following appendices represent a judicious selection of the statistical analyses that I have undertaken.

**Appendices 1-3:** These tables accompany Chapter 2, and they present a lexical analysis for the plays studied in this chapter. In Appendix 1, the vocabulary words counted are listed vertically, and the plays (abbreviated with initials) are presented chronologically across the horizontal axis, from left to right. The column entitled ‘Total’ displays the total number of utterances of the given vocabulary word in the eight plays, and the column entitled ‘Plays’ shows the number of plays in which the given vocabulary word is spoken. Appendix 2 separates a handful of lexical groups for this sample of plays, and Appendix 3 shows the difference in the way that male and female characters speak the word *amour* (whether its utterance conveys *sympathie* or *amour-propre*).

**Appendix 4:** This table of vocabulary expands the work from Appendix 1 to include all of Molière’s plays.

**Appendices 5 and 6:** Appendix 5 includes the first five items in the Narcissistic Personality Inventory,<sup>1</sup> the Empathy Quotient,<sup>2</sup> and the Diagnostic Criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*.<sup>3</sup> I have listed these measures in this order for two reasons: first of all, it is roughly chronological, and secondly, it allows for an easy comparison of the

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<sup>1</sup> Raskin and Hall, p. 590; and Raskin and Terry, pp. 890-902. For a user-friendly version, see Drew Pinsky and S. Mark Young, *The Mirror Effect: How Celebrity Narcissism is Seducing America* (New York: Harper, 2009), pp. 261-6.

<sup>2</sup> Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy*, pp. 129-134.

<sup>3</sup> *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn, pp. 669-70.

one empathy measure to both measures of narcissism in Appendices 7 and 8. For all three questionnaires, the higher the score, the higher the character's empathy and/or narcissism.

The Narcissistic Personality Inventory and Empathy Quotient are both comprised of 40 items each, and the Diagnostic Criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder includes nine items. Thus, I applied 89 separate items to each of 269 characters; therefore, these results are based upon 23,941 individual character analyses. These individual responses are excluded here because they would double the word count of this thesis. However, Appendix 6 gives a case study, applying the first three items from each questionnaire to Angélique in *George Dandin*. She is a character that presents surprising results, in that her score on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory qualifies her as a narcissist, but her score on for Narcissistic Personality Disorder qualifies her as *not* having the disorder. And so, her status as one of Molière's narcissists is ambiguous. (Her score on the Empathy Quotient places her moderately above average, although not in the range of the empathizers).

**Appendices 7 and 8:** These two appendices present the results of my analysis of 269 characters from Molière's entire theatre, applying questionnaire items from Appendix 5 to each character, as I have demonstrated with the case of Angélique from *George Dandin* in Appendix 6.

In Appendix 7, my results are presented for each play individually, and the 33 plays are listed in the chronological order of the Couton edition. In Appendix 8, the scores from all the characters are listed together, and indications of the Means and Standard Deviations for each range of scores are provided. In the latter appendix, the characters are listed by name and the abbreviation for the play; for example, 'Don Juan' is listed as 'Don Juan (DJ)'.

...

**Abbreviations**

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
JB	<i>La Jalousie du Barbouillé</i>
MV	<i>Le Médecin volant</i>
ET	<i>L'Etourdi ou les contretemps</i>
DA	<i>Le Dépit amoureux</i>
PR	<i>Les Précieuses ridicules</i>
SGA	<i>Sganarelle ou le cocu imaginaire</i>
DG	<i>Don Garcie de Navarre</i>
EM	<i>L'École des maris</i>
FA	<i>Les Fâcheux</i>
EF	<i>L'École des femmes</i>
CR	<i>La Critique de l'École des femmes</i>
IV	<i>L'Impromptu de Versailles</i>
MF	<i>Le Mariage forcé</i>
PE	<i>La Princesse d'Élide</i>
TA	<i>Le Tartuffe</i>
DJ	<i>Don Juan</i>
AM	<i>L'Amour médecin</i>
MIS	<i>Le Misanthrope</i>
MM	<i>Le Médecin malgré lui</i>
PC	<i>Pastorale comique</i>
ME	<i>Mélicerte</i>
SI	<i>Le Sicilien ou l'amour peintre</i>

AMP	<i>Amphitryon</i>
GD	<i>George Dandin</i>
AV	<i>L'Avare</i>
MP	<i>Monsieur de Pourceaugnac</i>
AMA	<i>Les Amants magnifiques</i>
BG	<i>Le Bourgeois gentilhomme</i>
PSY	<i>Psyché</i>
FSC	<i>Les Fourberies de Scapin</i>
CE	<i>La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas</i>
FSA	<i>Les Femmes savantes</i>
MI	<i>Le Malade imaginaire</i>
Total	Total utterances of the word
Plays/Pl.	Number of plays in which the word is uttered
SC	Score
NPD	Does this character exhibit Narcissistic Personality Disorder?

<b>Appendix 1</b>										
<b>Empathy and Narcissism Lexis Occurrence for a Sample of Eight Plays</b>										
	MV	EF	TA	DJ	MIS	MM	BG	MI	Total	Plays
Amant (n)	1	0	6	1	16	0	4	7	35	6
Aimable (adj)	0	4	1	1	3	0	2	8	19	6
Aimer (v)	1	23	21	39	39	9	16	30	178	8
Âme (n)	0	23	36	18	41	6	5	6	135	7
Ami (n)	4	17	8	11	16	1	17	17	91	8
Amiquié (n)	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	4	2
Amitié (n)	0	2	5	1	11	2	3	2	26	7
Amour (n)	4	25	18	20	31	7	28	17	150	8
Amoureux (adj)	0	7	3	3	1	1	12	3	30	7
Amour de soi-même (n)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Amour-propre (n)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Atrabilaire (adj)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aveugle (adj)	0	0	2	3	1	0	0	0	6	3
Aveuglement (n)	0	0	2	3	1	0	0	0	6	3
Aveuglement (adv)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	4	2
Aveugler (v)	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	5	2
Bienveillance (n)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Charitable (adj)	0	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	6	3
Charité (n)	0	1	3	1	1	0	2	2	10	6
Cœur (n)	3	32	62	40	70	13	21	26	267	8
Compassion (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Compatir (v)	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	5	4
Complaire (v)	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	3
Complaisance (n)	1	0	2	1	7	0	0	0	11	4
Complaisant (adj)	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	4	2
Déplaisir (n)	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	7	4
Déplaire (v)	0	1	2	0	4	2	1	0	10	5
Déshonneur (n)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Déshonoré (adj)	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	1
Déshonorer (v)	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	5	4
Désir (n)	1	2	7	3	5	0	4	1	23	7
Désirer (v)	0	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	9	2
Esprit (n)	1	24	13	13	24	3	17	7	102	8
Extravagance (n)	0	1	2	0	2	0	2	0	7	4
Extravagant (n)	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3	3
Extravagant (adj)	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	4	3
Fâcherie (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fâcheux (adj)	0	6	11	3	7	2	3	5	37	7
Fier (adj)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
Fierté (n)	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Flatter (v)	0	2	2	0	7	0	1	2	14	5
Se flatter (v)	0	1	0	1	4	0	0	0	6	3
Flatterie (n)	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	1
Flatteur (n)	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	1
Folie (n)	0	0	0	1	1	5	2	3	12	5
Fou/Folle (n)	0	4	2	1	0	2	0	0	9	4
Fou/Folle (adj)	0	1	8	4	1	1	7	2	24	7
Généreusement (adv)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2
Généreux (adj)	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	6	5
Générosité (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grandeur (n)	0	0	1	1	0	0	5	0	7	3
Hauteur (n)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	2
Honnête (adj)	0	7	9	9	10	4	9	12	60	7

Appendix 1, continued										
	MV	EF	TA	DJ	MIS	MM	BG	MI	Total	Plays
Honnêtement (adv)	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	2
Honnêteté (n)	0	3	0	1	2	1	0	1	8	5
<b>Honneur (n)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>8</b>
Honorable (adj)	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	2
Honorer (v)	0	0	2	1	0	0	6	1	10	4
Illusion (n)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Intéressé/e (adj)	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	4	3
Intéresser (v)	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	3
S'intéresser (v)	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	6	6
<b>Intérêt (n)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>7</b>
Je ne sais quoi (n)	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	4	3
Libertin (adj)	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	5	3
Libertin (n)	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2
Libertinage (n)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Mamie (n)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>5</b>
Mamour (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	11	1
Misanthrope (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Narcisse (n)</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Obsédé (adj)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Obséder (v)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Orgueil (n)	0	0	8	0	2	0	0	1	11	3
Orgueilleux (n)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Passion (n)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>7</b>
Passionné (adj)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	4	3
Se passionner (v)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
Penchant (n)	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	2	7	3
Philanthrope (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pitié (n)	0	1	2	3	3	0	0	0	9	4
Pitoyable (adj)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
<b>Plaisir (n)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>8</b>
Réalité (n)	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2
Se regarder (v)	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	2
Satisfaction (n)	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	5	3
Satisfaire (v)	0	1	2	4	0	0	1	0	8	4
Satisfait (adj)	0	1	0	4	3	2	4	0	14	5
Souffrance (n)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
<b>Souffrir (v)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>8</b>
Sympathie (n)	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	4	4
<b>Tendresse (n)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>7</b>
Titre (n)	0	0	2	1	2	0	1	0	6	4
Vain (adj)	0	2	4	1	4	0	1	0	12	5
Vanité (n)	0	2	1	2	4	0	0	1	10	5

<b>Appendix 2</b>										
<b>Occurrence of Eight Lexical Groups for a Sample of Eight Plays</b>										
<b>Appendix 2a</b>										
<b>Occurrence of <i>Amour</i></b>										
	MV	EF	TA	DJ	MIS	MM	BG	MI	Total	Plays
Amant (n)	1	0	6	1	16	0	4	7	35	6
Aimable (adj)	0	4	1	1	3	0	2	8	19	6
Aimer (v)	1	23	21	39	39	9	16	30	178	8
Amour (n)	4	25	18	20	31	7	28	17	150	8
Amoureux (adj)	0	7	3	3	1	1	12	3	30	7
Amour de soi-même (n)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Amour-propre (n)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Mamie (n)	0	0	4	0	6	3	2	11	26	5
Mamour (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	11	1
Total in each play	6	59	54	64	97	20	64	87	451	
<b>Appendix 2b</b>										
<b>Occurrence of <i>Honneur</i></b>										
	MV	EF	TA	DJ	MIS	MM	BG	MI	Total	Plays
Déshonneur (n)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Déshonoré (adj)	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	1
Déshonorer (v)	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	5	4
Honnête (adj)	0	7	9	9	10	4	9	12	60	7
Honnêtement (adv)	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	2
Honnêteté (n)	0	3	0	1	2	1	0	1	8	5
Honneur (n)	3	17	12	27	25	4	20	4	112	8
Honorable (adj)	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	2
Honorer (v)	0	0	2	1	0	0	6	1	10	4
Total in each play	3	30	25	42	38	9	38	19	204	
<b>Appendix 2c</b>										
<b>Occurrence of <i>Amitié</i></b>										
	MV	EF	TA	DJ	MIS	MM	BG	MI	Total	Plays
Ami (n)	4	17	8	11	16	1	17	17	91	8
Amiquié (n)	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	4	2
Amitié (n)	0	2	5	1	11	2	3	2	26	7
Total in each play	4	19	13	14	27	5	20	19	121	
<b>Appendix 2d</b>										
<b>Occurrence of <i>Souffrance</i></b>										
	MV	EF	TA	DJ	MIS	MM	BG	MI	Total	Plays
Souffrance (n)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Souffrir (v)	1	14	26	20	22	2	8	11	104	8
Total in each play	1	15	26	20	22	2	8	11	105	

<b>Appendix 2, continued</b>											
<b>Appendix 2e</b>											
<b>Occurrence of <i>Intérêt</i></b>											
	MV	EF	TA	DJ	MIS	MM	BG	MI	Total	Plays	
Intéressé/e (adj)	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	4	3	
Intéresser (v)	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	3	
S'intéresser (v)	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	6	6	
Intérêt (n)	0	2	15	7	9	3	2	7	45	7	
Total in each play	0	4	16	10	12	4	4	8	58		
<b>Appendix 2f</b>											
<b>Occurrence of <i>Désir</i></b>											
	MV	EF	TA	DJ	MIS	MM	BG	MI	Total	Plays	
Désir (n)	1	2	7	3	5	0	4	1	23	7	
Désirer (v)	0	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	9	2	
Total in each play	1	8	10	3	5	0	4	1	32		
<b>Appendix 2g</b>											
<b>Occurrence of <i>Satisfaction</i></b>											
	MV	EF	TA	DJ	MIS	MM	BG	MI	Total	Plays	
Satisfaction (n)	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	5	3	
Satisfaire (v)	0	1	2	4	0	0	1	0	8	4	
Satisfait (adj)	0	1	0	4	3	2	4	0	14	5	
Total in each play	2	3	2	10	3	2	5	0	27		
<b>Appendix 2h</b>											
<b>Occurrence of <i>Aveuglement</i></b>											
	MV	EF	TA	DJ	MIS	MM	BG	MI	Total	Plays	
Aveugle (adj)	0	0	2	3	1	0	0	0	6	3	
Aveuglement (n)	0	0	2	3	1	0	0	0	6	3	
Aveuglement (adv)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	4	2	
Aveugler (v)	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	5	2	
Total in each play	0	0	4	7	6	0	1	3	21		

<b>Appendix 3</b>							
<b>Incidences of <i>Amour</i> as <i>Sympathie</i> and <i>Amour</i> as <i>Amour-propre</i> by Gender of the Speaker in a Sample of Eight Plays</b>							
	<i>Sympathie</i>			<i>Amour-propre</i>			
	Male	Female	Male & Female	Male	Female	Male & Female	Total mentions in play
<b>MV</b>	0	1	0	3	0	0	4
<b>EF</b>	12	1	0	12	0	0	25
<b>TA</b>	3	3	0	7	5	0	18
<b>DJ</b>	4	5	0	10	1	0	20
<b>MIS</b>	10	5	0	10	6	0	31
<b>MM</b>	4	0	0	3	0	0	7
<b>BG</b>	7	1	2	17	1	0	28
<b>MI</b>	11	3	0	1	2	0	17
<b>Total</b>	51	19	2	63	15	0	150
	Total <i>Sympathie</i> : 67			Total <i>Amour-propre</i> : 83			
<b><i>Sympathie</i>:</b>							
MV:	Sabine (i)						
EF:	Horace (I, iv, 304); Horace (I, iv, 326); Agnès (II, v, 559); Horace (III, iv, 859); Horace (III, iv, 900); Horace (III, iv, 919); Horace (III, iv, 935); Horace (III, iv, 945); Horace (III, iv, 956); Horace (IV, vi, 1175); Horace (V, ii, 1409); Horace (V, ii, 1416); Horace (V, iii, 1468)						
TA:	Cléante (I, v, 425); Mariane (II, i, 434); Mariane (II, iii, 602); Dorine (II, iii, 624); Valère (II, iv, 734); L'Exempt (V, vii, 1915)						
DJ:	Sganarelle (I, i); Don Juan (I, ii); Mathurine (II, iv); Don Juan (III, ii); Don Carlos (III, iii); Done Elvire (IV, vi) x 4						
MIS:	Alceste (I, i, 225); Alceste (I, i, 248); Alceste (I, ii, 396); Alceste (I, ii, 408); Alceste (II, iv, 702); Éliante (II, iv, 711); Arsinoé (III, iv, 1007); Philinte (IV, i, 1159); Éliante (IV, i, 1175); Éliante (IV, i, 1198); Alceste (IV, ii, 1223); Alceste (IV, iii, 1298); Célimène (IV, iii, 1392); Alceste (IV, iv, 1479); Oronte (V, ii, 1613)						
MM:	Léandre (II, v); Sganarelle (II, v); Léandre (II, v); Sganarelle (II, v)						
BG:	Premier musicien (I, ii); Madame Jourdain (III, vii); Cléonte (III, ix); Cléonte (III, x); Cléonte (III, x); Musiciens et musicienne (IV, i); Musiciens et musicienne (IV, i); Covielle (IV, iii); Dorante (V, ii); Autre musicien (V, vi)						
MI:	Argan (I, vi); Polichinelle ( <i>Premier intermède</i> ) x 5; Cléante (II, v) x 5; Angélique (II, vi); Seconde femme more ( <i>Second intermède</i> ); Toinette (III, xiv)						
<b><i>Amour-propre</i>:</b>							
MV:	Gorgibus (xii); Gorgibus (xv); Sganarelle (xv)						
EF:	Arnolphe (I, i, 130); Horace (I, iv, 348); Arnolphe (III, v, 987); Arnolphe (III, v, 990); Arnolphe (III, v, 999); Arnolphe (IV, ii, 1054); Arnolphe (IV, v, 1139); Arnolphe (V, iv, 1488); Arnolphe (V, iv, 1582); Arnolphe (V, iv, 1589); Arnolphe (V, iv, 1599); Arnolphe (V, v, 1621)						
TA:	Tartuffe (III, iii, 882); Tartuffe (III, iii, 933); Tartuffe (III, iii, 934); Tartuffe (III, iii, 943); Tartuffe (III, iii, 1000); Elmire (III, iii, 1005); Tartuffe (III, iii, 1010); Damis (III, iv, 1028); Elmire (IV, iv, 1375); Elmire (IV, v, 1417); Elmire (IV, v, 1467); Dorine (V, v, 1817)						
DJ:	Gusman (I, i); Sganarelle (I, ii); Don Juan (I, ii) x 5; Sganarelle (II, ii); Don Juan (II, ii); Don Juan (III, iv); Done Elvire (IV, vi)						
MIS:	Alceste (II, i, 523); Célimène (II, i, 528); Célimène (II, iv, 709); Clitandre (III, ii, 848); Célimène (III, iv, 944); Célimène (III, iv, 995); Arsinoé (III, v, 1046); Arsinoé (III, v, 1100); Alceste (IV, ii, 1256); Alceste (IV, iii, 1384); Alceste (IV, iii, 1422); Alceste (IV, iii, 1432); Alceste (V, i, 1579); Oronte (V, ii, 1595); Alceste (V, ii, 1606); Oronte (V, iv, 1701)						
MM:	Sganarelle (II, ii); Sganarelle (III, iii); Géronte (III, vii)						
BG:	Second musicien (I, ii) x 2; Monsieur Jourdain (II, iv) x 2; Maître de philosophie (II, iv) x 6; Dorante (III, vi) x 3; Madame Jourdain (III, vii); Covielle (III, ix); Dorante (III, xv) x 2; Covielle (IV, iii)						
MI:	Flore ( <i>Prologue</i> ); Toinette (I, iv); Thomas Diafoirus (II, vi)						

**Appendix 4**  
**Empathy and Narcissism Lexis Occurrence in Molière's Complete Works**

	JB	MV	ET	DA	PR	SG	DG	EM	FA	EF	CR	IV	MF	PE	TA	DJ	AM	MIS	MM	PC	ME	SI	AMP	GD	AV	MP	AMA	BG	PSY	FSC	CE	FSA	MI	Total	Pl.	
Amant (n)	0	1	5	10	3	3	23	8	7	0	2	2	2	0	8	6	1	1	16	0	0	3	4	11	2	3	1	10	4	33	5	6	7	7	192	28
Aimable (adj)	0	0	2	1	0	0	3	0	1	4	0	0	1	6	1	1	0	3	0	1	2	2	4	0	5	3	3	2	6	7	0	4	8	70	22	
Aimé (adj)	0	1	1	1	1	1	5	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	0	1	1	36	17	
Aimer (v)	7	0	5	26	5	1	25	21	8	23	4	2	5	75	20	39	3	34	9	26	21	15	16	10	31	13	18	16	61	19	7	33	29	627	32	
Âme (n)	1	0	14	34	3	17	70	17	8	23	0	3	1	26	36	18	3	41	6	1	8	2	34	1	6	2	6	5	37	2	3	27	6	461	31	
Ami (n)	4	4	3	4	6	0	3	2	5	17	5	4	9	3	8	11	5	16	1	0	1	3	8	2	5	11	9	17	3	8	2	6	17	202	31	
Amiitié (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2
Amitié (n)	0	0	0	1	1	2	8	5	1	2	1	2	2	2	5	1	1	11	2	0	2	1	1	5	6	4	2	3	14	5	0	1	2	93	28	
Amour (n)	0	4	19	43	3	10	46	26	14	25	5	1	2	33	18	20	5	31	7	6	19	9	25	7	32	16	34	28	87	15	10	32	17	649	32	
Amourusement (adv)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Amoureux (adj)	0	0	4	3	2	0	4	3	0	7	2	0	1	5	3	3	0	1	1	0	2	4	6	6	3	4	11	12	12	2	0	8	3	112	25	
Amour de soi-même (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	
Amour-propre (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Atrabilaire (adj)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Aveugle (adj)	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	15	11
En aveugle (adv)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Aveuglement (n)	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	16	10	
Aveuglement (adv)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	7	5	
Aveugler (v)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
S'Aveugler (v)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	
Bienveillance (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	
Charitable (adj)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	5	
Charitablement (adv)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	
Charité (n)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	2	17	12	
<b>Cœur (n)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1006</b>	<b>33</b>	
Compassion (n)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	3	
Compaîr (v)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	
Complaire (v)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	
Complaisance (n)	0	1	0	1	1	0	3	1	1	0	3	0	2	1	2	1	0	7	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	33	19	
Complaisant (adj)	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	11	6	
Déplaisir (n)	0	0	2	2	0	1	6	1	1	2	0	1	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	36	16	
Déplaire (v)	0	0	0	2	1	0	5	2	3	1	1	1	0	3	2	0	4	2	0	3	3	2	1	3	0	1	1	5	0	0	5	0	51	21		



		Appendix 4, continued																																			
		JB	MV	ET	DA	PR	SG	DG	EM	FA	EF	CR	IV	MF	PE	TA	DJ	AM	MIS	MM	PC	ME	SI	AMP	GD	AV	MP	AMA	BG	PSY	FSC	CE	FSA	MI	Total	PL	
Flatteur (adj)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Folie (n)	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	5	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	3	30	16
Fou/Folle (n)	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	6	3	4	0	1	0	1	2	1	5	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	36	15
Fou/Folle (adj)	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	1	1	1	4	0	0	8	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	6	3	7	1	0	1	3	2	52	20		
Généreusement (adv)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	6	4	
Généreux (adj)	0	0	2	2	0	1	6	1	0	1	1	0	0	5	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	31	18	
Générosité (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	
Grandeur (n)	0	0	1	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	5	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	24	13	
Hauteur (n)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	8	5	
Haut (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	
Honnête (adj)	1	0	5	2	4	2	0	5	1	7	8	4	3	0	9	9	3	10	4	0	0	1	6	7	12	8	3	9	0	5	3	5	12	148	27		
Honnêtement (adv)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	
Honnêteté (n)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	24	15	
Honneur (n)	1	3	13	11	0	13	12	24	3	17	3	5	2	10	12	27	1	25	4	0	5	3	19	15	13	11	8	20	10	9	5	12	4	320	31		
Honorable (adj)	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	2	0	9	7		
Honorablement (adv)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	
Honoré (adj)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	
Honorer (v)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	3	6	3	0	0	3	1	29	15		
Humain (n)	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	4	
Humain (adj)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	6	3	2	9	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	38	13	
Humainement (adv)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	
Humanisé/e (adj)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Humaniser (v)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
S'humaniser (v)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	
Humanité (n)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	5	5	
Illusion (n)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	
Impitoyable (adj)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	
Inclination (n)	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	2	13	1	0	2	0	0	7	44	13		
Inhumain (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	
Inhumain (adj)	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	10	8	
Inhumainement (adv)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Intéressé/e (adj)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	12	11	
Intéresser (v)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	
S'intéresser (v)	0	0	0	3	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	19	14		



Appendix 4, continued		JB	MV	ET	DA	PR	SG	DG	EM	FA	EF	CR	IV	MF	PE	TA	DJ	AM	MIS	MM	PC	ME	SI	AMP	GD	AV	MP	AMA	BG	PSY	FSC	CE	FSA	MI	Total	PL				
Reconnaissance (n)	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	17	9			
Reconnaissance (adj)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2			
Réel (adj)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2			
Regard (n)	0	0	0	1	0	0	9	5	0	6	1	0	0	5	1	1	2	3	0	0	3	5	2	0	3	0	3	2	9	1	0	2	2	66	20					
Regardé (adj)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3				
Regarder (v)	0	1	3	4	4	0	5	2	0	7	5	7	2	6	8	6	2	2	2	0	2	4	3	5	4	3	2	6	1	2	10	114	28							
Se regarder (v)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5				
Se faire regarder (v)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1				
Satisfaction (n)	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	6				
Satisfaire (v)	1	0	1	5	0	0	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	2	0	4	2	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	34	18				
Se satisfaire (v)	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4				
Satisfait (adj)	0	0	2	6	2	1	3	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	4	1	3	2	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	4	1	0	0	1	0	46	22					
Satisfait en soi-même (adj)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1				
[de moi] satisfait (adj)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1				
Souffrance (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3			
Souffrant (adj)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1			
Souffrir (v)	1	1	11	5	1	21	12	10	14	7	2	2	11	26	19	1	22	2	0	6	3	19	7	5	6	7	8	25	7	5	14	11	302	32						
Sympathie (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	8				
Sympathiser (v)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1			
Sympathique (adj)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1			
Tendre (adj)	0	0	2	0	0	3	2	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	1	5	0	1	7	2	8	0	2	0	4	2	9	1	0	3	4	67	20				
Tendre (n)	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1				
Tendrement (adv)	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1		
Tendresse (n)	0	0	2	4	0	0	6	4	0	8	1	0	0	5	6	4	7	1	0	2	1	12	0	9	1	3	1	15	4	1	4	8	114	24						
Tendresso (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1			
Tiire (n)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	3	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	14		
Vain (adj)	0	0	6	0	1	1	7	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	3	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	37	17						
Vain (n)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1			
Vainement (adv)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2		
Vanité (n)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	17	11			

## Appendix 5

### Three Psychometric Questionnaires

For copyright reasons, I am not reproducing the full questionnaires, but only the first five items from each, which give a good sense of the psychological and behavioural qualities they probe. The full questionnaires may be found in the footnoted sources and on the Internet.

For the Narcissistic Personality Inventory, select one of the two statements presented.

For the Empathy Quotient, choose one of the four possible answers.

For the Narcissistic Personality Disorder criteria, reply 'yes' or 'no' to each item; five or more 'yes' answers indicates the presence of the disorder.

...

#### The Narcissistic Personality Inventory<sup>1</sup>

1.     A. I have a natural talent for influencing people.  
       B. I am not good at influencing people.
2.     A. Modesty doesn't become me.  
       B. I am essentially a modest person.
3.     A. I would do almost anything on a dare.  
       B. I tend to be a fairly cautious person.
4.     A. When people compliment me I sometimes get embarrassed.  
       B. I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so.
5.     A. The thought of ruling the world frightens the hell out of me.  
       B. If I ruled the world it would be a better place.

#### Scoring Key

Assign one point for each response that matches the key.

1. A    2. A    3. A    4. B    5. B

...

#### The Empathy Quotient<sup>2</sup>

Possible Responses:

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<sup>1</sup> Raskin and Hall, p. 590; Raskin and Terry, pp. 890-902; and Pinsky and Young, pp. 261-6.

<sup>2</sup> Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy*, pp. 129-134.

Strongly Agree      Slightly Agree      Slightly Disagree      Strongly Disagree

1. I can easily tell if someone else wants to enter a conversation.
2. I find it difficult to explain to others things that I understand easily, when they don't understand it the first time.
3. I really enjoy caring for other people.
4. I find it hard to know what to do in a social situation.
5. People often tell me that I went too far in driving my point home in a discussion.

### **How to Score Your EQ**

Score two points for each of the following items if you answered 'strongly agree' or one point if you answered 'slightly agree': 1, 3

Score two points for each of the following items if you answered 'strongly disagree' or one point if you answered 'slightly disagree': 2, 4, 5

Simply add up all the points you have scored to obtain your total EQ score.

### **How to Interpret Your EQ Score**

- 0-32 = **low**
- 33-52 = **average range**
- 52-63 is **above average**
- 64-80 is **very high**
- 80 = **maximum**

...

### **Narcissistic Personality Disorder Diagnostic Criteria<sup>3</sup>**

1. Has a grandiose sense of self-importance (e.g., exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements).
2. Is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love.
3. Believes that he or she is 'special' and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions).
4. Requires excessive admiration.

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<sup>3</sup> *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn, pp. 669-70.

5. Has a sense of entitlement (i.e., unreasonable expectations of especially favourable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations).

## Appendix 6

### Case Study: A Sample of Responses for Angélique in *George Dandin*

#### Narcissistic Personality Inventory Responses

- Item 1.           A. I have a natural talent for influencing people.  
                  B. I am not good at influencing people.

Response: A  
One point added.

It is obvious from her first appearance on stage that Angélique is an expert at manipulation, particularly with her parents. When George Dandin first accuses her of having an affair, she insists to the Sotenvilles, ‘Tout mon malheur est de le trop considérer, et plût au Ciel que je fusse capable de souffrir, comme il dit, les galanteries de quelqu’un, je ne serais pas tant à plaindre’ (I, vi). She puts on such a convincing act of wifely virtue that her mother responds by telling George Dandin, ‘Allez, vous ne méritez pas l’honnête femme qu’on vous a donnée’ (I, vi).

- Item 2.           A. Modesty doesn’t become me.  
                  B. I am essentially a modest person.

Response: A  
One point added.

Angélique is frank about the pleasure she garners from her physical appearance. When she quarrels with George Dandin, she tells him explicitly that she enjoys admiring attention from men, saying, ‘je ne me scandalise point qu’on me trouve bien faite, et cela me fait du plaisir’ (II, ii). In this respect, she resembles Isidore in *Le Sicilien*—to whom I also assigned an ‘A’ response for this questionnaire item—when she tells Dom Père, ‘Quelque mine qu’on fasse, on est, toujours, bien aise d’être aimée: ces hommages à nos appas, ne sont, jamais, pour nous déplaire’ (vi).

- Item 3.           A. I would do almost anything on a dare.  
                  B. I tend to be a fairly cautious person.

Response: A  
One point added.

Given that she is a married woman, Angélique’s nocturnal excursion with Clitandre is daring. Not only does she risk discovery by George Dandin, but she risks something she fears even more; when she is caught by her husband, she implores him to spare her from ‘la mauvaise humeur de mes parents’ (III, vi). Furthermore, the way that she rescues herself from George Dandin’s threat to expose her to the Sotenvilles—by feigning suicide—is a high-stakes ruse.

...

### Empathy Quotient Responses

Item 1. I can easily tell if someone else wants to enter a conversation.

Response: Strongly Agree  
Two points added.

While George Dandin castigates Angélique in Act II, scene ii, she is well aware that Clitandre wishes to speak with her. She attempts to signal this to him, which irritates and confuses her husband, who tells her, ‘Mon Dieu laissez là votre révérence’, and ‘Encore? ah ne raillons pas davantage!’. Later in the scene, Clitandre demonstrates his desire for a conversation, because he hovers behind her and demands, ‘Un moment d’entretien’.

Item 2. I find it difficult to explain to others things that I understand easily, when they don’t understand it the first time.

Response: Strongly Disagree  
Two points added.

Quarrelling with Angélique about her flirtatious behaviour—‘un certain air doucereux’ (II, ii) that attracts men—George Dandin demands, ‘Mais quel personnage voulez-vous que joue un mari pendant cette galanterie?’ (II, ii), to which she responds succinctly, ‘Le personnage d’un honnête homme qui est bien aise de voir sa femme considérée’. Curtly, George Dandin replies with the expression, ‘Je suis votre valet’, which, according to Forestier and Bourqui, indicates ‘un désaccord avec l’interlocuteur’.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, George Dandin *has* understood Angélique’s explanation; he simply disagrees with her.

Item 3. I really enjoy caring for other people.

Response: Strongly Disagree  
No points added.

During her climactic confrontation with George Dandin, Angélique promises him she will be a dutiful wife if he opens the door. She implores her husband, ‘Oui, je vous donne ma parole que vous m’allez voir désormais la meilleure femme du monde, et que je vous témoignerai tant d’amitié, tant d’amitié que vous en serez satisfait’ (III, vi). This speech is Angélique’s greatest display of loving care, but she uses it to manipulate her husband into doing what she wants rather than as an expression of real affection.

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<sup>1</sup> Molière, I, p. 1577, n. 12.

...

### Narcissistic Personality Disorder Responses

Item 1. Has a grandiose sense of self-importance (e.g., exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements).

Response: No  
No points added.

When George Dandin complains of her disloyalty, Angélique queries, ‘M’avez-vous avant le mariage demandé mon consentement, et si je voulais bien de vous?’ (II, ii). She then answers her own question for him, stating, ‘Vous n’avez consulté pour cela que mon père, et ma mère, ce sont eux proprement qui vous ont épousé’. Her grievance against George Dandin here seems reasonable, rather than based in some overweening sense of superiority.

Item 2. Is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love.

Response: Yes  
One point added.

Angélique has an idealized sense of what a young woman’s youth should resemble. She tells George Dandin: ‘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’ouïr dire des douceurs’ (II, ii).

Item 3. Believes that he or she is ‘special’ and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions).

Response: Yes  
One point added.

This is a primary source of conflict between Angélique and George Dandin: she comes from a noble family and considers him beneath her. George Dandin addresses this directly when he tells her, ‘j’ignore pas qu’à cause de votre noblesse vous me tenez fort au-dessous de vous’ (II, ii). Later, Angélique makes this apparent when she receives a letter from Clitandre, and upon reading it, exclaims to Claudine, ‘Ah Claudine que ce billet s’explique d’une façon galante! que dans tous leurs discours, et 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). She aspires to socialize with people of a higher social status than George Dandin.

<b>Appendix 7</b>						
<b>Psychometric Questionnaire Results for 269 Characters, Subdivided by Play</b>						
<b>7a. Results for <i>La Jalousie du Barbouillé</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Le Docteur	28	Gorgibus	50	Le Docteur	7	Yes
Le Barbouillé	27	Valère	49	Angélique	5	Yes
Angélique	19	Villebrequin	46	Le Barbouillé	5	Yes
Valère	14	Cathau	32	Cathau	3	No
Gorgibus	11	Angélique	31	Valère	3	No
Cathau	8	Le Barbouillé	19	Gorgibus	0	No
Villebrequin	2	Le Docteur	12	Villebrequin	0	No
<b>7b. Results for <i>Le Médecin volant</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Sganarelle	23	Sabine	68	Gorgibus	4	No
Gorgibus	19	Valère	41	Valère	3	No
Sabine	13	Sganarelle	34	Sganarelle	2	No
Valère	10	Gorgibus	28	Gros-René	1	No
Gros-René	4	Gros-René	22	Sabine	1	No
<b>7c. Results for <i>L'Étourdi ou les contretemps</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Lélie	23	Célie	59	Lélie	8	Yes
Mascarille	20	Anselme	51	Andrès	4	No
Anselme	16	Ergaste	50	Hippolyte	4	No
Andrès	14	Mascarille	50	Léandre	4	No
Hippolyte	13	Andrès	45	Anselme	3	No
Léandre	12	Léandre	34	Mascarille	3	No
Trufaldin	12	Trufaldin	29	Pandolfe	3	No
Célie	11	Pandolfe	22	Trufaldin	2	No
Pandolfe	11	Hippolyte	21	Célie	1	No
Ergaste	7	Lélie	16	Ergaste	1	No
<b>7d. Results for <i>Le Dépôt amoureux</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Métaphraste	25	Ascagne	62	Métaphraste	6	Yes
Albert	18	Polidore	45	Albert	5	Yes
Ascagne	18	Frosine	44	Éraste	4	No
Valère	18	Valère	38	Lucile	4	No
Éraste	16	Éraste	37	Valère	4	No
Lucile	14	Gros-René	37	Mascarille	2	No
La Rapière	8	Albert	32	Ascagne	1	No
Gros-René	7	Mascarille	31	La Rapière	1	No
Mascarille	7	Marinette	30	Marinette	1	No
Marinette	6	La Rapière	27	Polidore	1	No
Polidore	6	Lucile	23	Frosine	0	No
Frosine	2	Métaphraste	13	Gros-René	0	No

<b>Appendix 7, continued</b>						
<b>7e. Results for <i>Les Précieuses ridicules</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Mascarille	32	La Grange	41	Cathos	8	Yes
Magdelon	29	Gorgibus	36	Magdelon	8	Yes
Cathos	23	Du Croisy	32	Mascarille	7	Yes
Jodelet	23	Mascarille	21	Jodelet	6	Yes
La Grange	22	Magdelon	20	Du Croisy	4	No
Du Croisy	10	Jodelet	18	La Grange	4	No
Gorgibus	6	Cathos	17	Gorgibus	2	No
<b>7f. Results for <i>Sganarelle ou le cocu imaginaire</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Gorgibus	27	Suivante de Célie	39	Gorgibus	8	Yes
Lélie	19	Femme de Sgan.	30	Sganarelle	5	Yes
Célie	16	Célie	30	Célie	4	No
Sganarelle	15	Sganarelle	27	Lélie	4	No
Suivante de Célie	10	Gros-René	23	Femme de Sgan.	3	No
Femme de Sgan.	9	Gorgibus	22	Gros-René	2	No
Gros-René	6	Lélie	21	Suivante de Célie	1	No
<b>7g. Results for <i>Don Garcie de Navarre</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Done Elvire	29	Done Ignès	57	Done Elvire	8	Yes
Don Lope	26	Don Alvar	55	Don Lope	7	Yes
Don Alphonse	25	Don Lope	44	Don Garcie	6	Yes
Don Garcie	24	Élise	41	Don Alphonse	6	Yes
Élise	6	Done Elvire	31	Done Ignès	1	No
Done Ignès	6	Don Garcie	22	Don Alvar	0	No
Don Alvar	4	Don Alphonse	19	Élise	0	No
<b>7h. Results for <i>L'École des maris</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Sganarelle	32	Ergaste	47	Sganarelle	8	Yes
Isabelle	20	Ariste	46	Isabelle	2	No
Ergaste	9	Isabelle	46	Ergaste	1	No
Lisette	9	Léonor	46	Léonor	1	No
Ariste	8	Lisette	38	Valère	1	No
Léonor	8	Valère	38	Ariste	0	No
Valère	3	Sganarelle	17	Lisette	0	No

<b>Appendix 7, continued</b>						
<b>7i. Results for <i>Les Fâcheux</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Orante	26	Alcandre	34	Caritidès	8	Yes
Filinte	25	Lysandre	32	Ormin	7	Yes
Ormin	24	Ormin	32	Clymène	6	Yes
Lysandre	23	Damis	28	Lysandre	6	Yes
Dorante	21	La Montagne	28	Orante	6	Yes
Alcipe	18	Orphise	27	Dorante	5	Yes
Caritidès	18	Dorante	23	Filinte	5	Yes
Damis	18	Éraste	22	Damis	4	No
Clymène	17	Orante	22	Éraste	4	No
Alcandre	16	Clymène	20	Alcipe	2	No
Éraste	14	Alcipe	18	Orphise	2	No
Orphise	14	Filinte	18	Alcandre	1	No
La Montagne	10	Caritidès	16	La Montagne	1	No
<b>7j. Results for <i>L'École des femmes</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Arnolphe	26	Horace	63	Arnolphe	7	Yes
Georgette	17	Chrysalde	60	Oronte	3	No
Alain	15	Agnès	42	Alain	2	No
Horace	15	Enrique	33	Georgette	2	No
Oronte	13	Oronte	22	Enrique	1	No
Enrique	10	Arnolphe	10	Horace	1	No
Chrysalde	6	Alain	8	Agnès	0	No
Agnès	5	Georgette	6	Chrysalde	0	No
<b>7k. Results for <i>La Critique de l'École des femmes</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Lysidas	23	Élise	51	Lysidas	8	Yes
Uranie	19	Dorante	50	Le Marquis	7	Yes
Climène	18	Uranie	39	Climène	4	No
Le Marquis	16	Lysidas	31	Élise	2	No
Dorante	14	Le Marquis	29	Galopin	1	No
Élise	7	Climène	26	Uranie	1	No
Galopin	6	Galopin	7	Dorante	0	No
<b>7l. Results for <i>L'Impromptu de Versailles</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
La Thorillière	24	Molière	46	La Thorillière	6	Yes
Molière	19	Mlle Béjart	42	Mlle Béjart	2	No
Mlle Béjart	13	Mlle de Brie	36	Mlle Molière	2	No
Mlle Molière	12	Mlle du Parc	27	Molière	2	No
Mlle du Parc	10	Brécourt	25	Mlle du Parc	2	No
Mlle de Brie	9	Mlle Molière	22	Brécourt	1	No
Brécourt	4	La Thorillière	15	Mlle de Brie	0	No

<b>Appendix 7, continued</b>						
<b>7m. Results for <i>Le Mariage forcé</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Panrace	23	Alcidas	43	Sganarelle	7	Yes
Alcidas	22	Alcantor	40	Panrace	6	Yes
Dorimène	22	Lycaste	40	Lycaste	4	No
Lycaste	18	Géronimo	32	Dorimène	3	No
Marphurius	15	Dorimène	26	Marphurius	3	No
Sganarelle	14	Sganarelle	19	Alcantor	2	No
Géronimo	9	Marphurius	17	Alcidas	2	No
Alcantor	4	Panrace	16	Géronimo	1	No
<b>7n. Results for <i>La Princesse d'Élide</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
La Princesse	30	Arbate	57	La Princesse	8	Yes
Euryale	22	Moron	54	Théocle	4	No
Iphitas	21	Iphitas	52	Aristomène	3	No
Aristomène	20	Euryale	47	Euryale	3	No
Philis	16	Aglante	46	Moron	3	No
Moron	15	Philis	37	Philis	3	No
Théocle	15	Aristomène	34	Aglante	2	No
Cynthia	8	Cynthia	32	Arbate	2	No
Aglante	2	Théocle	31	Cynthia	2	No
Arbate	2	La Princesse	16	Iphitas	0	No
<b>7o. Results for <i>Le Tartuffe</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Tartuffe	36	Elmire	57	Tartuffe	9	Yes
Mme Pernelle	21	Dorine	55	Orgon	8	Yes
Orgon	18	Cléante	52	Mme Pernelle	6	Yes
Damis	15	Valère	40	Damis	3	No
Dorine	15	Mariane	30	Mariane	2	No
Cléante	10	Tartuffe	26	Valère	1	No
Elmire	5	Damis	22	Cléante	0	No
Valère	5	Orgon	17	Dorine	0	No
Mariane	1	Mme Pernelle	12	Elmire	0	No
<b>7p. Results for <i>Don Juan</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Don Juan	39	Done Elvire	50	Don Juan	6	Yes
Don Alonse	24	Don Carlos	48	Sganarelle	5	Yes
Charlotte	22	Don Louis	41	Charlotte	4	No
Sganarelle	21	Don Juan	39	Mathurine	4	No
Don Louis	15	Francisque	34	Don Alonse	3	No
Mathurine	14	Don Alonse	31	Done Elvire	3	No
Don Carlos	11	Pierrot	28	Pierrot	3	No
Francisque	7	Sganarelle	20	Francisque	2	No
Pierrot	6	M. Dimanche	18	Don Carlos	1	No
M. Dimanche	5	Mathurine	17	M. Dimanche	1	No
Done Elvire	4	Charlotte	14	Don Louis	1	No

<b>Appendix 7, continued</b>						
<b>7q. Results for <i>L'Amour médecin</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
M. Filerin	34	Clitandre	69	M. Filerin	6	Yes
Lisette	17	Lisette	57	Sganarelle	3	No
Sganarelle	17	Lucinde	55	Lisette	2	No
Clitandre	16	M. Filerin	46	Clitandre	1	No
Lucinde	3	Sganarelle	31	Lucinde	1	No
<b>7r. Results for <i>Le Misanthrope</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Acaste	35	Éliante	71	Acaste	9	Yes
Oronte	35	Philinte	68	Arsinoé	9	Yes
Alceste	32	Acaste	27	Célimène	9	Yes
Arsinoé	32	Clitandre	27	Alceste	8	Yes
Célimène	32	Célimène	26	Clitandre	8	Yes
Clitandre	30	Oronte	26	Oronte	7	Yes
Philinte	3	Arsinoé	16	Éliante	2	No
Éliante	1	Alceste	12	Philinte	0	No
<b>7s. Results for <i>Le Médecin malgré lui</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Sganarelle	26	Perrin	65	Lucas	6	Yes
Martine	21	Léandre	58	Sganarelle	6	Yes
Lucinde	20	Jacqueline	50	Géronte	4	No
Lucas	16	M. Robert	44	Lucinde	4	No
Géronte	13	Thibaut	32	Martine	4	No
Léandre	11	Géronte	29	Valère	3	No
Perrin	10	Lucinde	28	Léandre	2	No
Valère	9	Martine	28	Jacqueline	1	No
M. Robert	8	Valère	24	Perrin	1	No
Jacqueline	6	Lucas	18	Thibaut	1	No
Thibaut	3	Sganarelle	17	M. Robert	0	No
<b>7t. Results for <i>Pastorale comique</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Filène	32	Filène	20	Filène	7	Yes
Lycas	17	Lycas	13	Lycas	5	Yes
<b>7u. Results for <i>Mélicerte</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Daphné	22	Myrtil	58	Daphné	6	Yes
Éroxène	22	Mélicerte	44	Éroxène	6	Yes
Lycarsis	20	Daphné	35	Lycarsis	5	Yes
Myrtil	7	Éroxène	35	Acante	3	No
Acante	3	Acante	29	Tyrène	3	No
Tyrène	3	Tyrène	29	Mélicerte	1	No
Mélicerte	2	Lycarsis	13	Myrtil	1	No

<b>Appendix 7, continued</b>						
<b>7v. Results for <i>Le Sicilien ou l'amour peintre</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Le Sénateur	32	Climène	57	Don Pèdre	5	Yes
Don Pèdre	31	Isidore	48	Le Sénateur	5	Yes
Hali	25	Adraste	45	Hali	4	No
Adraste	22	Hali	40	Adraste	2	No
Isidore	22	Le Sénateur	22	Isidore	2	No
Climène	13	Don Pèdre	17	Climène	1	No
<b>7w. Results for <i>Amphitryon</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Jupiter	34	Jupiter	43	Jupiter	7	Yes
Mercure	25	Mercure	38	Amphitryon	4	No
Amphitryon	23	Alcmène	37	Mercure	4	No
Alcmène	11	Cléanthis	34	La Nuit	4	No
Cléanthis	9	Amphitryon	25	Cléanthis	3	No
Sosie	9	La Nuit	22	Sosie	2	No
La Nuit	7	Sosie	13	Alcmène	0	No
<b>7x. Results for <i>George Dandin</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
M. de Sotenville	33	Claudine	46	M. de Sotenville	8	Yes
Mme de Sotenville	31	Angélique	41	Mme de Sotenville	8	Yes
Angélique	28	Clitandre	39	Angélique	4	No
Clitandre	24	M. de Sotenville	32	Clitandre	4	No
Claudine	14	Mme de Sotenville	26	George Dandin	4	No
George Dandin	13	George Dandin	22	Lubin	4	No
Lubin	11	Lubin	12	Claudine	2	No
<b>7y. Results for <i>L'Avare</i></b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Frosine	30	Valère	63	Harpagon	6	Yes
Harpagon	21	Anselme	60	Frosine	3	No
Valère	20	Mariane	56	Cléante	2	No
La Flèche	17	Élise	52	Maître Jacques	2	No
Cléante	11	Frosine	43	Valère	2	No
Anselme	10	Cléante	38	Élise	1	No
Maître Jacques	8	Maître Jacques	36	La Flèche	1	No
Mariane	6	La Flèche	35	Anselme	0	No
Élise	5	Harpagon	18	Mariane	0	No

Appendix 7, continued						
<b>7z. Results for <i>Monsieur de Pourceaugnac</i></b>						
Narcissistic Personality Inventory		Empathy Quotient		Narcissistic Personality Disorder		
Character	Score	Character	Score	Character	Score	NPD
Sbrigani	33	Julie	62	Pourceaugnac	6	Yes
Premier médecin	32	Éraste	56	Premier médecin	6	Yes
Nérine	29	Nérine	54	Nérine	5	Yes
Second médecin	28	Sbrigani	51	Sbrigani	5	Yes
L'Apothicaire	22	Oronte	23	L'Apothicaire	5	Yes
Pourceaugnac	19	L'Apothicaire	21	Second médecin	5	Yes
Éraste	17	Pourceaugnac	18	Éraste	4	No
Oronte	14	Premier médecin	13	Julie	3	No
Julie	12	Second médecin	10	Oronte	3	No
<b>7aa. Results for <i>Les Amants magnifiques</i></b>						
Narcissistic Personality Inventory		Empathy Quotient		Narcissistic Personality Disorder		
Character	Score	Character	Score	Character	Score	NPD
Anaxarque	32	Clitidas	56	Timoclès	8	Yes
Iphicrate	29	Anaxarque	46	Iphicrate	7	Yes
Timoclès	28	Iphicrate	44	Anaxarque	6	Yes
Aristione	24	Cléonice	39	Ériphile	4	No
Ériphile	20	Sostrate	39	Aristione	2	No
Clitidas	17	Aristione	36	Clitidas	1	No
Cléonice	6	Timoclès	31	Sostrate	1	No
Sostrate	2	Ériphile	27	Cléonice	0	No
<b>7bb. Results for <i>Le Bourgeois gentilhomme</i></b>						
Narcissistic Personality Inventory		Empathy Quotient		Narcissistic Personality Disorder		
Character	Score	Character	Score	Character	Score	NPD
Maître d'armes	31	Covielle	53	M. Jourdain	8	Yes
Maître tailleur	30	Dorante	52	Maître d'armes	6	Yes
Maître de philos.	29	Maître de musique	49	Maître de philos.	6	Yes
Dorante	28	Mme Jourdain	43	Dorante	5	Yes
M. Jourdain	26	Maître à danser	39	Maître à danser	4	No
Maître à danser	21	Lucile	38	Maître tailleur	4	No
Maître de musique	13	Maître tailleur	37	Cléonte	3	No
Covielle	12	Dorimène	34	Dorimène	3	No
Dorimène	10	Cléonte	32	Covielle	1	No
Lucile	6	Nicole	22	Mme Jourdain	1	No
Nicole	6	M. Jourdain	18	Nicole	1	No
Cléonte	4	Maître d'armes	16	Maître de musique	1	No
Mme Jourdain	4	Maître de philos.	16	Lucile	0	No

Appendix 7, continued						
<b>7cc. Results for <i>Psyché</i></b>						
Narcissistic Personality Inventory		Empathy Quotient		Narcissistic Personality Disorder		
Character	Score	Character	Score	Character	Score	NPD
Vénus	37	Jupiter	55	Cidippe	9	Yes
L'Amour	33	L'Amour	53	Aglaure	8	Yes
Jupiter	33	Agénor	52	Vénus	8	Yes
Aglaure	31	Cléomène	51	L'Amour	6	Yes
Cidippe	23	Le Roi	40	Jupiter	2	No
Le Roi	15	Aglaure	36	Psyché	2	No
Psyché	13	Vénus	36	Agénor	1	No
Agénor	7	Cidippe	31	Cléomène	1	No
Cléomène	7	Psyché	27	Le Roi	1	No
<b>7dd. Results for <i>Les Fourberies de Scapin</i></b>						
Narcissistic Personality Inventory		Empathy Quotient		Narcissistic Personality Disorder		
Character	Score	Character	Score	Character	Score	NPD
Scapin	30	Hyacinte	57	Géronte	8	Yes
Géronte	22	Octave	53	Argante	6	Yes
Léandre	15	Silvestre	43	Scapin	6	Yes
Zerbinette	15	Scapin	41	Léandre	3	No
Argante	14	Léandre	37	Hyacinte	2	No
Hyacinte	14	Argante	20	Octave	2	No
Octave	6	Géronte	14	Silvestre	1	No
Silvestre	5	Zerbinette	14	Zerbinette	1	No
<b>7ee. Results for <i>La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas</i></b>						
Narcissistic Personality Inventory		Empathy Quotient		Narcissistic Personality Disorder		
Character	Score	Character	Score	Character	Score	NPD
La Comtesse	33	Le Vicomte	50	La Comtesse	8	Yes
Julie	19	Julie	46	M. Harpin	8	Yes
M. Harpin	18	M. Tibaudier	31	M. Tibaudier	5	Yes
M. Tibaudier	13	M. Harpin	26	Le Vicomte	3	No
Le Vicomte	9	La Comtesse	20	Julie	2	No
<b>7ff. Results for <i>Les Femmes savantes</i></b>						
Narcissistic Personality Inventory		Empathy Quotient		Narcissistic Personality Disorder		
Character	Score	Character	Score	Character	Score	NPD
Trissotin	34	Ariste	60	Vadius	9	Yes
Philaminte	33	Henriette	43	Armande	8	Yes
Vadius	31	Clitandre	42	Bélise	8	Yes
Bélise	30	Trissotin	39	Philaminte	8	Yes
Armande	24	Chrysale	34	Trissotin	8	Yes
Chrysale	18	Armande	30	Clitandre	2	No
Ariste	11	Martine	25	Ariste	1	No
Clitandre	6	Philaminte	22	Chrysale	1	No
Martine	5	Bélise	20	Henriette	1	No
Henriette	4	Vadius	18	Martine	1	No

<b>Appendix 7, continued</b>					
<b>7gg. Results for <i>Le Malade imaginaire</i></b>					
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>	
<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Score NPD</b>
M. Purgon	34	Cléante	64	M. Purgon	8 Yes
M. Diafoirus	29	Toinette	63	Argan	7 Yes
Thomas Diafoirus	22	Angélique	55	Thomas Diafoirus	7 Yes
Béline	21	Béralde	47	M. Diafoirus	6 Yes
Argan	19	Béline	37	Béline	4 No
Louison	13	Louison	36	Angélique	1 No
Béralde	12	M. Purgon	27	Béralde	1 No
Cléante	12	Argan	8	Cléante	1 No
Toinette	12	M. Diafoirus	7	Toinette	1 No
Angélique	4	Thomas Diafoirus	6	Louison	0 No

<b>Appendix 8</b>					
<b>Complete Psychometric Questionnaire Results for 269 Characters</b>					
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>	
<b>Character</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>SC NP</b>
Don Juan (DJ)	39	Éliante (MIS)	71	Acaste (MIS)	9 Yes
Vénus (PSY)	37	Clitandre (AM)	69	Arsinoé (MIS)	9 Yes
Tartuffe (TA)	36	Philinte (MIS)	68	Célimène (MIS)	9 Yes
<b>2 Standard Deviations: 35.3</b>		Sabine (MV)	68	Cidippe (PSY)	9 Yes
Acaste (MIS)	35	Perrin (MM)	65	Tartuffe (TA)	9 Yes
Oronte (MIS)	35	Cléante (MI)	64	Vadius (FSA)	9 Yes
M. Filerin (AM)	34	<b>2 Standard Deviations: 63.92</b>		<b>2 Standard Deviations: 8.72</b>	
Jupiter (AMP)	34	Horace (EF)	63	Aglaure (PSY)	8 Yes
M. Purgon (MI)	34	Toinette (MI)	63	Alceste (MIS)	8 Yes
Trissotin (FSA)	34	Valère (AV)	63	Armande (FSA)	8 Yes
L'Amour (PSY)	33	Ascagne (DA)	62	Bélise (FSA)	8 Yes
La Comtesse (CE)	33	Julie (MP)	62	Caritidès (FA)	8 Yes
Jupiter (PSY)	33	Anselme (AV)	60	Cathos (PR)	8 Yes
Philaminte (FSA)	33	Ariste (FSA)	60	Clitandre (MIS)	8 Yes
Sbrigani (MP)	33	Chrysalde (EF)	60	La Princesse d'Élide (PE)	8 Yes
M. de Sotenville (GD)	33	Célie (ET)	59	Done Elvire (DG)	8 Yes
Alceste (MIS)	32	Léandre (MM)	58	La Comtesse (CE)	8 Yes
Anaxarque (AMA)	32	Myrtil (ME)	58	Géronte (FSC)	8 Yes
Arsinoé (MIS)	32	Arbate (PE)	57	Gorgibus (SGA)	8 Yes
Célimène (MIS)	32	Climène (SI)	57	M. Harpin (CE)	8 Yes
Filène (PC)	32	Elmire (TA)	57	M. Jourdain (BG)	8 Yes
Mascarille (PR)	32	Hyacinte (FSC)	57	Lélie (ET)	8 Yes
Sganarelle (EM)	32	Done Ignès (DG)	57	Lysidas (CR)	8 Yes
Premier médecin (MP)	32	Lisette (AM)	57	Magdelon (PR)	8 Yes
Le Sénateur (SI)	32	Clitidas (AMA)	56	Orgon (TA)	8 Yes
Aglaure (PSY)	31	Éraste (MP)	56	Philaminte (FSA)	8 Yes
Don Pèdre (SI)	31	Mariane (AV)	56	M. Purgon (MI)	8 Yes
Mme de Sotenville (GD)	31	Don Alvar (DG)	55	Sganarelle (EM)	8 Yes
Vadius (FSA)	31	Angélique (MI)	55	Mme de Sotenville (GD)	8 Yes
Maître d'armes (BG)	31	Dorine (TA)	55	M. de Sotenville (GD)	8 Yes
Bélise (FSA)	30	Jupiter (PSY)	55	Timoclès (AMA)	8 Yes
Clitandre (MIS)	30	Lucinde (AM)	55	Trissotin (FSA)	8 Yes
La Princesse d'Élide (PE)	30	Moron (PE)	54	Vénus (PSY)	8 Yes
Frosine (AV)	30	Nérine (MP)	54	Argan (MI)	7 Yes
Scapin (FSC)	30	L'Amour (PSY)	53	Arnolphe (EF)	7 Yes
Maître tailleur (BG)	30	Covielle (BG)	53	Filène (PC)	7 Yes
M. Diafoirus (MI)	29	Octave (FSC)	53	Iphicrate (AMA)	7 Yes
Done Elvire (DG)	29	Agénor (PSY)	52	Jupiter (AMP)	7 Yes
Iphicrate (AMA)	29	Cléante (TA)	52	Don Lope (DG)	7 Yes
Magdelon (PR)	29	Dorante (BG)	52	Mascarille (PR)	7 Yes
Nérine (MP)	29	Élise (AV)	52	Ormin (FA)	7 Yes
Maître de philosophie (BG)	29	Iphitas (PE)	52	Oronte (MIS)	7 Yes
Angélique (GD)	28	Anselme (ET)	51	Sganarelle (MF)	7 Yes
Dorante (BG)	28	Cléomène (PSY)	51	Thomas Diafoirus (MI)	7 Yes
Timoclès (AMA)	28	Élise (CR)	51	Le Docteur (JB)	7 Yes
Le Docteur (JB)	28	Sbrigani (MP)	51	Le Marquis (CR)	7 Yes
Second médecin (MP)	28	Dorante (CR)	50	<b>1 Standard Deviation: 6.13</b>	
Gorgibus (SGA)	28	Done Elvire (DJ)	50	Don Alphonse (DG)	6 Yes
Le Barbouillé (JB)	27	Ergaste (ET)	50	L'Amour (PSY)	6 Yes
<b>1 Standard Deviation: 26.03</b>		Gorgibus (JB)	50	Anaxarque (AMA)	6 Yes
Arnolphe (EF)	26	Jacqueline (MM)	50	Argante (FSC)	6 Yes
M. Jourdain (BG)	26	Mascarille (ET)	50	Clymène (FA)	6 Yes
Don Lope (DG)	26	Le Vicomte (CE)	50	Daphné (ME)	6 Yes
Orante (FA)	26	<b>1 Standard Deviation: 49.25</b>		M. Diafoirus (MI)	6 Yes

Appendix 8, continued						
Narcissistic Personality Inventory			Empathy Quotient		Narcissistic Personality Disorder	
Character	SC	Character	SC	Character	SC	NPD
Sganarelle (MM)	26	Valère (JB)	49	Éroxène (ME)	6	Yes
Don Alphonse (DG)	25	Maître de musique (BG)	49	M. Filerin (AM)	6	Yes
Filinte (FA)	25	Don Carlos (DJ)	48	Don Garcie (DG)	6	Yes
Hali (SI)	25	Isidore (SI)	48	Harpagon (AV)	6	Yes
Mercure (AMP)	25	Béralde (MI)	47	Jodelet (PR)	6	Yes
Métaphraste (DA)	25	Ergaste (EM)	47	Don Juan (DJ)	6	Yes
Don Alonse (DJ)	24	Euryale (PE)	47	La Thorillière (IV)	6	Yes
Aristione (AMA)	24	Aglante (PE)	46	Lucas (MM)	6	Yes
Armande (FSA)	24	Anaxarque (AMA)	46	Lysandre (FA)	6	Yes
Clitandre (GD)	24	Ariste (EM)	46	Métaphraste (DA)	6	Yes
Don Garcie (DG)	24	Claudine (GD)	46	Orante (FA)	6	Yes
La Thorillière (IV)	24	M. Filerin (AM)	46	Panrace (MF)	6	Yes
Ormin (FA)	24	Isabelle (EM)	46	Mme Pernelle (TA)	6	Yes
Amphitryon (AMP)	23	Julie (CE)	46	M. de Pourceaugnac (MP)	6	Yes
Cathos (PR)	23	Léonor (EM)	46	Scapin (FSC)	6	Yes
Cidippe (PSY)	23	Molière (IV)	46	Sganarelle (MM)	6	Yes
Jodelet (PR)	23	Villebrequin (JB)	46	Maître d'armes (BG)	6	Yes
Lélie (ET)	23	Adraste (SI)	45	Maître de philosophie (BG)	6	Yes
Lysandre (FA)	23	Andrès (ET)	45	Premier médecin (MP)	6	Yes
Lysidas (CR)	23	Polidore (DA)	45	Albert (DA)	5	Yes
Panrace (MF)	23	Frosine (DA)	44	Angélique (JB)	5	Yes
Sganarelle (MV)	23	Iphicrate (AMA)	44	Dorante (BG)	5	Yes
Adraste (SI)	22	Don Lope (DG)	44	Dorante (FA)	5	Yes
Alcidas (MF)	22	Mélicerte (ME)	44	Filinte (FA)	5	Yes
Charlotte (DJ)	22	M. Robert (MM)	44	Lycarsis (ME)	5	Yes
Daphné (ME)	22	Alcidas (MF)	43	Lycas (PC)	5	Yes
Dorimène (MF)	22	Frosine (AV)	43	Nérine (MP)	5	Yes
Éroxène (ME)	22	Henriette (FSA)	43	Don Pèdre (SI)	5	Yes
Euryale (PE)	22	Mme Jourdain (BG)	43	Sbrigani (MP)	5	Yes
Géronte (FSC)	22	Jupiter (AMP)	43	Sganarelle (DJ)	5	Yes
Isidore (SI)	22	Silvestre (FSC)	43	Sganarelle (SGA)	5	Yes
La Grange (PR)	22	Agnès (EF)	42	M. Tibaudier (CE)	5	Yes
Thomas Diafoirus (MI)	22	Mlle Béjart (IV)	42	L'Apothicaire (MP)	5	Yes
L'Apothicaire (MP)	22	Clitandre (FSA)	42	Le Barbouillé (JB)	5	Yes
Béline (MI)	21	Angélique (GD)	41	Second médecin (MP)	5	Yes
Dorante (FA)	21	Élise (DG)	41	Le Sénateur (SI)	5	Yes
Harpagon (AV)	21	La Grange (PR)	41	Amphitryon (AMP)	4	No
Iphitas (PE)	21	Don Louis (DJ)	41	Andrès (ET)	4	No
Martine (MM)	21	Scapin (FSC)	41	Angélique (GD)	4	No
Mme Pernelle (TA)	21	Valère (MV)	41	Béline (MI)	4	No
Sganarelle (DJ)	21	Alcantor (MF)	40	Célie (SGA)	4	No
Maître à danser (BG)	21	Hali (SI)	40	Charlotte (DJ)	4	No
Aristomène (PE)	20	Lycaste (MF)	40	Climène (CR)	4	No
Ériphile (AMA)	20	Valère (TA)	40	Clitandre (GD)	4	No
Isabelle (EM)	20	Le Roi (PSY)	40	Damis (FA)	4	No
Lucinde (MM)	20	Cléonice (AMA)	39	Du Croisy (PR)	4	No
Lycarsis (ME)	20	Clitandre (GD)	39	Éraste (DA)	4	No
Mascarille (ET)	20	Don Juan (DJ)	39	Éraste (FA)	4	No
Valère (AV)	20	Sostrate (AMA)	39	Éraste (MP)	4	No
Angélique (JB)	19	Trissotin (FSA)	39	Ériphile (AMA)	4	No
Argan (MI)	19	Uranie (CR)	39	George Dandin (GD)	4	No
Gorgibus (MV)	19	Maître à danser (BG)	39	Géronte (MM)	4	No
Julie (CE)	19	La Suivante de Célie (SGA)	39	Gorgibus (MV)	4	No
Lélie (SGA)	19	Cléante (AV)	38	Hali (SI)	4	No
Molière (IV)	19	Lisette (EM)	38	Hippolyte (ET)	4	No

Appendix 8, continued					
Narcissistic Personality Inventory		Empathy Quotient		Narcissistic Personality Disorder	
Character	SC	Character	SC	Character	SC NPD
M. de Pourceaugnac (MP)	19	Lucile (BG)	38	La Grange (PR)	4 No
Uranie (CR)	19	Mercure (AMP)	38	Léandre (ET)	4 No
Albert (DA)	18	Valère (DA)	38	Lélie (SGA)	4 No
Alcipe (FA)	18	Valère (EM)	38	Lubin (GD)	4 No
Ascagne (DA)	18	Alcmène (AMP)	37	Lucile (DA)	4 No
Caritidès (FA)	18	Béline (MI)	37	Lucinde (MM)	4 No
Chrysale (FSA)	18	Éraste (DA)	37	Lycaste (MF)	4 No
Climène (CR)	18	Gros-René (DA)	37	Martine (MM)	4 No
Damis (FA)	18	Léandre (FSC)	37	Mathurine (DJ)	4 No
M. Harpin (CE)	18	Phylis (PE)	37	Mercure (AMP)	4 No
Lycaste (MF)	18	Maître tailleur (BG)	37	La Nuit (AMP)	4 No
Orgon (TA)	18	Aglaure (PSY)	36	Théocle (PE)	4 No
Valère (DA)	18	Aristione (AMA)	36	Valère (DA)	4 No
Clitidas (AMA)	17	Mlle de Brie (IV)	36	Maître à danser (BG)	4 No
Clymène (FA)	17	Gorgibus (PR)	36	Maître tailleur (BG)	4 No
Éraste (MP)	17	Maître Jacques (AV)	36	<b>MEAN: 3.54</b>	
Georgette (EF)	17	Louison (MI)	36	Acante (ME)	3 No
La Flèche (AV)	17	Vénus (PSY)	36	Don Alonse (DJ)	3 No
Lisette (AM)	17	Daphné (ME)	35	Anselme (ET)	3 No
Lycas (PC)	17	Éroxène (ME)	35	Aristomène (PE)	3 No
Sganarelle (AM)	17	La Flèche (AV)	35	Cathau (JB)	3 No
<b>MEAN: 16.76</b>		<b>MEAN: 34.58</b>		Cléanthis (AMP)	3 No
Alcandre (FA)	16	Alcandre (FA)	34	Cléonte (BG)	3 No
Anselme (ET)	16	Aristomène (PE)	34	Damis (TA)	3 No
Célie (SGA)	16	Chrysale (FSA)	34	Dorimène (BG)	3 No
Clitandre (AM)	16	Cléanthis (AMP)	34	Dorimène (MF)	3 No
Éraste (DA)	16	Dorimène (BG)	34	Done Elvire (DJ)	3 No
Lucas (MM)	16	Francisque (DJ)	34	Euryale (PE)	3 No
Phylis (PE)	16	Léandre (ET)	34	Frosine (AV)	3 No
Le Marquis (CR)	16	Sganarelle (MV)	34	Julie (MP)	3 No
Alain (EF)	15	Enrique (EF)	33	Léandre (FSC)	3 No
Damis (TA)	15	Albert (DA)	32	Marphurius (MF)	3 No
Dorine (TA)	15	Cathau (JB)	32	Mascarille (ET)	3 No
Horace (EF)	15	Cléonte (BG)	32	Moron (PE)	3 No
Léandre (FSC)	15	Du Croisy (PR)	32	Oronte (EF)	3 No
Don Louis (DJ)	15	Cynthia (PE)	32	Oronte (MP)	3 No
Marphurius (MF)	15	Géronimo (MF)	32	Pandolfe (ET)	3 No
Moron (PE)	15	Lysandre (FA)	32	Phylis (PE)	3 No
Sganarelle (SGA)	15	Ormin (FA)	32	Pierrot (DJ)	3 No
Théocle (PE)	15	M. de Sotenville (GD)	32	Sganarelle (AM)	3 No
Zerbinette (FSC)	15	Thibaut (MM)	32	Tyrène (ME)	3 No
Le Roi (PSY)	15	Don Alonse (DJ)	31	Valère (JB)	3 No
Andrès (ET)	14	Angélique (JB)	31	Valère (MM)	3 No
Argante (FSC)	14	Cidippe (PSY)	31	Valère (MV)	3 No
Claudine (GD)	14	Done Elvire (DG)	31	Le Vicomte (CE)	3 No
Dorante (CR)	14	Lysidas (CR)	31	La Femme de Sgan. (SGA)	3 No
Éraste (FA)	14	Mascarille (DA)	31	Adraste (SI)	2 No
Hyacinthe (FSC)	14	Sganarelle (AM)	31	Aglante (PE)	2 No
Lucile (DA)	14	Théocle (PE)	31	Alain (EF)	2 No
Mathurine (DJ)	14	M. Tibaudier (CE)	31	Alcantor (MF)	2 No
Oronte (MP)	14	Timoclès (AMA)	31	Alcidas (MF)	2 No
Orphise (FA)	14	Armande (FSA)	30	Alcipe (FA)	2 No
Sganarelle (MF)	14	Célie (SGA)	30	Arbate (PE)	2 No
Valère (JB)	14	Mariane (TA)	30	Aristione (AMA)	2 No
Mlle Béjart (IV)	13	Marinette (DA)	30	Mlle Béjart (IV)	2 No

Appendix 8, continued					
Narcissistic Personality Inventory		Empathy Quotient		Narcissistic Personality Disorder	
Character	SC	Character	SC	Character	SC NPD
Climène (SI)	13	La Femme de Sgan. (SGA)	30	Claudine (GD)	2 No
George Dandin (GD)	13	Acante (ME)	29	Cléante (AV)	2 No
Géronte (MM)	13	Géronte (MM)	29	Clitandre (FSA)	2 No
Hippolyte (ET)	13	Trufaldin (ET)	29	Cynthia (PE)	2 No
Louison (MI)	13	Tyrène (ME)	29	Éliante (MIS)	2 No
Oronte (EF)	13	Le Marquis (CR)	29	Élise (CR)	2 No
Psyché (PSY)	13	Damis (FA)	28	Francisque (DJ)	2 No
Sabine (MV)	13	Gorgibus (MV)	28	Georgette (EF)	2 No
M. Tibaudier (CE)	13	La Montagne (FA)	28	Gorgibus (PR)	2 No
Maître de musique (BG)	13	Lucinde (MM)	28	Gros-René (SGA)	2 No
Béralde (MI)	12	Martine (MM)	28	Hyacinthe (FSC)	2 No
Cléante (MI)	12	Pierrot (DJ)	28	Isabelle (EM)	2 No
Covielle (BG)	12	Acaste (MIS)	27	Isidore (SI)	2 No
Julie (MP)	12	Clitandre (MIS)	27	Maître Jacques (AV)	2 No
Léandre (ET)	12	Mlle du Parc (IV)	27	Julie (CE)	2 No
Mlle Molière (IV)	12	Ériphile (AMA)	27	Jupiter (PSY)	2 No
Toinette (MI)	12	La Rapière (DA)	27	Léandre (MM)	2 No
Trufaldin (ET)	12	Orphise (FA)	27	Lisette (AM)	2 No
Alcmène (AMP)	11	Psyché (PSY)	27	Mariane (TA)	2 No
Ariste (FSA)	11	M. Purgon (MI)	27	Mascarille (DA)	2 No
Don Carlos (DJ)	11	Sganarelle (SGA)	27	Mlle Molière (IV)	2 No
Célie (ET)	11	Célimène (MIS)	26	Molière (IV)	2 No
Cléante (AV)	11	Climène (CR)	26	Octave (FSC)	2 No
Gorgibus (JB)	11	Dorimène (MF)	26	Orphise (FA)	2 No
Léandre (MM)	11	M. Harpin (CE)	26	Mlle du Parc (IV)	2 No
Lubin (GD)	11	Oronte (MIS)	26	Psyché (PSY)	2 No
Pandolfe (ET)	11	Mme de Sotenville (GD)	26	Sganarelle (MV)	2 No
Anselme (AV)	10	Tartuffe (TA)	26	Sosie (AMP)	2 No
Cléante (TA)	10	Amphitryon (AMP)	25	Trufaldin (ET)	2 No
Dorimène (BG)	10	Brécourt (IV)	25	Valère (AV)	2 No
Du Croisy (PR)	10	Martine (FSA)	25	Agénor (PSY)	1 No
Mlle du Parc (IV)	10	Valère (MM)	24	Alcandre (FA)	1 No
Enrique (EF)	10	Dorante (FA)	23	Angélique (MI)	1 No
La Montagne (FA)	10	Gros-René (SGA)	23	Ariste (FSA)	1 No
Perrin (MM)	10	Lucile (DA)	23	Ascagne (DA)	1 No
Valère (MV)	10	Oronte (MP)	23	Béralde (MI)	1 No
La Suivante de Célie (SGA)	10	Damis (TA)	22	Brécourt (IV)	1 No
Cléanthis (AMP)	9	Éraste (FA)	22	Don Carlos (DJ)	1 No
Mlle de Brie (IV)	9	Don Garcie (DG)	22	Célie (ET)	1 No
Ergaste (EM)	9	George Dandin (GD)	22	Chrysale (FSA)	1 No
Géronimo (MF)	9	Gorgibus (SGA)	22	Cléante (MI)	1 No
Lisette (EM)	9	Gros-René (MV)	22	Cléomène (PSY)	1 No
Sosie (AMP)	9	Mlle Molière (IV)	22	Climène (SI)	1 No
Valère (MM)	9	Nicole (BG)	22	Clitandre (AM)	1 No
Le Vicomte (CE)	9	La Nuit (AMP)	22	Clitidas (AMA)	1 No
La Femme de Sgan. (SGA)	9	Orante (FA)	22	Covielle (BG)	1 No
Ariste (EM)	8	Oronte (EF)	22	M. Dimanche (DJ)	1 No
Cathau (JB)	8	Pandolfe (ET)	22	Élise (AV)	1 No
Cynthia (PE)	8	Philaminte (FSA)	22	Enrique (EF)	1 No
Maître Jacques (AV)	8	Le Sénateur (SI)	22	Ergaste (EM)	1 No
La Rapière (DA)	8	Hippolyte (ET)	21	Ergaste (ET)	1 No
Léonor (EM)	8	Lélie (SGA)	21	Galopin (CR)	1 No
M. Robert (MM)	8	Mascarille (PR)	21	Géronimo (MF)	1 No
<b>1 Standard Deviation: 7.49</b>		L'Apothicaire (MP)	21	Gros-René (MV)	1 No
Agénor (PSY)	7	Argante (FSC)	20	Henriette (FSA)	1 No

<b>Appendix 8, continued</b>						
<b>Narcissistic Personality Inventory</b>		<b>Empathy Quotient</b>		<b>Narcissistic Personality Disorder</b>		
<b>Character</b>	<b>Pts</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Pts</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Pts</b>	<b>NPD</b>
Cléomène (PSY)	7	Bélise (FSA)	20	Horace (EF)	1	No
Élise (CR)	7	Clymène (FA)	20	Done Ignès (DG)	1	No
Ergaste (ET)	7	La Comtesse (CE)	20	Jacqueline (MM)	1	No
Francisque (DJ)	7	Filène (PC)	20	Mme Jourdain (BG)	1	No
Gros-René (DA)	7	Magdelon (PR)	20	La Flèche (AV)	1	No
Mascarille (DA)	7	Sganarelle (DJ)	20	La Montagne (FA)	1	No
Myrtil (ME)	7	<b>1 Standard Deviation: 19.91</b>		La Rapière (DA)	1	No
La Nuit (AMP)	7	Don Alphonse (DG)	19	Léonor (EM)	1	No
Chrysalde (EF)	6	Sganarelle (MF)	19	Don Louis (DJ)	1	No
Cléonice (AMA)	6	Le Barbouillé (JB)	19	Lucinde (AM)	1	No
Clitandre (FSA)	6	Alcipe (FA)	18	Marinette (DA)	1	No
Élise (DG)	6	M. Dimanche (DJ)	18	Martine (FSA)	1	No
Galopin (CR)	6	Filinte (FA)	18	Mélicerte (ME)	1	No
Gorgibus (PR)	6	Harpagon (AV)	18	Myrtil (ME)	1	No
Gros-René (SGA)	6	Jodelet (PR)	18	Nicole (BG)	1	No
Done Ignès (DG)	6	M. Jourdain (BG)	18	Perrin (MM)	1	No
Jacqueline (MM)	6	Lucas (MM)	18	Polidore (DA)	1	No
Lucile (BG)	6	M. de Pourceaugnac (MP)	18	Sabine (MV)	1	No
Mariane (AV)	6	Vadius (FSA)	18	Silvestre (FSC)	1	No
Marinette (DA)	6	Cathos (PR)	17	Sostrate (AMA)	1	No
Nicole (BG)	6	Marphurius (MF)	17	Thibaut (MM)	1	No
Octave (FSC)	6	Mathurine (DJ)	17	Toinette (MI)	1	No
Pierrot (DJ)	6	Orgon (TA)	17	Uranie (CR)	1	No
Polidore (DA)	6	Don Pèdre (SI)	17	Valère (EM)	1	No
Agnès (EF)	5	Sganarelle (EM)	17	Valère (TA)	1	No
M. Dimanche (DJ)	5	Sganarelle (MM)	17	Zerbinette (FSC)	1	No
Élise (AV)	5	Arsinoé (MIS)	16	Maître de musique (BG)	1	No
Elmire (TA)	5	Caritidès (FA)	16	Le Roi (PSY)	1	No
Martine (FSA)	5	La Princesse d'Élide (PE)	16	La Suivante de Célie (SGA)	1	No
Silvestre (FSC)	5	Lélie (ET)	16	<b>1 Standard Deviation: 0.95</b>		
Valère (TA)	5	Panrace (MF)	16	Agnès (EF)	0	No
Alcantor (MF)	4	Maître d'armes (BG)	16	Alcmène (AMP)	0	No
Don Alvar (DG)	4	Maître de philosoph. (BG)	16	Don Alvar (DG)	0	No
Angélique (MI)	4	La Thorillière (IV)	15	Anselme (AV)	0	No
Brécourt (IV)	4	Charlotte (DJ)	14	Ariste (EM)	0	No
Cléonte (BG)	4	Géronte (FSC)	14	Mlle de Brie (IV)	0	No
Done Elvire (DJ)	4	Zerbinette (FSC)	14	Chrysalde (EF)	0	No
Gros-René (MV)	4	Lycarsis (ME)	13	Cléante (TA)	0	No
Henriette (FSA)	4	Lycas (PC)	13	Cléonice (AMA)	0	No
Mme Jourdain (BG)	4	Métaphraste (DA)	13	Dorante (CR)	0	No
Acante (ME)	3	Sosie (AMP)	13	Dorine (TA)	0	No
Lucinde (AM)	3	Premier médecin (MP)	13	Élise (DG)	0	No
Philinte (MIS)	3	Alceste (MIS)	12	Elmire (TA)	0	No
Thibaut (MM)	3	Lubin (GD)	12	Frosine (DA)	0	No
Tyrène (ME)	3	Mme Pernelle (TA)	12	Gorgibus (JB)	0	No
Valère (EM)	3	Le Docteur (JB)	12	Gros-René (DA)	0	No
Aglante (PE)	2	Arnolphe (EF)	10	Iphitas (PE)	0	No
Arbate (PE)	2	Second médecin (MP)	10	Lisette (EM)	0	No
Frosine (DA)	2	Alain (EF)	8	Louison (MI)	0	No
Mélicerte (ME)	2	Argan (MI)	8	Lucile (BG)	0	No
Sostrate (AMA)	2	M. Diafoirus (MI)	7	Mariane (AV)	0	No
Villebrequin (JB)	2	Galopin (CR)	7	Philinte (MIS)	0	No
Éliante (MIS)	1	Georgette (EF)	6	M. Robert (MM)	0	No
Mariane (TA)	1	Thomas Diafoirus (MI)	6	Villebrequin (JB)	0	No

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