The influence of "sensibilité" on French comedy in the first half of the eighteenth century (L'Andrienne to Mélanide)

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by

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ABSTRACT

That there was a move towards a more serious form of comic drama in the first half of the eighteenth century is well known. This study seeks an explanation for the change by placing the comedy, especially the main works of the dramatists writing for the Comédie Française, in the context of one of the most significant trends of thought of the time. The opening chapters therefore describe the climate of ideas, the concept of human nature and man's relations with his fellows in two major areas, aesthetics and morals. Chapters four and five treat the two relationships which have traditionally formed the basis of the comedy, namely that of the family and that of the married couple, examining in particular the nature of the characters, their attitudes to each other and thus their relationships on the stage. The following chapters cover what might be regarded as features peculiar to the comedy in the first half of the eighteenth century; chapters six and seven analyse the many forms taken by the moralising tendency of the comedy in these years, while chapter eight is concerned with the patterns which can be discerned in the creation of the tearful character and situation. All these chapters on the theatre deal with what might be called the tone of the plays, that is to say what would previously have been their comic mood or style and the influence on it of a transformation in outlook. Chapter nine, however, attempts to bring together all the features discussed hitherto and to determine their effect on the structure of the comedy.

Where possible, modern scholarly editions have been used. Unless otherwise stated, quotations are taken from the editions listed in the bibliography and all references are to those editions; their spelling and punctuation have been retained.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Many writers have outlined, and the title alone of Hazard's *La Crise de la conscience européenne* suggests, the change in outlook in many areas at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Although cruelty and injustice undoubtedly persisted, a softening of manners in general and the disappearance of some superstitions and barbarities were accompanied by separation to an extent of religion and morals and a more optimistic view of human nature. Certainly in several works of quite different kinds there are attempts to reassert the dignity of the ordinary man or at least to depress the pretensions of the rich and powerful. In philosophy, Cartesian rationalism, at its height around the turn of the century, remained strong, of course, and its analytical method was still to underpin a number of the major achievements of the eighteenth century, while a faith in Reason was the foundation for the Enlightenment. Despite this, however, systems based on the premise that man is a feeling and not a reasoning being form an important current of thought from the earliest years of the century.

The notion of "sensibilité" itself is an old one, dating back to the Middle Ages and belonging to the traditional philosophy of the schools. It is central once again in the work of the seventeenth-century free-thinker Gassendi, who adapts the medieval concept of the "sensitive soul" to make of it an "internal sense", which puts together all the evidence provided by the other senses. In the eighteenth century,
"sensibilité" contains within it two main elements, namely the ability to receive sense impressions from the outside world and a general capacity for feeling which, ultimately, becomes a moral sense.

The first of these, deriving principally from Locke's Essay concerning Human Understanding (1690), and his theory that man's knowledge comes from impressions made on the senses or representational ideas and their combinations, produces, later in the eighteenth century, the psychological studies of writers such as Condillac and the pure materialism of La Mettrie. "Sensibilité" as a generalised capacity for feeling is a complex notion, taken up in many different ways. It depends originally on a very basic awareness of external phenomena and hence of the self, which subsequently becomes sympathy or compassion for others, resulting in a desire to promote their well-being. Such a theory eventually finds its most concise expression perhaps in D'Alembert's Discours préliminaire à l'Encyclopédie (1751), and leads also to the coherent systems of Buffon and Rousseau. From the beginning of the century, however, there exists the idea that "sensibilité" is a source of moral energy and that man is possessed of inherent feelings of love and benevolence for his fellows. As far as plays on the stage were concerned, these beliefs, as we shall show, mean that in the "comic" sphere at least, the old dramatic techniques, relying on opposition of characters, are increasingly unacceptable. The tragedy, traditionally the domain of the "passions", is not that of the more moderate affections and thus remains largely unaffected by the new movement. In the comedy, however, new attitudes transform
the old genre to such an extent that the possibility of an entirely new genre could be envisaged.¹

Indeed, Lanson, one of the few critics to have attempted a serious analysis of the comedies of the first half of the eighteenth century usually grouped together under the heading "comédie larmoyante", specifically links their emergence to the change in attitude towards human nature. He is clear in his definition of the new genre and categorical about its creator:

La comédie larmoyante est un genre intermédiaire entre la comédie et la tragédie, qui introduit des personnages de condition privée, vertueux ou tout près de l'être, dans une action sérieuse, grave, parfois pathétique, et qui nous excite à la vertu en nous attendrissant sur ses infortunes et en nous faisant applaudir à son triomphe. La Chaussée en fut l'inventeur.²

Furthermore, he maintains that all La Chaussée's plays are informed by one dominant and striking characteristic:

Son théâtre tout entier est une peinture et un éloge de la sensibilité, et en manifeste le triomphe, au moins dans la littérature, longtemps avant que Rousseau ait paru c'est la première œuvre consi-
dérable qu'elle inspire, où elle s'ex-
prime. (p. 232).

¹For some of the first half of the eighteenth century comedies which might be said to form part of the classical French tradition were still being written and performed at the Comédie Française. This tradition, maintained by dramatists such as Dancourt and Dufresny, was continued by Legrand, whose last play, La Nouveauté, was produced in 1727. Others, like Guyot de Merville and La Grange-Chancel, ensured that a purely comic drama, even if influenced by the tone of the Foire, persisted until the end of the 1730s. The former's final play for the French actors, for example, Le Médecin de l'esprit, belongs to the year 1739.

In general, the new genre has not fared well at the hands of critics, many of whom give only a brief explanation for its success and who find sarcastic or dismissive comments difficult to avoid. Lénient says, for example:

"Si la comédie y (à l'esprit) renonce parfois, c'est pour tomber dans la déclamation et le pathos du drame bourgeois et philosophique, de ce que Diderot appelle le genre sérieux, trop voisin du genre ennuyeux, le seul que proscrive formellement Voltaire."

Similarly, Brunetière, suggesting that Nivelle de la Chaussée had not exploited, had perhaps not even realised, the true subject of his Mélanide, concludes:

"... cette seule raison nous empêchera toujours de souhaiter de revoir Mélanide ou la Gouvernante à la scène. La lecture en est bien suffisante! ..."

The tone of the same critic's opening sentence to his discussion of Destouches: "Je ne dirai rien de la vie, ni du caractère de Destouches; son Glorieux est l'événement le plus important de sa frivole existence" establishes the level of the rest.

When examining Voltaire, and Nanine in particular, an English critic, E. F. Jourdain claims that:

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4 F. Brunetière, Les Époques du théâtre français (1892), Sixième Édition (Paris, 1906), p. 292. The fifth edition bears the date 1914 on the title page, but the sixth edition has nevertheless been used here. There is no difference between the two as far as the passages quoted in this chapter are concerned.

5 Histoire de la littérature française classique, 1515-1830 (-1875) (Paris, 1904-17), III, 231. The third volume of this work is edited by Albert Chérel; the fourth edition, published in 1931, has been used here.
Of the purely larmoyant work of Voltaire's, Nanine (1749) is a good example. If Voltaire had been writing a thesis to show the melancholy result of indulgence in sensibility he could not have done better. Author and characters alike seem unable to produce any reasonable or likely chain of events.

Aghion begins his outline of the development of the whole of the comedy in the eighteenth century with:

La comédie romanesque, plus sérieuse que gaie, telle que nous la comprenons aujourd'hui, a été conçue et exécutée, (oh, bien maladroitement), à cette époque.

Trahard adopts the same kind of approach and discounts some of the most prominent dramatists of the time with:

... les œuvres d'un Piron, d'un Destouches, d'un Boursault, ne sont plus que des curiosités littéraires.

While such a judgment may be true, it does not preclude the possibility of giving both to the writers mentioned, and to others contemporary with them, serious consideration. Admittedly, some critics do abandon an ironic tone; in this case they often concentrate their deliberations on an attempt firstly to isolate the date at which the new genre emerged and then to determine its creator. Lénient tends in this direction when proposing that the beginning of a new stage in the development of the comedy can be seen with Destouches's Le Philosophe marié (1727) and Nivelle de la Chaussée's Le Préjugé à la mode (1735). Gaiffe, in his Le Drame en France

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9 See La Comédie en France au XVIIIe siècle, Chapter VII, I, 158.
au XVIII\textsuperscript{e} siècle, treats most of the comic drama in the first part of the century as a precursor of the "drame" of the latter half.\textsuperscript{10} In a later work, however, Le Rire et la scène française, he gives a general description of the main trends of the period and uses certain dramatists as examples of particular developments:

La manie de moraliser en scène et de faire du dialogue théâtral une sorte d'écrit à la Boileau que récitent plusieurs personnages, est déjà sensible dans des pièces de Boursault comme Esopo à la Cour (1680) \textit{sic} et Esopo à la Ville (1701) \textit{sic}, ou dans le Jaloux désabusé de Campistron (1709); elle va s'épanouir avec Destouches ... la comédie pathétique (on disait alors «larmoyante») avec La Chaussée, en attendant que le drame la repousse et crée un genre vraiment neuf ...\textsuperscript{11}

Aghion, having stated that: "Il est incontestable que «Le Préjugé à la mode» (1733) \textit{sic} marqué une révolution dans la littérature"\textsuperscript{12} then qualifies this with:

À la rigueur on peut contester à Nivelle de la Chaussée l'invention de la comédie larmoyante puisque Baron avec son "Andrienne" ... avait en 1703 fait un essai analogue, et que Piron ..........

.................................

en 1728, avait écrit une comédie «Les fils ingrats ou l'Ecole des Pères» ... (pp. 35-36).

He returns, however, to his original premise by emphasising that with La Chaussée "le théâtre larmoyant prend plus

\textsuperscript{10}See F. Gaiffe, \textit{Le Drame en France au XVIII\textsuperscript{e} siècle} (Paris, 1910), Première Partie, Chapitre premier, pp. 15-34.

\textsuperscript{11}Le Rire et la scène française (Paris, 1931), p. 134. Esopo à la cour was first performed in 1701 and Esopo à la ville in 1690.

\textsuperscript{12}Le Théâtre À Paris au XVIII\textsuperscript{e} siècle, p. 35.
d'étendue" (p. 36). Trahard, too, devotes much of the first two chapters of his *Les Maîtres de la sensibilité française* to determining precisely when the movement may be said to have come into being.¹³

It is easy to be sardonic about many of the comedies in the first half of the eighteenth century. Further, several critics provide no more than a survey or a description of the genre during these years. Despite Trahard's claim that the reasons for the change in comic drama "important moins que les résultats" (I, 17), it is perhaps natural, even desirable, that an attempt be made to set it in the context of its own time. Two theories recur in works of criticism when the causes of the development in the genre are sought. Firstly, the gradual transformation in outlook in many areas, including the theatre, is to be explained, for some, by a reaction against the climate of the previous age and secondly, for others, by the influence in some way of the middle class. For a critic such as Brunetière, for example, a change in social structure is responsible for the change in the comedy; the bourgeoisie, growing in importance, hungry for equality, use the theatre as "un moyen de propagande et d'action," refusing, moreover, to tolerate the continuing portrayal on the stage of members of the aristocracy.¹⁴ Aghion echoes this idea with his contention, again about the eighteenth century in general, that:

... l'art dramatique durant cette époque s'attache d'une part à plaire à la masse du public en peignant sous des couleurs

¹³ See *Les Maîtres de la sensibilité française*, I, 7-34.

¹⁴ See *Les Époques du théâtre français*, p. 287.
avantageuses la bourgeoisie et d'autre part à attaquer de plus en plus directement les institutions, les mœurs et l'autorité. (p. 20).

Alasseur, too, sees the comedy of the first half of the century within a political framework:

Dans la vie littéraire, il est facile de constater l'évolution des Lettres vers une mentalité bourgeoise. Au 18e siècle, Rousseau, la vie naturelle, les salons, le drame bourgeois, la comédie larmoyante, le Hameau de la Reine, tout évoque la bourgeoisie. 15

In a slightly different fashion, Descotes also attributes the new plays to the triumph "de l'élément bourgeois." 16 His argument is this:

La condition de roturier n'impose pas les servitudes de l'échelle, permet de manifester ouvertement sa sensibilité, alors que l'aristocrate se pique de froideur, de scepticisme, de suprême détachement ...

que, peu à peu, ce goût des larmes et de l'attendrissement ait gagné jusqu'aux plus hautes classes de la société, cela n'est pas douteux. L'ennui, la lassitude, le vide du cœur, le plaisir physique même perdant de sa vivacité par son abus même, expliquent assez cette évolution. (p. 189).

The notion expressed here clearly brings Descotes close to a belief that the new movement is to be explained by a desire for different values. The idea is an attractive one. As far as the "comédie larmoyante" is concerned, it is hard to find evidence in the plays for the political accounts offered for their appeal by those such as Brunetière or Aghion. In the first half of the century at least, the characters in the comedy are not notably members of the middle class,


nor do they make claims on behalf of that section of society, although there is no doubt that their moral standards are those of the bourgeoisie. Other, less common, theories are perhaps similarly difficult to prove. Brunetière also advances the notion, for instance, that as what he calls the "sens de l'art" decreases, the element of emotion in all literature increases; if to this is added the growing inability to suffer life's problems, given that life itself is becoming easier, it is plain that a willingness to shed tears will invade all art, including the drama.  

Descotes puts forward the view that the development in the comedy is due to the influence of women.  

As we have seen, there are those who believe that the new genre can be attributed to a rejection of established attitudes. Certainly Lénient proposes that the corruption of the Regency had inevitably to be replaced by a more moral and moralising position. It is perhaps Lanson, however, whose ideas remain the most interesting and challenging in this respect, because they have wide implications for several aspects of the comedy in the first half of the eighteenth century. He cannot emphasise too strongly the influence of Sensibility on La Chaussée's works which are, he would argue, "entièrement conçues selon les lois et les conventions spéciales de la sensibilité" (p. 240); it provides the unity of the dramatist's output and even explains indeed its defects.

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18 See Le Public de théâtre et son histoire, p. 188.
19 See La Comédie en France au XVIIIème siècle, Chapitre VII, I, 158-59.
In particular it may help to understand the form of La Chaussée's plays:

La sensibilité nous rendra encore raison de l'importance de l'élément romanésque dans les comédies larmoyantes de La Chaussée et des invraisemblances de l'action. (p. 247).

This idea, namely that "sensibilité" is responsible not only for the characteristic style or mood of the comedy, but also for the change in its structure, is significant and far-reaching. There seems little doubt that La Chaussée himself was largely indifferent about the genre in which he wrote, provided that his ambition was fulfilled: the fact that he returned to the new comedy after the failure of his tragedy Maximien (1738) would tend to prove this and support Lanson's thesis that La Chaussée was first and foremost an opportunist.

In the second edition of his book, as a preliminary to his discussion of the "comédie larmoyante", Lanson outlines the development at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries of both tragedy and comedy, in order to demonstrate that the time was right for a genre between the two when La Chaussée was contemplating a literary career. His proposition that La Chaussée is governed above all by the "sensibilité" of his age, that this quality in fact affected important dramatists contemporary with him, is, however, of far greater moment and worth exploring in depth.21

21 Returning to the works of La Chaussée after a survey of the beginnings of "sensibilité", Lanson remarks: "La sensibilité, dont on retrouve des traits de plus en plus fréquents et expressifs dans les œuvres dramatiques du premier tiers du XVIIIe siècle, qui a attaqué Destouches et même effleuré Piron, s'étale sans voiles et sans réserves dans le théâtre larmoyant de La Chaussée" (p. 240).
of the same approach has been taken by other critics, notably Gaiffe, who maintains that:

... ce ton joyeux va bientôt cesser d'être celui de notre théâtre; le second tiers du siècle amène une transformation profonde sinon dans les moeurs, du moins dans la mode, qui met en vogue certaines façons de penser et de sentir. Le goût de la sensibilité se développe ...

Since both Lanson and Gaiffe were writing, much new material has become available to us and their notion that the comedy belongs to a particular climate of ideas and attitudes demands to be reexamined.

It would naturally be wrong to suppose that all writers in the seventeenth or early part of the eighteenth century were guided by the dictates of reason. Descartes and the followers of Descartes would be unlikely to regard a capacity for feeling as a criterion of virtue, it is true; on the contrary, repression of such a quality would be considered worthy of admiration. But Mme de Sévigné, for example, betrays genuine affection for her daughter, particularly in letters written in the first distress of their separation. Mme de Grignan is for her "ma chère enfant, l'unique passion de mon cœur, le plaisir et la douleur de ma vie," and the extent of the mother's ability both to give and receive love is clear in this passage from the same letter of February 9th, 1671, which also contains an interesting usage of the very term with which we are concerned:

Vous vous amusez donc à penser à moi, vous en parlez, et vous aimez mieux m'écrire

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vos sentiments que vous n'aimez à me les dire. De quelque façon qu'ils me viennent, ils sont reçus avec une tendresse et une sensibilité qui n'est comprise que de ceux qui savent aimer comme je fais. Vous me faites sentir pour vous tout ce qu'il est possible de sentir de tendresse. (I, 152).

La Bruyère, in statements such as: "L'on est plus sociable et d'un meilleur commerce par le cœur que par l'esprit" and: "Il y a de certains grands sentiments, de certaines actions nobles et élevées, que nous devons moins à la force de notre esprit qu'à la bonté de notre naturel" would seem to be proposing that a quality other than the intellect may underlie human relations and may indeed be more reliable. He would appear, too, to be aware of man's suffering and the injustice of things:

Il y a des misères sur la terre qui saisissent le cœur; il manque à quelques-uns jusqu'aux aliments; ils redoutent l'hiver, ils appréhendent de vivre. L'on mange ailleurs des fruits précoces; l'on force la terre et les saisons pour four nir à sa délicatesse; de simples bourgeois, seulement à cause qu'ils étaient riches, ont eu l'audace d'avaler en un seul gorceau la nourriture de cent familles.

Some works of religious philosophy can be said to imply a non-Cartesian view of human nature, amongst them Pascal's Pensées. Although he believes man's dignity to lie in his capacity to reason, he does not dismiss the "heart" as a

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25 "Du Coeur" (79), Œuvres, p. 146.

26 "Des Biens de la fortune" (47), Œuvres, p. 189. This passage first appeared in the fifth edition, published in 1690.
source of knowledge. He states, for example, that:

Nous connaissons la vérité, non seulement
par la raison, mais encore par le cœur;
c'est de cette dernière sorte que nous
connaissons les premiers principes, et
c'est en vain que le raisonnement qui
n'y a point de part essaye de les com-
battre. ....................... 

Plût à Dieu que nous n'en (de la
raison) eussions, au contraire, jamais
besoin, et que nous connussions toutes
choses par instinct et par sentiment! 27

Certainly it is the "heart" which is more important where
matters of religious faith and a relationship with God are
concerned: "C'est le cœur qui sent Dieu et non la raison.
Voilà ce que c'est que la foi: Dieu sensible au cœur, non
à la raison" (p. 147).

Mme Guyon's inspired descriptions of religious ecstasy
suggest a yearning which comes entirely from the heart;
indeed both the Opuscules spirituels (1704), for example, and
La Vie de Madame J. M. B. de la Mothe-Guyon, first published
in 1720, consistently reject the reason and rational reflection
as a source of faith. In the latter, which is as much the
story of her soul as of her life, Mme Guyon says, for instance,
addressing herself directly to God:

... j'éprouvois que votre parole fairoit
une impression sur mon cœur directement,
& qu'elle fairoit tout son effet sans
l'entremise de la réflexion & de l'esprit. 28

Furthermore, that man may find greatest satisfaction in the
affective side of his being is clear in this appeal to the
reader:

27 B. Pascal, "Des Noyens de croire," Pensées, ed. Ch.-M.

28 J.-M. Guyon, La Vie de Madame J. M. B. de la Mothe-Guyon,
Aimez, aimez le Souverain Bien, haissez le souverain mal, & vous serez bien savans. Quand vous aimez quelqu'un, savez-vous les raisons de l'amour & ses définitions? non assurément; vous aimez parce que votre cœur est fait pour aimer ce qu'il trouve aimable. Y a-t-il rien de plus aimable que Dieu? Nul ne peut s'exempter d'aimer, car nul ne peut vivre sans cœur, ni le cœur sans amour. (I, 42-43).

Fénelon, too, adopts the same simple and personal approach in some of his writings. The first part of the Traité de l'existence et des attributs de Dieu, for instance, ends with a "Prière à Dieu," which contains the following passage:

Vous êtes auprès d'eux, et au-dedans d'eux... Ils vous trouveroient, ô douce lumière, ô éternelle beauté toujours ancienne et toujours nouvelle, ô fontaine des chastes délices, ô vie pure et bienheureuse de tous ceux qui vivent véritablement, s'ils vous cherchoient au-dedans d'eux-mêmes...

..............................

Qui est semblable à vous? Mon cœur se fond, et ma chair tombe en défaillance, ô Dieu, ô mon cœur, et mon éternelle portion!

The detailed, philosophical arguments of this work are frequently interspersed with meditations of this kind. Later, in the fifth chapter of the second part, Fénelon also adds this comment to a similar interjection:

Ces paroles impropre et imparfait sont le langage d'un amour foible et grossier: je les dis pour moi, et non pas pour vous; pour contenter mon cœur, et non pour m'instruire ni pour vous louer dignement. (II, 298).

A belief that religion is a matter not of rational

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29 F. de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon, Traité de l'existence et des attributs de Dieu, Première Partie, Chapitre V, Œuvres de M. François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon (Paris, 1787-92), II, 139-62. The first part of the Traité was published in 1712 and the second part in 1718.
perception but of spontaneous feeling is also to be seen in quite another area, namely the works of Saint-Evremond and the poets of the Epicurean circle. The former, for example, would seem by implication to be separating the intellect and another part of man's nature, to which he gives preference, in this assertion:

Vouloir se persuader l'Immortalité de l'Âme par la Raison, c'est entrer en défiance de la parole que Dieu nous en a donnée, et renoncer, en quelque façon, à la seule chose par qui nous pouvons en être assurés.

Qu'a fait Descartes par sa démonstration prétendue d'une substance purement spirituelle, d'une substance qui doit penser éternellement? Qu'a-t-il fait par des spéculations si épurées? Il a fait croire que la Religion ne le persuade pas, sans pouvoir persuader ni lui ni les autres par ses raisons.

Lisez, Monsieur, pensez, méditez; vous trouverez au bout de votre lecture, de vos pensées, de vos méditations, que c'est à la Religion d'en décider, et à la Raison de se soumettre.

This idea is echoed by Chaulieu in his "Ode contre l'esprit, en 1708":

Dans la vérité simple & pure
D'une sainte Religion,
De quelle superstition
N'y mèles-tu point l'imposture?
Le moyen de te pardonner
Ce que tu veux tirer de gloire
De nous apprendre à raisonner,
Quand il n'est question que de croire?


31 G. Anfrie de Chaulieu, Œuvres de Chaulieu (La Haye, 1777), I, 42.
Moreover, the value placed on the affective side of man's being is present in what is in fact more important for the Epicureans than religion, that is to say the search for happiness in the ideal state of "volupté". Scorning a preoccupation with wealth and prestige, and believing that man should follow his "passions", and what Chaulieu would call his "pente naturelle", these writers have scant respect for that which originates in the mind. This call from Mme Deshoulières: 

"Homme, vante moins ta raison;/Voici l'inutilité de ce présent céleste/ Pour qui tu dois, dit-on, mépriser tout le reste," 

is paralleled in a poem by Chaulieu on the death of La Fare:

J'appelle à mon secours, Raison, Philosophie, 
Je n'en reçois, hélas! aucun soulagement. 
A leurs belles leçons, insensé qui se fie! 
Elles ne peuvent rien contre le sentiment. 
J'entends que la raison me dit que vainement 
Je m'afflige d'un mal qui n'a point de remède, 
Mais je verse des pleurs dans le même moment 
Et sens qu'à ma douleur toute ma vertu cède. 

Similarly, La Fare himself, in his "Les Béatitudes de ce monde" states:

Heureux qui joint aux grands talents 
Un esprit doux, un cœur tendre et sincère: 
C'est le plus rare des présents 
Qu'aux mortels les Dieux puissent faire. 

Where the poets are concerned, the inclination to emphasize the affective side of their make-up often takes the form

32See the "Ode contre l'esprit" (Œuvres, I, 43), where the "pente naturelle" is called "le guide le plus fidelle."

33A. Du Liguier de la Garde Deshoulières, "Réflexions Diverses," Poésies de Madame et de Mademoiselle Deshoulières, Nouvelle Édition (Bruxelles, 1745), I, 103.

34"Plainte sur la mort de Monsieur le marquis de La Fare, le 28 Mai, 1712," Œuvres, II, 47.

35Ch. A. de La Fare, Poésies inédites du Marquis de La Fare, ed. G. L. van Roosbroeck (Paris, 1924), p. 34.
of a kind of melancholy, a striving for the impossible or a yearning for lost youth, which, in their turn, can find expression in a desire for solitude in nature. In more positive fashion, in all the writers, a capacity for feeling gives a meaning to man's existence. It is plain that for Saint-Évremond, for example, awareness of true contentment comes at least in part through the affections:

Je veux que la connoissance de ne rien sentir qui m'importune, que la réflexion de me voir libre et maître de moy, me donne la volupté spirituelle du bon Épicure; j'entends cette agréable indolence, qui n'est pas un état sans douleur et sans plaisir; c'est le sentiment délicat d'une joye pure, qui vient du repos de la conscience, et de la tranquillité de l'esprit.

The notion that man should yield to his feelings, especially those of love, is particularly strong in the poetry of Mme Deshoulières; significantly she believes that a heart that is not stirred by emotion, however painful, is one which has all but ceased to exist. In the poem "Caprice," for instance, she says:

These lines from "Les Deux Pigeons" come to mind here: "Hélas! quand reviendront de semblables moments?/Faut-il que tant d'objets si doux et si charmants/Ne laissent vivre au gré de mon âme inquiète?/Ah! si mon cœur osait encor se ren­flammer! Ne sentirai-je plus de charme qui m'arrête?/Ai-je passé le temps d'aimer?" (J. de la Fontaine, Fables, Livre Neuvième, Fables, Contes et Nouvelles, ed. R. Groos and J. Schifferin (Paris, 1954), p. 219).

La Fontaine's "Le Songe d'un habitant du Mogol," (Fables, Livre Onzième, Fables, Contes et Nouvelles, p. 268), Chaulieu's "La Retraite, en 1696" (Oeuvres, I, 26-28) and his "Les Louanges de la vie champêtre, A Fontenay, ma Maison de Campagne, 1707" (Oeuvres, I, 32-35), all express an appreciation of and a longing for the tranquillity of nature.

Tranquilité vous êtes de retour,
Mais que dans ce bonheur je trouve peu de charmes!
En perdant mes transports, mes craintes, mes désirs,
Hélas! que j'ai perdu de biens & de plaisirs!
Ah! le repos n'est pas aussi doux qu'on le pense!

The "tranquilité" which Mme Deshoulières here reproaches is not the contentment of Chaulieu or Saint-Évremond, in which man has no desires beyond those which he is capable of fulfilling; rather is it a complete emptiness, a "vuide dans la vie" which is insupportable. Only through experiences of the heart can man have a sense of life, the lines: "Peut-on s'accoutumer à ne sentir plus rien? Et pour les cœurs enfin le calme est-il un bien?" encapsulating Mme Deshoulières's belief that a capacity for feeling, even with a relatively narrow meaning, is precious.

This faculty also underlies a relationship much prized by the Epicureans, that of friendship. This is clear from Chaulieu's account of his suffering on the death of La Fare, a suffering simply and directly expressed:

La Fare n'est donc plus! La Parque impitoyable
A ravi de mon cœur cette chère moitié.

La trame de nos jours ne fut point assortie
Par raison d'intérêt, ou par réflexion;
D'un aimant mutuel la douce sympathie
Forma seule notre union ...

La Fare's own enjoyment of friendship is plain in "Les Béatitudes de ce monde":

38 Poësies, I, 124.

39 These words are used of the end of a love affair in "Madrigal," Poësies, I, 74.

40 "Caprice," Poësies, I, 125.

41 "Plainte sur la mort de Monsieur le marquis de La Fare," Oeuvres, II, 45-46.
Heureux celui dont le goût se renferme
Dans peu d'amis tendres et vertueux;
Qui sait de corps, d'esprit tranquille et fermé,
Dans les plaisirs peut vieillir avec eux.

If Saint-Évremond has some reservations about a friendship founded purely on affection, believing that: "Le Cœur est un aveugle, à qui sont dûes toutes nos erreurs," he nevertheless maintains that the relationship cannot be mere rational appreciation of another's qualities:

Ce que je veux dans les Amitiés, c'est que les lumières précèdent les mouvements, et qu'une estime justement formée dans l'Esprit, aille s'animer dans le Cœur, et y prendre la chaleur nécessaire, pour les Amitiés, comme pour l'Amour.

Indeed, in the essay "L'Amitié sans amitié," he would appear to suggest that man possesses a quite distinct part of his being which, in spite of its disadvantages, is the basis of any relationship:

Il est certain que la Nature a mis en nos cœurs quelque chose d'aimant, si on le peut dire; quelque principe secret d'affection; quelque fond caché de tendresse, qui s'explique et se rend communicable avec le temps ...

Striking in this passage is the vagueness of Saint-Évremond's language, a vagueness in evidence too in the essay "Sur l'Amitié":

Poésies inédites, p. 34.


"Here, for example, he states that: "Elles (les amitiés) ne subsistent point sans fidélité et sans secret. C'est ce qui les rend sûres; mais ce n'est pas tout pour nous les rendre agréables. Il se forme une certaine liaison entre deux Ames, où la sûreté seule ne suffit pas: il y entre un charme secret, que je ne saurois exprimer, et qui est plus facile à sentir qu'à bien connaître" (III, 316)."
It might be attributable perhaps to the fact that no adequate vocabulary exists at this time to define man's capacity for feeling; on the other hand, it is possible that Saint-Évremond has consciously chosen a mode of expression lacking in precision in order to insist on the separation between the affections and the intellect.

Whatever may be the truth of the matter in this instance, there can be no doubting that the Epicureans valued the affective and not the reflective aspects of existence. Saint-Évremond indeed analyses man's psychology and the workings of "sentiment" in "Sur les plaisirs," proposing that the "heart" responds to external phenomena and ultimately draws man to his fellows. Apart from this, however, there is no coherent system in the works of the Epicureans; it is true that their writings advance the possibility of a way of life and of attitudes which are non-Cartesian, but there is no real philosophy of sentiment here; the feelings which they express are not scruples and there is above all no moral intention in their works. Nor does the Epicureans' concern for others extend beyond their own circle. La Fare, as we have seen, refers to "peu d'amis tendres et vertueux" and Saint-Évremond urges: "Vivons pour peu de gens qui vivent pour nous."

The statements of all the seventeenth-century authors whom we have quoted, are, in fact, relatively isolated pronouncements and cannot truly be said to amount to a philosophy of man. This is the major difference between the seventeenth

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46 See Œuvres, IV, 12-23.

47 As far as La Fare is concerned, see p. 22 above. Saint-Évremond's statement comes from "L'Amitié sans amitié," III, 293.
and eighteenth centuries: in the latter, in the area of aesthetics and morals, in conduct books and works treating mankind in general, there is both a psychology and a morals of sentiment which help to determine the outlook of the age. An investigation of these two areas must surely be fruitful for an understanding of the development in comic drama.

For most of the first half of the eighteenth century there were three official theatres in Paris, the Comédie Française, the Théâtre Italien and the Opéra. It would clearly be impossible to undertake a satisfactory analysis of all the works produced at these theatres during the years with which we are concerned. At the Comédie Française alone, between 1715 and 1750, 83 comedies and 111 "petites pièces comiques" of one, two or three acts were performed. If to this number are added the comedies put on before 1715, it can be seen that even an exhaustive discussion of comic drama at the Comédie Française is out of the question.

This study will be limited to that theatre, since it was arguably the most important of the period. The choice of dramatists to be considered is not an easy one to make. Nivelle de la Chaussée would seem to select himself, as he is for so many, both at the time and later, the creator of


49 Some 65 comedies, of all types, were put on at the Comédie Française between 1700 and 1715. See H. C. Lancaster, Sunset: A History of Parisian Drama in the last years of Louis XIV, 1701-1715 (Baltimore, 1945), pp. 336-38.
a new genre. Similarly, it appears essential to include in any examination of the age the plays of Destouches, whom several have regarded as a precursor to Nivelle de la Chaussée. Both Lough and Lagrave have shown, moreover, that these two enjoyed greater success in the period than any other comic dramatist, with the exception of Marivaux. If we adopt this criterion, the plays of Piron, Gresset, Boissy and Fagan should also be included, Piron and Gresset indeed being singled out by not a few modern critics when significant drama of the first half of the eighteenth century is discussed. The decision to devote this study to the Comédie Française only necessarily means omitting most of Marivaux's theatre; the plays written for the French actors are of course considered here, together with others which seem to present interesting points of comparison. L'Andrienne (1703) and

50 In the eighteenth century Luigi Riccoboni, a staunch supporter of the new comedy, says of him, for example: "Il a inventé un nouveau genre de Comédie" ("Lettre de Monsieur Louis Riccoboni à M. le docteur Muratori," in Œuvres de Monsieur Nivelle de la Chaussée, ed. Sablier (Paris, 1762), V, 196).

Collé, although disliking the plays of La Chaussée, concedes his importance: "Il est bien étonnant qu'un auteur de la médiocrité incurable dont est La Chaussée ait donné, pour ainsi dire, le ton à son siècle ..." (Ch. Collé, Journal et Mémôires, ed. H. Bonhomme (Paris, 1868), I, 53).


Lagrave's statistics are particularly interesting for the light they shed on the success of Marivaux, especially, of course, at the Théâtre Italien. See his Le Théâtre et le public, pp. 597-601 and pp. 604-7.
Mélânide (1741) provide useful limits for the scope of an analysis of comic drama in the first half of the eighteenth century. Baron's play has often been regarded as heralding the emergence of a new kind of comedy and Desfontaines established its triumph by giving to Mélânide the name "Romanédie", thus marking the creation of a new genre. Some plays from the years after 1741 will in fact be examined in this study, so that the whole of the theatre of both Destouches and Nivelle de la Chaussée may be taken into consideration, together with the main works of other dramatists of the time.

The term "comédie larmoyante" is unsatisfactory for any objective study of the more serious comedy produced in the first half of the century, in view of the pejorative sense which it has acquired. Even some of those writing in the eighteenth century dislike the adjective "larmoyant" and use it against their will. Sablier, for example, remarks of Goldoni:

M. Goldoni, marchant sur les traces de M. de la Chaussée, a osé présenter à sa Patrie des Scènes intéressantes, pathétiques & même larmoyantes, puisqu'il faut se servir de ce terme ...

Fréron also has reservations about this epithet, referring to the new genre as "le genre Larmoyant, puisqu'on

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52 See the passage from Aghion's Le Théâtre à Paris au XVIIIe siècle quoted on p. 9 above and Bougainville's words quoted on p. 28 below.


l'appelle ainsi.” As several writers in the eighteenth century observe, "comédie larmoyante" is already employed only by those opposed to the genre. Titon du Tillet says of La Chaussée, for instance: "Il est l'inventeur d'un nouveau genre de Comédie à qui ses Censeurs ont donné le nom de larmoyant." That this is common practice is plain, too, in the explanation advanced for the failure of L'Amitié rivale de l'amour (1735) by the editor of Fagan's plays, who states that: "... ce ne fut point parce que la pièce étoit dans le genre que l'on a cru pouvoir appeler larmoyant pour en ridiculiser l'intérêt ..." Voltaire's preface to Nanine supports both these assertions; the new kind of comedy is a genre, he claims, "où l'on veut attendrir les spectateurs, et qu'on appelle, par dérision, comédie larmoyante."

Deciding on an alternative name is, however, by no means straightforward. Some critics seem to adopt the term "comédie sérieuse" for the comic drama in the first half of the century, but this may cause confusion between the theatre of those dramatists we have mentioned and a genre with its own aims and characteristics created later by Diderot. The name


56 These words are quoted by Sablier in his edition of the works of Nivelle de La Chaussée, "Avertissement," I, v, and are taken from Second Supplément du Parnasse François, article 324.


58 Voltaire, Nanine, Préface, Œuvres complètes de Voltaire, Nouvelle Édition ... conforme pour le texte à l'édition de Beuchot (Paris, 1877-85), V, 6.
"new comedy" might allow the greatest possibilities for objective study. Strictly speaking, of course, the genre is not new, despite the claims made for it and for Nivelle de la Chaussée by Sablier and others. There is a mixture of the serious and the comic, for instance, in the works of some seventeenth-century playwrights such as Hardy, Jean de Schélandre and Boisrobert, while the comedies of Corneille might also be regarded as precursors of the eighteenth-century genre. Indeed, there are those in the eighteenth century whose arguments in favour of the new genre are based in part precisely on this assertion, namely that the genre is not new and can thus be considered a legitimate form of drama.

On succeeding Nivelle de la Chaussée in the Académie Française, for example, M. de Bougainville replies to one contention of those against the new comedy that: "... ce genre ... est ancien ... l'Auteur de l'Andrienne l'a connu, & ... peut-être le devons-nous au Réformateur de la Comédie Grecque." The term "new comedy" nevertheless commends itself as one devoid of ironic or pejorative overtones. The plays themselves may have fallen out of favour, but, popular in their own time, they deserve serious analysis.

59 J.-P. de Bougainville, "Discours de M. de Bougainville, prononcé à l'Académie Française, le 30 Mai 1754, jour auquel il fut reçu à la place de M. De La Chaussée." An extract from this speech is given by Sablier in his edition of La Chaussée's works: "Avertissement," I, vii-xj. The words quoted here are to be found on p. x.
Poetic treatises in France develop out of those on rhetoric, using at first much the same divisions of material and terminology in their attempt to establish the status of poetry and of the poet. Such treatises are, in the sixteenth century, relatively precise and detailed where technical and linguistic problems are concerned, but the seventeenth century, an age which believes that beauty is dependent on a universal and eternal Reason and can be created by applying poetic rules, seeks a doctrine and a method which it considers to be lacking in the previous century. It witnesses, therefore, the rise of theorists of poetry whose aim is to enable the poet to attain perfection and, as a result, poetic treatises become increasingly categorical and authoritarian. The approach adopted by seventeenth-century critics is continued by the rationalists of the early eighteenth century, particularly those whose writings form part of the second Querelle des anciens et des modernes. That debate may well have widened the scope of discussion on artistic matters, however, and indeed, while treatises of a polemical nature, produced in defence of a definite point of view, do not disappear, many works on aesthetics, especially towards the middle and in the latter part of the century, belong to a wider investigation into the workings of the human mind and the operations of sentiment. ¹

¹The term "esthétique" itself is, of course, not used in the first half of the century; it is with the publication of Baumgarten's Aesthetica in 1750 that the word can be employed in studies of this kind.
The broadening of outlook experienced by the eighteenth century can be seen in its initial stages in the Réflexions critiques sur la Poésie et sur la Peinture by Dubos, who is now regarded as a significant figure in the history of aesthetics. His book, begun in 1719 and completed in 1733, deals not only with poetry and the visual arts, as one might expect, but with the nature of genius in many contexts, with external phenomena such as climate, which might affect all the arts, with the relationship, for example, between the climate and the character of different nations. Above all, Dubos devotes an important section of his deliberations to a study of the way in which the public judges art or poetry. His intention, as outlined at the beginning of the Réflexions critiques, is to render an account to each man "de son approbation & de ses dégoûts," to show him, where poetry and painting are concerned, "... ce qui se passe en lui-même, en un mot les mouvemens les plus intimes de son coeur." In the long run, such an analysis cannot but be useful for the creative artist:

Un livre qui, pour ainsi dire, déploieroit le cœur humain dans l'instant où il est attendri par un poème, ou touché par un tableau, donneroit des vues très-étendues & des lumières justes à nos Artisans sur l'effet général de leurs ouvrages...

Having given some time to an examination of human nature in the most general sense and to the possible genres within poetic and dramatic art, it is indeed to the artist rather than to the public that Dubos first addresses his attention.

2J.-B. Dubos, Réflexions critiques sur la Poésie et sur la Peinture, Quatrième édition (Paris, 1740), I, 3.
The passages from the opening section quoted above already suggest the originality of Dubos's attitude to aesthetic questions; but what might be called the premise of much of his subsequent discussion immediately distinguishes him from critics of the previous century:

On ne lit pas un poëme pour s'instruire, mais pour son plaisir, & on le quitte quand il n'a point un attrait capable de nous attacher. (I,XII,74).

This statement on the appeal of poetry can also be applied to painting; any artist must strive to stir the emotions and in order to do so he must find "la Poësie du stile." This Dubos defines, for poetry, in the following way:

La Poësie du stile consiste à prêter des sentiments interessans à tout ce qu'on fait parler, comme à exprimer par des figures, & à présenter sous des images capables de nous émouvoir, ce qui ne nous toucheroit pas, s'il étoit dit simplement en stile prosaïque. (I,XXXIII,272).

Moreover, one quality alone will enable the poet to endow his work with the "Poësie du stile":

C'est pour inventer des images qui peignent bien ce que le Poëte veut dire, c'est pour trouver les expressions propres à leur donner l'être, qu'il a besoin d'un feu divin, & non pour rimer. (I,XXXIII,279).

The notion that the true artist should be possessed of divine inspiration or genius is an old one, of course, having its origins in classical literature, and it is adopted in principle by all those in France who describe the creative process. We see it, for example, in the theoretical writings

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That Dubos scarcely separates the two forms is apparent in such a statement as "Les Peintres sont Poètes" (I,XXIV, 186), and in this preliminary to the contention that genius is essential to the true artist: "Si cet entousiasme divin, qui rend les Peintres Poètes, & les Poètes Peintres ..." (II,1,6).
of the Renaissance and in seventeenth-century critics such as Chapelain or La Mesnardière, while Boileau makes of it a starting-point for the arguments in his *Art poétique*.

Near to Dubos's own time, a critic like Houdar de la Motte could reaffirm the idea, examining with particular reference to the ode "... quel est & quel doit être cet enthousiasme dont on fait tant d'honneur aux Poètes, & qui doit faire en effet une des plus grandes beautés de l'Ode."

Whatever name may be given to poetic genius, however, for all those who are influenced by classical concepts it must to some extent be, at the very least, balanced by a calmer and more rational approach. The poets of the Renaissance, for example, maintain that the product of divine inspiration must be revised and polished in tranquillity and imagination could never be given a free rein. Greater emphasis was given to this belief in the seventeenth century, when it was widely held not only that genius should be controlled by the intellect, but that qualities of knowledge and industry were almost more important. This is broadly speaking the position taken up by the rationalists of the early eighteenth century. The name of La Motte has in fact become synonymous with "enemy of the poet"; he regards the verse form as an obstacle both to expression and understanding of meaning and qualifies his approval of "enthousiasme" in this way:

... source de beautés & de défauts, selon qu'elle est aveugle ou éclairée. Mais c'est le plus souvent un beau nom qu'on donne à ce qui est le moins raisonnable. ...
Enthousiasme tant qu'on voudra, il faut qu'il soit toujours guidé par la raison, & que le poète le plus échauffé se rappelle souvent à soi, pour juger sainement de ce que son imagination lui offre.

Terrasson, another avowed modern, believes that under Louis VIII the arts and sciences developed together to their mutual advantage, the sciences giving a certain precision and logic to the arts, but the union between the two, which alone can carry the arts to perfection, must now be strengthened:

... il faut nécessairement rappeler les unes à les autres à un principe commun, à ce principe n'est autre que l'esprit de philosophie que nous avons défini en commençant.

Considering as they do that poetry must have the dual aim of providing instruction and of aspiring to absolute beauty according to the rules laid down for it, La Motte and Terrasson come close to denying genius any role in artistic endeavour. Influenced by Cartesian rationalism and following the doctrine established by the seventeenth century, they would seem to propose that poetry is a creation of the intellect.

It is in this context that Dubos's statements are so

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5Discours sur la Poésie en général. Œuvres, I, Première Partie, 28-29.

6J. Terrasson, Dissertation critique sur l'Iliade d'Homère (Paris, 1715), Préface, I, xli. "Philosophie" had been defined as "une superiorité de raison qui nous fait rapporter chaque chose à ses principes propres & naturels, indépendamment de l'opinion qu'en ont eu les autres hommes" (I, iij). It is significant that Terrasson's work bears the sub-title Où à l'occasion de ce Poème on cherche les Règles d'une Poétique fondée sur la raison, & sur les exemples des Anciens & des Modernes.
striking. It is true that a few writers before him had advanced the claims of the feelings in poetry. One such is the abbé Chaulieu, whose poem "Ode contre l'esprit" may be said to contain a short but complete aesthetic theory based on the belief that:

Ce qui sûrement touchera,
C'est ce que le cœur nous fait dire.
C'est ce langage de nos cœurs
Qui saisit l'âme et qui l'agit ...

in an exchange of letters with La Motte, Fénelon questions the validity of rules in art, saying that: "Il faut avouer que la sévérité de nos règles a rendu notre Versification presque impossible." And he adds:

"L'émulation peut produire d'heureux efforts, pourvu qu'on n'aillc point jusqu'à mépriser le goût des Anciens sur l'imitation de la simple nature, sur l'observation inviolable des divers caractères, sur l'harmonie & sur le sentiment, qui est l'âme de la parole" (III, 23).

Duhos, however, evolves a more coherent position out of his central idea and what the rhetoricians had always said of eloquence is extended by him to all the arts. While he does not suggest that a poem or painting should not be revised or that rules can be abandoned, he nevertheless places few reservations on his demand that the artist trust himself to something other than his reason in order to win over his public.

His discussion of genius, for example, begins with this paraphrase of an important idea in Horace: "... il faut encore que ces vers puissent remuer les cœurs, & qu'ils soient...

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7G. Anfrie de Chaulieu, "Ode contre l'esprit, en 1708," (Œuvres de Chaulieu (La Haye, 1777), I, 41-42.

8F. de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon, Lettre de Fr. Ar. Duc de Cambrai, ce 26 janvier 1714, Œuvres de Monsieur Houdar de la Motte, III, 51-52. The spelling in the two passages quoted here is that of the complete works of La Motte.
capables d'y faire naître les sentiments qu'ils pretend
ter exciter" (II,1,2).⁹ It is clear, therefore, that in the
first instance the intellect is of no use to either poet or
painter; indeed, Dubos had said as much when offering advice
to both earlier:

I'art d'émouvoir les hommes & de les amener
où l'on veut, consiste principalement à
savoir faire un bon usage de ces images.
L'Ecrivain le plus austère, celui qui fait
la profession la plus sérieuse de ne met­
tre en œuvre, pour nous persuader, que
la raison toute nue, sent bientôt, que
pour nous convaincre, il nous faut émou­
voir, & qu'il faut, pour nous émouvoir,
mettre sous nos yeux par des peintures,
les objets dont il nous parle.
(I,XXXIII,277-78).

These words may perhaps recall those of some Renaissance poets
and yet the gift of which Dubos speaks is not exactly that
referred to by, say, Ronsard or Du Bellay.¹⁰ His inspiration
is a more subdued state, stemming, it would seem, from a par­
ticular element in man's make-up; he may even be proposing
in fact that there is within man a quite separate quality,
independent of what one might call divine fury, but fundamen­
tal to the creation of art or poetry. He chooses several of
the same terms as his predecessors, but envisages the creative

⁹ Dubos himself quotes Horace's De Arte Poetica here: "Non
satis est pulchra esse Poemata, dulcia sunt,/Et quocumque
volent animum auditoris agunto" and adds: "Et Horace auroit
dit la même chose aux Peintres" (II,1,2). (Dubos's own pre­
sentation of the Latin has been reproduced here; he is quoting
lines 99-100 of Horace's poem).

¹⁰ The passage quoted from Dubos might recall these words of
Du Bellay, for example: "... celuy sera véritablement le poète
que je cherche en nostre Langue, qui me fera indignier, apayser,
ejouryr, douloir, aymer, hayr, admirer, etonner, bref, qui
tiendra la bride de mes affections, me tournant ça & la à
son plaisir" (Deffence et Illustration de la Langue françoyse,
... l'enthousiasme qui fait les Peintres & les Poëtes, ne consiste pas dans l'invention des mystères allégoriques, mais bien dans le talent d'enrichir ses compositions par tous les ornements que la vraisemblance du sujet peut permettre, ainsi qu'à donner de la vie à tous ses personnages par l'expression des passions. ...

Il n'est pas nécessaire d'inventer son sujet, ni de créer ses personnages, pour être réputé un Poëte plein de verve. On mérite le nom de Poëte, en rendant l'action qu'on traite capable d'émouvoir, ce qui se fait en imaginant quels sentiments conviennent à des personnages supposé dans une certaine situation, & en tirant de son génie les traits les plus propres à bien exprimer ces sentiments.

(1,XXIV,206-7).

A similar notion underlies Dubos's observations on painters; it leads us to conclude that inspiration is an instinctive understanding of what is appropriate, as the phrase "imaginant quels sentiments conviennent" makes plain, amounting to a kind of sympathy between the poet or the painter as creator and that which he creates. It is a judgment, but one which comes through the feelings.

There is clearly some vagueness in Dubos's exposition of the qualities needed by the true artist. Certainly he does not put before all else the desirability of sound knowledge, nor does he believe a preoccupation with perfect composition and structure to be essential; on the contrary, a poem, at any rate, cannot appeal by mere regularity of form or

11"Ips Peintres sunt Poëtes, mais leur Poësie ne consiste pas tant à inventer des chimères ou des jeux d'esprit, qu'à bien imaginer quelles passions & quels sentiments l'on doit donner aux personnages, suivant leur caractère & la situation où l'on les suppose, comme à trouver les expressions propres à rendre ces passions sensibles, & à faire deviner ces sentiments. " (1,XXIV,186).
adherence to the rules. By definition, however, Dubos cannot legislate for art in the way that Chapelain, for example, was able to, given his faith in reason. Dubos can do no more than say that a poem or painting must have an immediate impression and speak directly to the heart:

*Ces premières idées qui naissent dans l'âme, lorsqu'elle reçoit une affection vive, & qu'on appelle communément des sentiments, touchent toujours ... Ils parlent le langage du cœur.*

(I,XXXIII,272).

By implication, therefore, if an artist wishes to reach his public, he must himself first experience or comprehend the emotions he is seeking to convey and use himself the language which makes a simple and direct appeal. Only a capacity for feeling, and not a readiness to obey rules devised by the intellect, can render this possible. In a sense, Dubos has liberated the artist, since no laws can be set up either to bring such a capacity into being or to regulate its operations.

Rollin, rector of the University of Paris in 1694 and principal of the Collège de Beauvais in 1699, includes in his *De la Manière d'enseigner et d'étudier les belles lettres* observations on the creation and appreciation of several art forms. As a man devoted to the study of the classics, he believes that the imagination should be held in check and subjugated to good taste. This is "... un discernement..."

12*Or c'est à proportion des charmes de la Poésie du stile qu'un poème nous interesse. Voilà pourquoi les hommes préfèrent toujours les poèmes qui touchent, aux poèmes réguliers.* (I,XXXIV,287-88). He does, however, make this proviso: "Le génie est donc une plante, qui, pour ainsi dire, pousse d'elle-même; mais la qualité, comme la quantité de ses fruits, dépendent beaucoup de la culture qu'elle reçoit, le génie le plus heureux, ne peut être perfectionné qu'à l'aide d'une longue étude" (II,V,43-44).
délicat, vif, net, & précis de toute la beauté, la vérité, &
la justesse des pensées & des expressions qui entrent dans
un discours." Although it functions "par un sentiment fin
et exquis," and seems to escape precise definition, it is
nevertheless closely allied to the intellect:

Cette heureuse qualité, que l'on sent
mieux qu'on ne peut la définir, est moins
l'effet du génie que du jugement, & d'une
espece de raison naturelle perfectionnée
par l'étude. (I,lxxx).

It is this "heureuse qualité" which is a guide during the pro­
cess of composition:

Elle fait usage de l'imagination, mais
sans s'y livrer, & en demeure toujours
maitresse. Elle consulte en tout la
nature, la suit pas à pas, & en est une
fidele expression." (I,lxxx).

Rollin demands of the orator, however, qualities held
by Dubos to be essential in painter and poet. Naturally the
orator has ideas and these must survive close scrutiny, but
if he concentrates on logic alone, appealing merely to the
reason, he will fail. In order truly to persuade, he must
touch the heart and therefore make use of striking imagery,
for without it his speech "... languit, tombe dans une espece
de monotonie, & est presque comme un corps sans ame" (II,244-45).
The soul to which Rollin refers here are the passions, which
"emportent & entraînent tout" (II,309). Thus the first pre­
requisite for a good orator who wishes to carry his audience
along with him, is an ability to undergo himself the emotions
he is to arouse in others:

Le plus important de tous (les préceptes)
est que pour toucher les autres, il faut
être touché soi-même ... (II,310).

13Ch. Rollin, De la Manière d'enseigner et d'étudier les
belles lettres, Par rapport à l'esprit & au cœur (Paris, 1726-
28), "Discours préliminaire," I,lxxix.
The poet cannot allow himself to be governed by his intellect; a facility for natural and genuine expression is of greater value:

... l'air, l'extérieur, le geste, le ton, le style, tout doit respirer je ne sais quoi de doux & de tendre, qui parte du cœur, à qui n'aile droit au cœur.

(II, 318-19).

Again we note that the writer is not specific in his advice and in this case resorts to the old notion of the "je ne sais quoi". It is clear, nevertheless, that Rollin believes a capacity for feeling to be a surer basis than the intellect for communication between orator and audience and that that communication should be founded on emotions experienced by both. Like Dubos, he reinstates feelings killed by Cartesianism.

More explicit and outspoken, Rémond de Saint-Mard begins his aesthetic theories with an attack on rationalism, condemning in particular Loudar de la Motte's attempts at the systematisation of poetry, together with the verse of both Fontenelle and La Motte himself. He maintains that in general terms a desire to apply the Cartesian method too widely has led to an arrogant narrowness of outlook and repression of an important side of man's nature:

Nous ne voyons rien au-dessus de nous, parce que nous savons tirer une belle chaîne de conséquences; on dirait que nous sommes devenus des substances pensantes, des esprits purs, à que nous avons renoncé à sentir pour être désormais mieux en état de penser.

In art, more specifically, this development has meant the...

11. Rémond de Saint-Mard, Lettres premiers à Monsieur D... Sur la naissance, les progrès à la décadence du Goût, Œuvres de Monsieur Rémond de St.-Mard (Amsterdam, 1749), III, 172-73. This and the other Lettres were first published in 1733.
abandonment of the "beau feu" and the "beau naturel" once so highly prized, with the result that "... nous immolons tout à une raison sévère, & fiers de nos sacrifices, nous disons que nous avons de la précision" (III,173-74). In despising movements of his own time, Saint-Mard takes us back to the idea that a true poet must be possessed of, and trust himself to, inspiration. He has various terms for this, sometimes calling it, as well as "ce beau feu", "cette belle chaleur" and, simply, "le Génie", but it is always to be preferred to reason or "esprit". In addition, he also looks for another quality in the poet, which he often places in opposition to "esprit" and to which he gives the name "sentiment". His judgments of Fontenelle and La Motte, for example, are remarkably similar; of the first he says: "... si entraîné par l'esprit M. de Fontenelle m'a paru quelquefois peu fidele au sentiment ...", and of La Motte: "... avec de l'esprit, il avoit fort peu de goût ... où il falloit du sentiment, il mettoit presque toujours de l'esprit" (III,211-12, Note).

There is something of the same juxtaposition of two different forces in this praise of classical authors:

15 Of Fontenelle Saint-Mard remarks: "... mais par malheur cet empire qu'il a sur son imagination, est senti; on se plaint de ce qu'il coûte, & l'on a regret de le voir acheté par la perte de ce beau feu, de ce beau naturel qui touche & qui enchant" (Lettre II, Sur les causes de la décadence du Goût, Œuvres, III, 189-90). As a note to this he adds: "Comment cela se fait-il? On dit qu'il faut être maître de sa matière; cependant on n'est vif, agréable, naturel, (disons mieux) on n'est beau qu'autant qu'on est entraîné par elle; Est-ce que pour être admirable il faut presque l'avoir été à son insu? Sans doute, & c'est par-là que le Génie est si supérieur à l'Esprit" (III,190).

16 Lettre II, Œuvres, III, 200, Note.
Neither the word "sentiment" nor the faculty needed to stir the reader's emotions is analysed in these letters, but it would seem that Saint-Mard is suggesting that the creative artist, indeed most men, can call on something other than inspiration and reason. Ideas contained by implication in this part of Saint-Mard's work are developed in the Réponse de l'Auteur à Madame la Comtesse de V^{XXX}. Qui lui avoit demandé des regles pour bien écrire, written in 1737. Throughout this letter, which has as its premise the belief that "... le beau ... ne fut jamais le fruit de nos recherches" (III,18), Saint-Mard stresses that rules and a knowledge of the rules are quite useless for the poet, mainly because he is directed, when composing, by his own make-up and response to the external world:

... notre façon de rendre est une copie fidele, de la maniéré dont nous sommes affectés ...

(The only advantage of rules is that they can refine what already exists, namely "le goût". As a conclusion to this part of his discussion, Saint-Mard states categorically:

Disons-le donc, & disons-le sans détour, il n'y a que le goût, encore le veux-je exquis et raisonnablement cultivé, qui, de concert avec le génie, puisse opérer les belles choses.

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17 Lettre première, Œuvres, III, 172.
18 "... il est sûr qu'un homme de génie peut tirer du profit des regles; mais pour cela il faut, s'il vous plaît, qu'il ne manque point absolument de goût" (III,28).
There are thus two central concepts in this theory, that is to say, taste and inspiration. Again, the latter is not defined, Saint-Mard assuming presumably that with such an old idea explanation is unnecessary; he merely says: "... il nous faut de la chaleur; & celle qui produit & qui enfante, la belle en un mot, vous devez savoir que ce n'est pas nous ordinairement qui nous la donnons" (III,35). To the notion of "goût", on the other hand, he devotes rather more attention. The passage quoted above might lead us to suppose that it is a quality governed by the intellect, susceptible certainly of improvement and perfection. As Saint-Mard continues his argument, however, it becomes plain that "goût" is an innate quality which cannot be created by any other part of man's nature if it is not already possessed:

... si le goût, lorsqu'on en a, peut s'étendre & se perfectionner, il est fort vraisemblable que lorsqu'on n'en a point du tout, c'est qu'on n'est pas fait pour en avoir; & qu'alors on travaille inutilement pour en acquérir. (III,44).

Indeed, far from being dependent on an ability to reason, "goût" belongs to quite another side of man:

Je le dis donc hardiment... il n'y a que ce sentiment qui nous a été plus ou moins donné à tous, pour distinguer ce qui est convenable d'avec ce qui ne l'est point; cet instinct plus sûr que la raison, le goût, pour tout dire, qui puisse; selon le précepte d'Horace, varier un sujet... polir un Ouvrage sans le refroidir; attraper juste cette précision, qui poussée un peu plus loin, irait à l'obscurité; démêler le sublime du guindé, le simple du bas & du rampant. (III,59-60).

"Goût" is thus affective. We notice here, too, the importance for Saint-Mard of that which is "convenable", or of those elements in a particular work which are fittingly together.
It is not so much the perception of objects themselves, therefore, which is a "sentiment", as the perception of the relations between them. "Goût" remains a judgment, an assessment of how a work should be accomplished, similar to Horace's notion of "ars", but it is a feeling and not a "clear idea".

Beyond this, there is a certain vagueness in Saint-Mard's system as to the way in which "goût" operates. It is plain, as we have seen, that beauty can only be created by "le goût et le génie," but beauty itself cannot be defined; the excellence of a poem, for example:

... vient d'un beau, que content de sentir on doit renoncer à connaître, d'un beau qui sort à tous momens, & sort de mille & mille endroits; elle (l'excellence) vient d'une infinité de petits riens, plus char­mans les uns que les autres; mais si fins, si délicats, qu'il est impossible de les manier ...

(III,68-69).

Nevertheless, it would seem possible to conclude that "goût" arises out of a distinct and separate faculty in man's make-up. In a somewhat sad reflection on the disappearance of taste in his own time, for instance, Saint-Mard says this:

'Seroit-ce que semblables [sic] aux fruits délicats, le goût ne veut pas être trop manié? On ne seroit-ce pas plutôt que la débauche honteuse où nous sommes plongés, que la corruption de nos mœurs, que l'esprit d'intérêt, & de bassesse qui nous domine, a tout-à-fait usé notre sensibilité, & que le goût qui en dépend, & qui est lui­même un sentiment, en a souffert.

(III,58-59,Note).

Thus "goût" in both poet and public stems from a generalised capacity for feeling and both, moreover, are incompatible with selfishness and corruption. The first idea takes us back to Saint-Mard's original premise, namely that a poet's creative power is closely allied to the way in which he is affected by objects and events around him, "... de la maniere dont
nous sommes affectés." If Saint-Mard does not give a detailed analysis of the poet's psychology, he does at least offer us the notion that there is in man a faculty which perceives and reacts instinctively to the outside world, putting together the evidence which it finds there and that this faculty is, furthermore, more reliable than the intellect. In addition, the implication at the beginning of the Réponse à Madame la Comtesse de VXXX is that the feeling fundamental to good taste might be more far-reaching. The Comtesse prefaces her request that Saint-Mard write on the principles of good judgment with the following remark:

C'est un métier dont tout le monde se mêle; mais que peu de gens savent; parce que pour le bien faire il faut avoir ce que vous avez; je veux dire, un sentiment fin & délicat, & ce qui en est le fruit, un discernement éclairé. (III,2).

To this she later adds, assuaging her fear that he might not have sufficient energy to do it:

... mais je me rassure par l'idée que j'ai de votre complaisance, je la crois sans bornes; puisque c'est une vertu qui est d'autant plus parfaite, que le sentiment est vif & délicat. (III,8-9).

"Délicatesse de sentiment" is thus a sign of a standard of behaviour. From the area of aesthetics, we have moved into that of morals.

In the field of poetic theory, the abbé Yart in his Observations générales again expresses the belief that a poet should himself experience all the emotions of those whom he creates:

Je veux dire que son imagination doit se les peindre si vivement, que son cœur sente les mêmes transports, que si elles
This ability to enter into characters is a gift and is more valuable than the power of reason:

Voila l'heureux don du Sentiment; il est plus nécessaire au Poète Tragique que l'esprit, parce que l'esprit, quelques efforts qu'il fasse, ne peut imiter la Nature que très-foiblement, & que le Sentiment, au contraire, est la Nature même.

Thus an "âme sensible" is essential to the poet and particularly the tragic poet. We note that Yart is not discussing the concept of taste in this essay; the creative power for him is not a matter of judgment but one of sympathy, as it had been to a certain extent for Dubos.

We have seen, therefore, that a number of writers in the first half of the eighteenth century believe in the superiority of genius over "wit" and imply that the artist has within him a faculty separate from, and capable of suppressing, his powers of reasoning, that is to say his power of proceeding from clear idea to clear idea or of combining clear ideas. This faculty, more closely associated with his capacity for "feeling" - which includes judgment and sympathy as well as emotion - inspires his work and forms the basis of his communication with the public. There is also an attempt at this time to locate that part of man which responds to and evaluates a work of art. The rationalists' position on this question is determined by their ideas on the nature of poetry.

19 M. Yart, "Observations générales sur le Sentiment & l'Interêt, qui doivent entrer dans nos Tragédies," in Mercure de France (Paris, nov., déc. 1742), Décembre, Premier Volume, 2643.
If, as for Houdar de la Motte, for example, beauty is achieved only when a poem conforms to the genre in which it is written and obeys the rules governing harmony and versification, a knowledge of poetic theory is essential for true appreciation of a work. Ideally the critical process is slow and deliberate, taking the form of meditation and comparison of a work with the ideal set up for it. As La Motte plainly says when defending this kind of artistic endeavour:

... elle (la Critique) est utile, puisqu'elle ne tend qu'a faire voir par un raisonnement sérieux & détaillé les défauts & les beautés des Ouvrages.

Terrasson, too, in stating that "... la poétique doit être en elle-même un art tiré des lumières générales & universelles de la raison, indépendamment de l'exemple d'aucun Poète particulier, & dont le but soit de diriger les Ouvrages de Poésie" makes evaluation of a work of art an intellectual exercise.²¹ Underlying both his and La Motte's aesthetic doctrines is the notion that man is, or should be, first and foremost a thinking being. It is clear from the Réflexions critiques and the Dissertation critique sur l'Iliade, however, that other ideas on this subject had been circulating widely for some time. Terrasson, for example, takes the trouble to dismiss the claims of a capacity for feeling in any area of life²² and it is certainly true that where the question of the judgment of art or literature is concerned, there are

²⁰"De la manière de critiquer les Auteurs," Réflexions sur la Critique, Oeuvres, III, 10.

²¹Dissertation critique sur l'Iliade d'Homère, Préface, I, xj.

²²"Il n'y a donc d'infaillible pour les choses humaines que la raison seule, & c'est à elle qu'il faut soumettre le sentiment même" (I,li).
those who believe that a faculty other than the reason must be used. La Bruyère, for instance, proposes that:

```parisian
La lecture vous élève l'esprit, et quelle vous inspire des sentiments nobles et courageux, ne cherchez pas une autre règle pour juger l'ouvrage; il est bon, et fait de main d'ouvrier.
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It is also possible to go back to the père Bouhous and his *Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène* (1671), to find mention of a something which cannot be coped with by the discursive faculty. Ariste suggests in the "Cinquième Entretien," for example, that the beauty in art - he mentions specifically paintings and statues - or indeed in anything which man may find pleasing, cannot be explained:

```parisian
... quand on fera un peu de reflexion sur les choses de ce monde que nous admirons le plus, on verra que ce qui nous les fait admirer, c'est je ne sais quoi qui nous surprend, qui nous éboultit, & qui nous enchante.
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Bouhous therefore uses the term "je ne sais quoi" to refer to the fundamental and apparently inherent quality in art which attracts man. From the discussion at the start of the "Entretien," however, which centres on the meaning of the phrase and the concept in a general sense, it is plain that the "je ne sais quoi" is a quality in us as well as a quality in works of art or other outside things and that it belongs in fact to the affective side of man's being. Ariste attributes his liking for Eugène, for instance, to "... des effets d'une grande sympathie, & de ces inclinations secrettes qui

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nous font sentir pour une personne, je ne sçay quoi que nous ne sentons point pour une autre" (p. 246). The nature of this rapport between two men cannot be subjected to analysis and indeed the "je ne sais quoi" would cease to exist were a precise definition to be found for it:

Il est bien plus aisé de le sentir que de le connoistre ... Ce ne seroit plus un je ne sçay quoi, si l'on sçavoit ce que c'est; sa nature est d'estre incomprehensible, & inexplicable. (pp. 246-47).

The "je ne sais quoi" thus escapes the scrutiny of the intellect and can only be apprehended through the feelings; that it is itself a feeling is placed beyond doubt in the following description offered by Bouhours, despite the previous claim that the notion cannot be captured in words:

... c'est le penchant & l'instinct du cœur ... c'est un tres exquis sentiment de l'ame pour un objet qui la touche; une sympathie merveilleuse, & comme une parenté des coeurs ... (p. 247)

We can see, therefore, that Bouhours believes man to possess a first impulse which acts independently of the reason, in that it certainly does not rely on knowledge or on any process conducted by the intellect. Phenomena in the outside world appeal to and awaken the feeling latent in us, as the words " ... ces je ne sçay quoi en beau et en laid ... excitent dans nous des je ne sçay quoi d'inclination, &

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25 The whole of this discussion might recall Montaigne's essay "De l'Amitié" and in particular his reference to his own friendship with La Boétie: "Si on me presse de dire pour-quooy 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" (M. de Montaigne, Essais, I, XXVIII, Œuvres complètes, ed. Albert Thibaudet et Maurice Rat (Paris, 1962), pp. 186-87).
d'aversion" (p. 257) imply. Furthermore, in stating that: "Ce sont de premiers mouvemens qui prenvent la reflexion" (p. 248), Bouhours is clearly separating the spontaneous reactions of the "je ne sais quoi" from the capacity for thought, proposing that, in art as in human relationships, the former play the primary role. The most significant characteristic in the "Entretien" is perhaps the fact that Bouhours's views on aesthetics are contained within a theory of human nature. At the same time, however, he is incapable of analysing the operations of "sentiment" and does not even attempt to say what this term means for him when he employs it.

The vogue of the "je ne sais quoi" was short-lived and the more definite word "goût" came to be applied to man's faculty of appreciation, which was soon to be more carefully examined and described. Bouhours himself gives this definition:

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Le goût ... est un sentiment naturel qui tient à l'ame, & qui est indépendant de toutes les sciences qu'on peut acquérir; le goût n'est autre chose qu'un certain rapport qui se trouve entre l'esprit & les objets qu'on luy présente; enfin le bon goût est le premier mouvement, ou pour ainsi dire une espéce d'instinct de la droite raison qui l'entrains avec rapidité, & qui la conduit plus sûremente que tous lës raissonemens qu'elle pourrait faire.
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This is clearly in line with what he has already written on the subject of judgment or evaluation, but is not developed in any way. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, however, Morvan de Bellegarde published some more detailed reflections on good taste, which contain the following preliminary

question:

Le croiriez-vous, Madame, que le goût dépend plus de cœur, que de l'esprit, quoique la plupart des hommes se persuadent, que c'est plutôt une réflexion de l'esprit, qu'un mouvement du cœur? 27

In all areas of life — in the choice of a profession, in the appreciation of art or architecture or in the question of dress — taste is founded on what the abbé de Bellegarde calls an "inclination" or "penchant". No more than qualified approval is given by him to this fact, however, for he distinguishes between good and bad taste, introducing another notion into his argument:

... je croi que le goût est exquis, quand il est réglé par la raison; & que ceux qui ne suivent que leur inclination pour guide, ont d'ordinaire le goût mauvais, parce qu'ils ressemblent en quelque manière aux bêtes, qui n'agissent que par instinct, & par temperament. (pp. 13-14).

These two ideas run together through the "Reflexions."

Despite Morvan de Bellegarde's belief that taste has a very real existence, it is clearly difficult to define and we see that he has recourse to the "je ne sais quoi":

Quoiqu'on ait bien de la peine à déterminer en quoi il consiste, il ne faut pas croire, qu'il ne dépend que de l'imagination, ou de la fantaisie; c'est quelque chose de réel; c'est un certain je ne sais quoi, que l'on sent, qui fait plaisir, & que l'on ne saurait définir bien nettement. (p. 21)

On the one hand, therefore, if it is not precisely stated that taste is a function of the feelings, neither is it one

27. Morvan de Bellegarde, "Lettres de M l'abbé de Bellegarde, à une Dame de la Cour, qui lui avoit demandé quelques Reflexions sur le bon Goût," Lettres curieuses de littérature, et de morale (Paris, 1702), pp. 12-15. Despite the title, there is only one letter on good taste.
connected with the intellect, in that it cannot be the object of rational analysis. Morvan de Bellegarde's description of the way in which taste operates seems to support this interpretation of his argument. In words more reminiscent of Locke than of Descartes, for instance, he says:

La nature est une espece d'harmonie, qui par un assemblage divers, fait impression dans nos sens, dans notre esprit, dans notre raison, dans notre coeur: voilà l'origine de toutes nos passions, qui s'excitent par le rapport qui se trouve entre nos sens, & leurs objets; c'est ce rapport, & cette sympathie, qui fait le plaisir des sensations: la sympathie consiste dans une certaine disposition d'un objet à l'égard d'un autre objet. (p. 22).

Again we are confronted with the idea that suitable or fitting relationships are present objectively in nature and also between the things in nature and us; taste is the appreciation of them. Here the abbé de Bellegarde is proposing that it takes the form of a pleasurable sensation, which arises from a spontaneous recognition of harmony, independently of the workings of the reason.

On the other hand, however, there is no doubt that for Morvan de Bellegarde taste is the result of an enlightened mind:

Le bon goût est l'effet d'une raison droite & éclairée, qui prend toujours le bon parti dans les choses douteuses ou équivoques. (p. 14).

Whereas all men possess some taste, especially in fields where they may be considered expert, and while it may be desirable to follow the promptings of taste which is "inclination", superior taste is found only in those who apply their intellect to a question:

Ceux qui ont le discernement juste & délicat,
conçoivent les choses sous des idées nettes, & telles qu'elles sont en elles-mêmes ...

It is significant that the abbé de Bellegarde holds that too great an attention is paid to the cultivation of social graces, to the detriment of that of the reason, for this implies that he prizes a capacity for clear thinking above all. Certainly he condemns the fact that most men act

... plutôt par caprice, & par l'impétuosité d'une humeur bizarre, que par les lumières de leur raison, qui n'est pas assez cultivée.

(p. 34).

He discusses the decline in good taste in this context and it thus becomes plain that, ideally, judgment belongs in part at least to the rational side of man's being. He says indeed:

Le peu de soin que l'on prend de former la raison des hommes, est cause qu'ils n'ont pas le goût délicat. (pp. 33-34).

These notions, that taste is a movement of the "heart" towards an object causing pleasure and an operation of the intellect, seem to co-exist uneasily in this essay. Morvan de Bellegarde appears to indicate that his ideas are in fact drawn from two different sources in this piece of flattery to the Marquise:

Voilà, Madame, une philosophie, dont vous vous seriez bien passée; il y a longtemps que vous êtes instruite de tous ces mystères, puisqu'il n'y a rien de curieux dans Descartes ou dans Gassendi, ni dans les autres Philosophes modernes, qui se dérobe à vos lumières. (p. 25).

He makes no attempt, however, to devise a coherent system from two such conflicting theories. Rather are we left to conclude that, to attain perfection, the impulse on which taste is based should be controlled and directed by the intellect, with its true powers of perception and analysis.
Nevertheless, Morvan de Bellegarde has advanced the possibility that appreciation, in art as elsewhere in life, may be a process belonging to the affections.

A similar approach is adopted by Frain du Tremblay in his *Discours sur l'Origine de la Poésie* (1713). Initially his statement that good taste is more often the product of temperament and the prejudices gained through education "... que d'un discernement éclairé & d'une connaissance certaine qui procède de la raison ..."²⁸ points to a belief that it should be a faculty governed by the reason. An assertion such as "... il n'est point du tout impossible d'apprendre & d'enseigner ce qui fait le bon goût ..." (p. 118) supports the original impression that assessment of a work of art is a rational act. When he goes on to examine the particular "habitude de l'âme" on which appraisal is founded, however, Frain du Tremblay reveals that the question is more complex:

On l'appelle goût, quand elle agit par sentiment & à la première impression des objets; on l'appelle jugement, quand elle agit par raisonnement, & après avoir examiné les ouvrages sur les règles de l'art & par les lumières de la vérité.

(p. 120).

It is interesting to note, in the first place, the limitation placed here on the word "jugement"; others accept that taste provides judgments, but for Frain du Tremblay, as we see, "jugement" is a separate and independent function. Moreover, it is clear from the distinction he makes that response to a work of art may be a feeling; indeed, when further refining his definitions of the terms "jugement" and "goût" he says:

It is plain that there are two different uses of the word "goût" here. The term is applied both to "l'habitude ou la disposition de l'âme" (p. 123) which produces pleasure in, say, certain books and to "le sentiment même que nous avons à l'occasion de ces études & de cette lecture" (pp. 123-24). In short, it can be employed of "l'habitude qui produit l'acte" and "l'acte qui est produit" (p. 124). In addition, Frain du Tremblay has reverted to the idea that good taste is a basis for judgment. It remains true nonetheless that pure "jugement" is an intellectual activity, while "goût", in both senses, belongs to the 'heart'. The word "jugement" contains no notion of affection for a work of art:

C'est pourquoi on peut dire que l'esprit a plus de part que le cœur à ce qui fait le jugement, & qu'au contraire le cœur a plus de part que l'esprit à ce qui fait le bon goût. (pp. 122-23).

Statements such as these are admittedly qualified by constant reservations. The "sentiment" more appropriate for appreciation of works of the imagination must become, for example, "un véritable jugement de la raison par l'examen & par les reflexions" (p. 120). There can be no doubt that for Frain du Tremblay critical assessment which is a "jugement" is the ideal:

... le terme de jugement présente à l'esprit une plus noble idée; car il signifie proprement un discernement éclairé & fondé sur des connaissances certaines; au lieu
que celui de goût marque un discernement confus, qui vient plus de sentiment, que de lumière. (p. 123).

Nevertheless, like Morvan de Bellegarde, he has introduced into aesthetics the proposition that man's reaction to artistic creation can, in the first instance, be a feeling. It operates most effectively when man's mind has within it a kind of harmony with outside forces:

Car notre ame possède en effet cette qualité, qui fait discerner par sentiment les bonnes choses d'avec les mauvaises, & qui les fait estimer leur juste prix, quand notre esprit se trouve dans un parfait accord avec la raison. (p. 128).

In his Réflexions critiques Dubos claims, however, that sentiment alone can be the basis of judgment and that the feeling of individuals is a better guide than any approach of the intellect, particularly the theories and calculations of specialists:

Or le sentiment enseigne bien mieux si l'ouvrage touche, & s'il fait sur nous l'impression qu'il doit faire, que toutes les dissertations composées par les Critiques ... (II, XXII, 324).

Although analysis of a rational kind may be employed in questions of aesthetics, its function is to determine not the initial response to a work of art, but the cause of the pleasure gained from it. Thus Dubos concludes that:

Le raisonnement ne doit donc intervenir ... que pour rendre raison de la décision du sentiment ... (II, XXII, 324).

We see, therefore, that the role accorded to the reason is more limited here than it had been for Morvan de Bellegarde or Frain du Tremblay. The importance of Dubos's work lies, too, in the lengthy consideration devoted to the nature of "sentiment" and the way in which it operates. It would seem
at times that it is a sense, possessing the characteristics of the other five senses. Certainly, in stating that reliable decisions are made on the part of the public "... par la voie du sentiment, & suivant l'impression que le poème ou le tableau font sur lui" (II, XXII,323), Dubos implies that in the first instance the faculty is a passive one, receiving evidence from other parts of the body. Throughout the discussion, "sentiment" is associated closely with the senses. Dubos believes, for example, that with age comes the realisation that: "... on est trompé rarement par le rapport distinct de ses sens" (II,XXIII,341), and that in many areas reason must yield to experience, that is to say, to the knowledge obtained through the senses. This is as true for appreciation of poetry as for any other activity:

Or s'il est quelque matière où il faille que le raisonnement se taise devant l'expérience, c'est assurément dans les questions qu'on peut faire sur le mérite d'un poème. (II,XXIII,349).

Furthermore, when asserting that "sentiment" exists in all men, Dubos links it with the senses of sight and hearing, saying that "... comme ils n'ont pas tous les oreilles & les yeux également bons, de même ils n'ont pas tous le sentiment également parfait" (II,XXIII,352).29 As we might assume, its judgments are made in a completely spontaneous fashion, without any prior knowledge of the rules. Dubos says of the power to stir of a play, for example: "Le sentiment nous

29Proposing that:"Les Romains naissent presque tous avec beaucoup de sensibilité pour la peinture" (II,XXIX,395), Dubos attributes this in part to "la sensibilité des organes plus grande dans ces contrés-là que dans des pays froids & humides ..." (II,XXIX,396).
apprend ce qui en est, avant que nous ayons pensé à en faire l'examen" (II,XXII,327).

All these statements would seem to suggest that "sentiment" depends on the receptivity of the five main senses and as such it does not greatly differ from the 'sens commun' of traditional philosophy. It is at any rate similar to the other senses, the crucial distinction being that it is an active as well as a passive faculty, with the power to respond to objects perceived. Both these central ideas are encapsulated in the following account of the way in which judgments are formed:

Lorsqu'il s'agit de connoître si l'imitation qu'on nous présente ... est capable d'exciter la compassion & d'attendrir, le sens destiné pour en juger, est le sens même qui aurait été attendri, c'est le sens qui aurait jugé de l'objet imité. C'est ce sixième sens qui est en nous, sans que nous voissions ses organes. C'est la portion de nous-mêmes qui juge sur l'impres­sion qu'elle ressent.... C'est enfin ce qu'on appelle communément le sentiment. (II,XXII,326).

"Sentiment", therefore, is a quite separate part of ourselves which, while it may rely on sense impressions, acts independently of them. To this "portion de nous-mêmes"

Dubos gives other names which enable us to understand it more clearly. In particular, he immediately develops the notion expressed in the passage quoted above in this way:

Le cœur s'agite de lui-même, & par un mouvement qui précède toute délibération, quand l'objet qu'on lui présente est réellement un objet touchant, soit que l'objet ait reçu son être de la nature, soit qu'il tienne son existence d'une imitation que l'art en a faite. Notre cœur est fait, il est organisé pour cela. (II,XXII,326).

In asserting that the heart, which is traditionally the seat
of all emotions, is that in man which is stirred by and responds to a work of art, Dubos is associating "sentiment" or the sixth sense with the affective side of man's nature and reveals that the terms have a metaphorical sense for him. Elsewhere he uses as synonyms "le sentiment intérieur" or "l'expérience intérieure",\(^{30}\) and it is plain from his discussion that he believes man to possess a quality, namely a capacity for feeling, more reliable than the intellect.

It is apparent, moreover, that in Dubos's system all men have the ability to form a judgment about a work of art. Perfection is not attained by all, as we have seen,\(^{31}\) but those without "sentiment" are rare. It is a faculty, too, which exists in varying degrees. Dubos declares, for example, employing the word in an unusual way, that "esprit" provides an awareness of a poem or a painting "... car on entend alors par le mot d'esprit, la justesse & la délicatesse du sentiment" (II,XXII,328), and he continues:

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\text{Plus notre sentiment est délicat, ou si l'on veut, plus nous avons d'esprit, plus la montre est juste. (II,XXII,329).}^{32}\]

\(^{30}\) Dubos repeats his principal theory thus, for instance: "Tous les hommes, à l'aide du sentiment intérieur qui est en eux, connoissent, sans savoir les règles, si les productions des arts sont de bons ou de mauvais ouvrages" (II,XXII,331-32). Later when insisting on the timelessness of opinions based on "sentiment", he says: "Les opinions dont l'étendue & la durée sont fondées sur le sentiment propre, & pour ainsi dire, sur l'expérience intérieure de ceux qui les ont adoptées dans tous les âges ne sont pas sujettes à être détruites ..." (II,XXXIV,488).

\(^{31}\) See p. 28 above.

\(^{32}\) Dubos is taking up and attacking here Pascal's idea that a man attempting to judge a work of art without a knowledge of the rules is like one without a watch: "Ceux qui jugent d'un ouvrage sans règle sont, à l'égard des autres, comme ceux qui n'ont pas de montre à l'égard des autres" (Pensées, ed. Ch.-M. des Granges (Paris, 1964), p.75).
Thus, although men of all ages and all countries are "semblables par le cœur," they may not be equal in the quality of their judgment. Of particular interest here, however, is the association of "délicat" with "sentiment" to suggest the highest point which the capacity for feeling can reach.

Two parallel ideas, perhaps not entirely incompatible, emerge from this part of the Réflexions critiques. The "sentiment" or sixth sense is a sense like the others, but has at one and the same time, the ability to receive impressions and to make its own judgments. "Sentiment" is therefore reflective from the start, being at once a movement of the "heart" and a faculty which recognises that movement, using it as a basis for appreciating a work of art.

It can be seen that Dubos's aesthetic system suggests quite a different conception of man from that of critics such as La Motte or Terrasson. More than this, it is developed from a coherent psychology, the claim in this part of the book that "... tous les hommes peuvent juger des vers & des tableaux, parce que tous les hommes sont sensibles, & que l'effet des vers & des tableaux tombe sur le sentiment" (II, XXIV, 360), recalling the theories with which the Réflexions critiques open. Dubos's premise is that man has to be occupied, the needs of the soul being equal to those of the body in this respect. The activities of the soul fall into two categories:

Ou l'âme se livre aux impressions que les objets extérieurs font sur elle; & c'est ce qu'on appelle sentir; ou bien elle s'entretient elle-même par des spéculations sur des matières ... & c'est ce qu'on appelle réfléchir et méditer. (I, I, 6).

The second of these is by far the more difficult and it...
is therefore to the first that the majority of men turn, pursuing any object which is capable of arousing passions, even if it means enduring pain or unhappiness. The reason has no role to play here. This is exemplified firstly in the type of sights to which man is drawn, sights which may include a hanging or the torture of animals, and secondly by the fact that he is powerless to repress this attraction should he attempt to do so:

Un mouvement que la raison réprime mal, fait courir bien des personnes après les objets les plus propres à déchirer le cœur. (I,II,12).

Many spectacles cause too much distress, however, and man eventually seeks a less disagreeable way of filling his time. Art, which creates artificial emotions only, is ideally suited to occupy man, since it enables him to escape boredom without giving him any lasting suffering:

Ne pourroit-il (l'art) pas produire des objets qui excitassent en nous des passions artificielles capables de nous occuper dans le moment que nous les sentons, & incapables de nous causer dans la suite des peines réelles & des afflictions véritables? (I,III,25).

Poets and painters have therefore learnt to imitate that which would have made a powerful impression in real life, thereby awakening a similar passion. It is the experience of this passion which is at the bottom of the pleasure to be gained from a work of art:

Mais comme l'impression que l'imitation fait n'est pas aussi profonde que l'impression que l'objet même aurait faite ... comme l'impression faite par l'imitation n'affecte vivement que l'ame sensitive, elle s'efface bientot. ...

Voila d'où procede le plaisir que la Poésie et la Peinture font à tous les hommes. (I,III,26-28).
We see at the outset, therefore, the belief that is everywhere present in Dubos's work, namely that art appeals essentially to the feelings and that it is with his feelings that man must and does appreciate art. This theory is based, however, on an even more fundamental conception of man, a psychology which underlies the entire discussion about the sixth sense later. It is expressed in this statement:

Quand on fait attention à la sensibilité naturelle du cœur humain, à sa disposition pour être ému facilement par tous les objets dont les Peintres & les Poètes font des imitations; on n'est pas surpris que les vers & les tableaux mêmes puissent l'agiter. (I,IV,3).

Man's response to art is to be explained, therefore, not only by his fear of boredom, but by a capacity, central to his nature, to be moved by objects or spectacles in life; such a conception of man alone can explain the satisfaction he obtains from the most moving sights. This "sensibilité" has been given to man that he may form relationships with his fellows, Dubos claiming that: "La nature a voulu mettre en lui cette sensibilité si prompte & si soudaine, comme le premier fondement de la société" (I,IV,33). It is, in other words, an inherent faculty, seen by the author as counter-acting the effects of an "amour propre immodéré" which could lead man to pursue his own selfish interests. Its major function is to ensure compassion for those who are suffering:

Ainsi leur émotion seule nous touche subitement; à ils obtiennent de nous, en nous attendrissant, ce qu'ils n'obtiendraient jamais par la voie du raisonnement & de la conviction. (I,IV,39).

The examination of the sixth sense had presented a notion of man as primarily a feeling and not a thinking being; these
opening sections of the Réflexions critiques contain the philosophy on which such a theory is founded. They propose not only that man has passions which need to be satisfied, but also that his most important actions and responses are caused by a part of his nature located in the affections. Thus we may say that Dubos's aesthetics is based on a psychology of sentiment.

Rollin includes in his De la Maniere d'enseigner et d'étudier les belles lettres some observations on the appreciation of art. As we have seen, he appears to imply that taste is entirely a matter of feeling and even undefinable, while being at the same time a faculty of judgment belonging to the intellect. Yet there is much to suggest that Rollin regards good taste as a spontaneous reaction, present in all men but more perfect in those who have received an education. Whether they be scholars or not, all men can discern a good orator, for example, and are shocked by dissonance even without a knowledge of musical theory:

C'est que la nature leur a donné du goût & du sentiment pour l'harmonie.  
(I,lxxxiiij).

Similarly, the layman, without an awareness of the technique of painting, is well able to gain pleasure from the visual arts:

... le sentiment fait à peu près en lui ce que l'art & l'usage font dans les connois-seurs.  
(I,lxxxiiij).

Although Rollin does not define what he means by "sentiment", we can infer from the general trend of his argument that it is a faculty opposed to the power of reflection and

34See p. 10 above.
to any faculty which judges art with reference to a precise set of rules. It may be less developed in some men and susceptible of improvement through education, but in the first instance it functions independently. Its object, for Rollin as for other theorists, is a certain "harmony", in that it responds spontaneously to things which may be said fittingly to exist together.

In his Lettre III, sur la naissance, les progrès & la décadence du Goût Rémond de Saint-Mard launches a swingeing attack on criticism conducted according to a knowledge of the rules. Asserting that there are no longer any good writers, he adds that in any case "... si la Nature nous en envoyoit, quelle fourmillière de fautes ne leur trouverions-nous pas: tantôt ce seroit une faute de Grammaire qui nous impatienteroit; tantôt un petit vice de Versification: car ce que nous avons perdu en goût, nous l'avons gagné en exactitude." Here we see, therefore, a primary cause for the decline in good taste, namely an obsession with detail and correctness. It is implied that appreciation of art should be a more immediate and subjective affair; certainly our ability to be affected by a work of art is being distorted as far as Saint-Mard is concerned:

... elle (notre vanité) est poussée au point que nous n'exerçons notre sensibilité, que nous ne nous remercions d'en avoir que pour être mieux en état de remarquer les défauts d'un Ouvrage, sensibilité funeste, délicatesse pernicieuse ... (III,238).

Man should thus trust himself to his "sensibilité", but to a "sensibilité" allowed to operate freely and independently

35 Œuvres, III, 236.
through his feelings.

In *Sur la poésie en général* Saint-Mard examines in greater detail the psychology of the response to a work of art. The "Avertissement" contains his premise, which is that to write a poetic treatise

... il faudroit aller plus haut que les regles, remonter à ce qui les a fait faire, les vérifier sur les impressions mêmes; d'où il résulteroit une plus grande certitude dans les regles, & ... l'honneur de savoir sur quoi ces regles ont été fondées; c'est-à-dire, leur rapport avec notre manière de sentir. (IV,iij).

Like that of Duhos, therefore, Saint-Mard's system is based on an inquiry into the way man functions and, as we can see, it is founded on the notion that the affective side of his being is the more important in this question. This writer states indeed, in another "Avertissement" which first appeared in 1729 at the head of a *Morceau sur la Poésie en général*, that

... attentif à la manière dont sont frappés les hommes dans la Poésie, je recueillerai fidèlement les impressions qu'ils ont re­çues, & celles qu'en conséquence de la dis­position de leurs organes, ils sont néces­sités à recevoir encore. (IV,xx).

*Sur la poésie En général* itself opens with a statement of the old 'classical' idea that imagery is essential in poetry, principally because it arouses certain passions:

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36 This was originally published as *Réflexions sur la poésie en général* in 1734; it is included in the complete works together with *Réflexions sur l'Eloquence, sur La Fable etc.* under the title *Poétique prise dans ses Sources.* The *Morceau sur la poésie en général* referred to by the editor was first published under the title *Examen philosophique de la poésie.*
... les images ne servent pas seulement à peindre & à nous rendre attentifs ... elles ont encore des rapports secrets, des convenances délicates, une analogie source, avec les principales affections du cœur; & c'est en vertu de ces convenances qu'on est quelquefois si vivement touché. (IV,12-13).

It is in fact enjoyment of passions awoken by images which have an affinity with them which constitutes for Saint-Mard the chief pleasure to be found in a work of art. Each image produces a different reaction and, moreover, given our nature, it is inevitable that each time a particular image strikes us, we experience a particular reaction:

... soyez sûr que nous éprouverons, tant que nous sommes, un mouvement à peu près pareil toutes les fois qu'on nous présentera une image bien choisie & bien frappée; parce que nos passions sont des espèces de cordes toujours tendues, & toujours prêtes à recevoir l'unisson de quelqu'image. Or, jugez de l'ébranlement agréable qui doit arriver à l'âme, lorsque cet unisson se trouve frappé avec une grande justesse. (IV,16).

The metaphor which Saint-Mard uses here makes it possible for him to avoid finding a precise term to designate the faculty in man which appreciates art. He does not speak of "bon goû" in this essay, nor does he have in his system a sixth sense. It is plain, however, that imagery does more than strike the imagination; in exciting a passion, it goes to the heart. In language strongly reminiscent of that of Dubos, Saint-Mard claims that "... tout y va dans la Poésie, son but est d'aller remuer un cœur qui veut continuellement être agité ..." (IV,17). Thus the heart, centre of all affections, is always open to impressions, poetry "agite, remue, intéresse le cœur, fixe & soulage l'imagination ..."(IV,19). More than this, it is exactly calculated to appeal, because
"... sensibles comme nous sommes, c'était bien assez pour
nous plaire" (IV, 19).

One may say that, in common with Dubos, Rémond de Saint-
Hind has devised an aesthetics of sentiment. He insists
throughout the *De l'origine dans ses Sources* that the feelings
alone can make a reliable appraisal of a work of art. Dis-
cussing the effect of harmony in its widest sense in the world
around us, for example, he says:

Celle-là (harmonie de la Nature) n'est
point érigée en Art, il n'y a point de
syllabes à compter ... c'est par instinct
qu'on la sent, c'est par instinct qu'on
l'attrape, & ce n'est qu'à l'aide d'un
sentiment exquis qu'on peut trouver cette
celence si délicieuse pour qui la sait
sentir. (IV, 28).

We see once again in this part of the essay the notion that
man is moved by things in nature which may be said properly
to belong together. Saint-Nard's contention, expressed in
the passage quoted above, is that an instantaneous response
of the feelings makes this possible. Such an idea is repea-
ted in the assertion that harmony is essential to both prose
and poetry:

... elle (l'harmonie) a un rapport réel,
non-seulement avec nos oreilles, mais
encore avec notre coeur, & par ce double
rapport, elle devient également néces-
saire à la prose & à la Poésie. (IV, 29).

We have seen that in spite of a change in emphasis and
interest in the first half of the eighteenth century, many
of the old 'classical' concepts about art and poetry still
remain, together with the use of key words such as "inspira-
tion", "imagination" and "invention", which had always been
central to the discussion of aesthetic questions in France
from the sixteenth century onwards. Where the artist, be he poet or painter, is concerned, Dubos employs all three terms in describing the creative process, but associates them with a capacity for feeling, or sympathy, in the artist for that which he creates. Rémond de Saint-Mard, on the other hand, believes in the necessity of genius for the poet, but also requires taste, that is to say a quality which determines the way in which a subject is to be treated and this, he maintains, belongs to the affective side of man's nature. Both writers, in common with a number of others, suggest that it is also this part of man which responds to a work of art and "sentiment" thus becomes a dynamic force capable of making a judgment. The "public" of whom Dubos speaks with such approval is in fact fairly restricted, since he includes only those who have received an education. This might lead us to assume that "sentiment" is the recognition that a poem or a painting has been created according to the rules, such a recognition being a product of the reason, however instantaneous. Throughout the Réflexions critiques, however, Dubos insists on the futility of rules in evaluating either poetry or art, advocating instead an independent appraisal based on movements of the "heart".

The rationalists, too, had urged independence in assessing the value of a work of art, but in so doing had replaced prejudice and convention with a strictly intellectual process which examined the internal logic of a poem, for example, and its adherence to the rules of the genre in which it was composed. This is perhaps a limiting and ultimately destructive attitude to aesthetics, since it starts from a pre-conceived notion of each type of poetry and attacks any work which does
not conform to an ideal. There are those such as the Marquis d'Argens in his Réflexions historiques à critiques sur le goût (1743) and the abbé Trublet in his Réflexions sur le goût, published in Essais sur divers sujets in 1754, who continue to hold that reason is of the greatest importance in the creation and judgment of art. The rationalist approach also underlies the painstaking aesthetic systems of several writers of the time, among them the père Batteux, whose Les Beaux-arts réduits à un même principe (1746) attempts a definition and a categorisation of the beautiful.

The fundamental difference between writers such as these and, say, Dubos or Saint-Mard, is that the latter begin from a study of the individual and his nature, proceeding only then to analyse the way in which he responds to a work of art. Of equal importance is the emergence of a definite vocabulary with which aesthetic questions and indeed human psychology in general may be studied, this vocabulary including not only phrases such as "l'instinct du cœur", "de premiers mouvements" or "un mouvement du cœur", but fundamental terms such as "le sentiment", "la sensibilité naturelle du cœur humain" or "notre sensibilité", to denote key ideas. It might be assumed from Dubos's use of the term "sixième sens" that his

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37 These are used by the père Bouhours, for example; see the discussion on pp. 19-24 above.

38 A phrase used by Morvan de Bellegarde, among others; see p. 22 above.

39 These are both employed by Dubos; see particularly p. 27 and p. 33 above.

40 This is the form used by Rémond de Saint-Mard; see p. 15 above.
is a psychology founded on a theory of sensation or sense impressions, similar perhaps to that of Condillac, for example, later in the century. As we have seen, however, Dubos and others are not opposing the claims of the senses to those of the reason, but proposing as a more reliable source of judgment than the latter a generalised capacity for feeling. The terminology they choose advances and makes acceptable the notion that there is within man a quite separate, valuable and dependable faculty which operates without reference to the intellect. Despite the existence of aesthetic systems based on reason, the works which we have examined help to establish, for a century that was to hold it with conviction, the belief that man is primarily a "feeling" and not a "thinking" being.

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41 Some of the vocabulary needed by eighteenth-century writers is already present in the works of Malebranche. Although the word "sentiment", for example, is used with the meaning of "sensation", it can also signify an intuitive judgment: "Les biens du corps ne méritent pas l'application d'un esprit, que Dieu n'a fait que pour lui: il faut donc que l'esprit reconnaîsse de tels biens sans examen, & par la preuve courte & incontestable du sentiment" (N. Malebranche, De La Recherche de la vérité (1674), Ouvres de Malebranche (Paris, 1958-70), I, 72. This volume is edited by G. Rodis-Lewis).

He also employs the term "sentiment intérieur" when describing spontaneous, non-reflexive judgments: "... personne n'a de connaissance de son âme que par la pensée, ou par le sentiment intérieur de tout ce qui se passe dans son esprit..." (I, 389).

"Sensibilité", however, seems to be used in connection with the senses only. See Livre Premier, Chapitre V, I, 76.
CHAPTER THREE

Moral sensibility in the first half of the eighteenth century

Pour moi j'ai toujours trouvé que cette inclination pour les choses aimables adoucit les mœurs, donne de la politesse & de l'honnêteté, & prépare à la vertu, laquelle, ainsi que l'amour, ne peut se trouver que dans un naturel sensible & tendre.

Written in 1701 and published for the first time in 1719 in the Nouveau Mercure de France, these words from Rémond le Grec's Agathon suggest, at the end of a dialogue concerned with the nature of true "volupté", that virtue is only possible in conjunction with a certain capacity for feeling. At the time that Rémond le Grec was writing, rationalist morals as they had been propounded towards the close of the seventeenth century by Malebranche in particular were those accepted by the majority. In Malebranche's moral system, the universe is governed by a principle termed "le Verbe", "la Sagesse Eternelle" or simply "la Raison", a principle which determines and controls the laws regulating all actions, those of God and man alike. The reason of both is part of the universal Reason, man thus being able to understand something of the workings of God's will. For Malebranche man is free within this system, but he is also weak, so that although he may be drawn to the pursuit of truth and the preservation of order, wherein lies his real happiness, he is also attracted


2N. Malebranche, Traité de morale (1684), Première Partie, Chapitre 1, Oeuvres de Malebranche (Paris, 1958-70), XI, 17-23. This volume is edited by Michel Adam.
to more immediate pleasures. God allows those who use their freedom in an attempt to resemble Him more nearly, however, something of His own state of being:

Celui qui consulte sans cesse la Raison, celui qui aime l'Ordre, ayant part à la perfection de Dieu, aura donc part à son bonheur, à sa gloire, à sa grandeur. (XI, 23).

We can see, therefore, that only by consulting the supreme Wisdom or Reason behind the harmony of the universe will man become aware of his duty, and furthermore, that virtue is always synonymous for Malebranche with a love of order. Indeed he states explicitly that:

C'est l'obéissance que l'on rend à l'Ordre, c'est la soumission à la Loi Divine qui est la vertu en tout sens. (XI, 24).

In such a philosophy as this, a virtuous action is one which is entirely motivated by a desire to maintain the harmony of the universe and a virtuous man one who examines a proposed action until he is assured that it is both necessary and beneficial. In this process the reason alone is active.

Malebranche's morals thus depend on an operation of the intellect and on religious conviction, two forces which must inevitably be linked in a system where virtue is a striving after the perfection of God, itself contingent upon the perpetuation of the order in the world, determined by a supreme Reason. A capacity for feeling has no place in such a scheme of things. It is true that Malebranche speaks of virtue as an "amour de l'ordre" but throughout his work this love is made dependent on an examination by the mind of a projected

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"La disposition à s'acquitter de tel de ces devoirs (humilité, générosité, libéralité), n'est donc pas proprement vertu, sans amour de l'Ordre" (XI, 30-31).
act. While admitting that "une compassion naturelle" can and does inspire certain actions, Malebranche nevertheless dismisses such an impulse on the grounds, firstly, that it is pure, unreasoning instinct and, secondly, that it leads to acts which are virtuous in the eyes of man alone and which do not in reality tend towards the only admissible goal, namely eternal salvation. These theories rob man's actions of their spontaneity and genuine concern for the well-being of others. The one emotion possible indeed in Malebranche's philosophy is an admiration, amounting almost to awe, for the perfection of the universe. In every other respect he makes of man a wholly rational being.

Although Malebranche's influence was enormous and continued into the eighteenth century, his ideas did not spread without opposition. A morals based on something other than religion, for example, had been advanced since Pierre Bayle's time, but in spite of the fact that he divorces morals from religious belief and holds that man is governed by the desire of the moment, he yet retains in his system the concept of "conscience", which is a kind of Cartesian intuition, and maintains that Reason should determine the acts of all men. For a work which contains a new psychology of man and which

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4 Malebranche claims, for example, that: "Celui qui donne son bien aux pauvres ou par vanité, ou par une compassion naturelle, n'est point liberal, parce-que ce n'est point la Raison qui le conduit, ni l'ordre qui le règle; ce n'est qu'orgueil, ou que disposition de machine" (XI, 23). As far as the second point is concerned, Malebranche proposes that a seemingly callous man "est plus vertueux & plus aimable que ces amis emportez, qui sacrifient aux passions de leurs amis, leurs parens, leur vie, leur salut éternel" (XI, 31).

5 See, for example, Pensées diverses sur la comète (1683), Chapitre CLXXVIII, ed. A. Prat (Paris, 1911-12), II, 122-25.
begins to suggest a fundamentally different approach to moral philosophy, we should look to John Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690).

The main elements in Locke's epistemology are well-known; here we have to examine the importance of his notions of "sensation" and "reflection" for the enriching of the French notion of "sentiment". For the English writer, the source of man's knowledge is sensation, an impression of an object being made on a sense organ and communicated to the brain, producing there an "idea" or representation of the object. The mind, having perceived this image, may then proceed to contemplate it and to combine it with others creating eventually a new series of ideas, those of reflection or inner sense. The foundation of all that man knows is therefore the faculty of sensation:

> If it shall be demanded then when a man begins to have any ideas, I think the true answer is, when he first has any sensation.

This in itself is a complete break with rationalist psychology and Locke is explicit in dismissing the claim, basic in Descartes's philosophy, for example, that the faculty of thought is the essence of the soul:

> ... nor can (I) conceive it any more necessary for the soul always to think, than for the body always to move: the perception of ideas being (as I conceive) to the soul what motion is to the body; not its essence, but one of its operations. (*II, I, 81*).

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Locke goes further than this, however. In entirely rejecting the theory of "innate" ideas, or the capacity of the mind to have ideas not received from experience, he suggests that man's reaction to, as distinct from his image of, external objects, is something other than an inherent concept of the outside world. The response comes from an 'inborn principle', but this principle is not an "idea"; it is, as Locke puts it, "joined to" our ideas:

Delight or uneasiness, one or other of them, join themselves to almost all our ideas both of sensation and reflection: and there is scarce any affection of our senses from without, any retired thought of our mind within, which is not able to produce in us pleasure or pain.

(II, VII, 99).

Locke maintains that delight or pain are deliberately made by God to accompany man's sensations in order that he may pursue those objects which are apt to procure his well-being and avoid those which are not. Sensations of pleasure and pain thus decide all man's actions; Locke had indeed stated at the outset:

Nature, I confess, has put into man a desire of happiness and an aversion to misery: these indeed are innate practical principles which ... do continue constantly to operate and influence all our actions without ceasing ... but these are inclinations of the appetite to good, not impressions of truth on the understanding.

(I, III, 27).

It would seem, therefore, that man has a distinct faculty in his make-up which enables him to respond to particular kinds of sensation; this is "feeling", although Locke does not in fact employ the term, using rather the expression
"internal sensations."\textsuperscript{7} Nor does he analyse the precise nature of the sensation accompanying the first impression and claims indeed that it would be impossible to do so, as personal experience is the only means of knowing it.\textsuperscript{8} Of especial interest as far as we are concerned, is the fact that in the case of a response to people, the "internal sensation" does more than make man aware of a source of good or evil; the pleasure experienced at the thought of a fellow human-being, for instance, leads man to desire the continued existence and contentment of that human-being. Man's pursuit of his own happiness thus produces in him the will to pursue that of others:

... hatred or love, to beings capable of happiness or misery, is often the uneasiness or delight which we find in ourselves arising from a consideration of their very being or happiness. Thus the being and welfare of a man's children or friends producing constant delight in him, he is said constantly to love them.(II,XX,190).

\textsuperscript{7}This appears to be the case in the following statement about the passions: "Pleasure and pain and that which causes them, good and evil, are the hinges on which our passions turn. And if we reflect on ourselves and observe how these, under various considerations, operate in us, what modifications or tempers of mind, what internal sensations (if I may so call them) they produce in us, we may thence form to ourselves the ideas of our passions"(II,XX,190).

\textsuperscript{8}"These (pleasure or pain), like other simple ideas, cannot be described, nor their names defined; the way of knowing them is, as of the simple ideas of the senses, only by experience" (II,XX,189). To this he adds: "For, to define them by the presence of good or evil is no other wise to make them known to us than by making us reflect on what we feel in ourselves, upon the several and various operations of good and evil upon our minds ..." (II,XX,189); it would seem, therefore, that although pleasure and pain are called "ideas", they are affective.
While it would be wrong to claim that Locke's *Essay* contains a complete moral philosophy, his theories, as we see, take him to the edge of a discussion on the origin of our moral notions. He demonstrates, moreover, the possibility of founding a moral system on a faculty other than the reason, since "ideas" of good and evil, firstly with relation to man himself and subsequently by implication with relation to others, belong to the affective side of his being.

French writers and philosophers became acquainted with Locke's work both through Coste's translation, published in 1700, and in some instances at first hand while living in England. Such was undoubtedly the case of Jacques Abbadie, a Swiss Protestant, who had been officiating as a clergyman in London since 1689 and who remained in England until his death in 1727. His *Art de se connoître soi-même* (1692) develops certain of Locke's ideas, his sub-title *Ou la Recherche des sources de la morale*, indicating the difference in purpose between the two. Abbadie's aim is to establish a logical moral system based on those principles which the majority of men possess "par sentiment."

The faculty of thought, for example, often considered to be the most fundamental in man, is one which can be neither shown nor explained. The movement of the particles in the tubes of the body, which is eventually communicated to the brain, cannot in itself be called thought and the exact process therefore escapes both definition and understanding:

*Je ne saurois dire pour quoy je pense dans ce corps, dans ce moment, ni avec tous ces organes qui ne font rien essentiellement à la pensée & n'ont aucun rapport naturel avec elle; mais je sçay*
pourtant bien que je pense; et c'est ici une vérité de sentiment.

Similarly, man's awareness of the external world is obtained through what Abbadie terms the "voye du sentiment," which he believes to be superior to the intellect for two reasons. In the first place it reacts more quickly:

... la voye du sentiment qui attache aux objets nos propres perceptions, est bien plus courte pour nous en faire faire usage, que la voye des idées distinctes & de l'intelligence. (p. 43).

Secondly, it is more reliable:

J'ajoute que cette voye du sentiment que notre ame attache à ce qui en est l'occasion, est plus sûre que celle de l'intelligence. (p. 43).

The phraseology employed by Abbadie here is reminiscent of that chosen by Locke to convey one of the central notions in his psychology of man. Abbadie, however, seems to have omitted the initial stage of the sense impression made by an object and to have moved immediately to that which accompanies it. Moreover, the expression "la voye du sentiment" would appear to designate a separate faculty within our make-up, particularly in the first of the statements quoted, where it seems that the "voye du sentiment" is an active force with the power to associate a kind of judgment with an object apprehended through the senses. Certainly, for Abbadie, nature has endowed us with the ability to distinguish between phenomena in the outside world, especially as far as their usefulness or danger are concerned and this we do "en les révêtant de nos propres sentiments" (p. 44). Thus pain is

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9 J. Abbadie, L'Art de se connoître soy-meme, Seconde edition (La Haye, 1700), p. 32.
attached to the "idea" of fire:

... elle (la nature) attache en quelque sorte la douleur au feu, en me faisant concevoir dans cet élément une sorte de chaleur aspre & cuisante, pareille à celle que je sens, & qui n'est pourtant point en lui ...

(p. 45).

Equally, smell, for example, is joined to certain objects "bien que cette odeur soit en nous & non pas en eux, puis qu'estant agréable ou fâcheuse, elle enferme un sentiment de douleur ou de plaisir, lequel sentiment n'existe jamais que dans notre ame" (p. 46).

Abbadie's analysis of the way in which we acquire knowledge reveals that there are, for him, two elements in the impression made by an object, namely the "sentiment" and "le principe que le produit" (p. 46). We see, too, that at this stage, despite the suggestion in the term "la voye du sentiment," "sentiment" is used with a meaning akin to that of "sensation". Abbadie's own summary of this part of his argument lends support to such a conclusion:

... il a esté ... nécessaire d'attacher certains sentiments aux mouvements du corps; pour nous avertir de ce qui pouvoit le perdre & le conserver le dernier; de sorte qu'on peut dire que la société raisonnable est la fin de la vie corporelle, comme la conservation de cette vie est la fin de la plupart des sensations.

(pp. 59-60)

Subsequently, however, the significance of the word "sentiment", whether it be used in the singular or the plural, becomes wider. The fact that man is capable of experiencing what we might call "internal sensations" inevitably produces a response to the self. A man who feels pain, for example, must necessarily hate it:
... si cette douleur est constante & inseparable, (il faut) qu'il haïsse son être propre, sachant bien que le sentiment de cette douleur ne seroit point sans son existence. (pp. 128-29).

The same reasoning applies to the sensation of pleasure:

On conçoit encore que l'on ne peut sentir le plaisir, sans aimer ce plaisir qu'on sent, & sans souhaiter la conservation de ce soy-même qui en est le sujet. Le plaisir fait qu'on ayme son existence; parce que sans cette existence, ce plaisir ne sauroit subsister. (p. 129).

Here there can be no doubt that the original sensation accompanying a sense impression has given birth to an affection for the self, a feeling, which Abbadie calls a "penchant naturel" or an "inclination".10 The whole of this section rests on earlier assertions that one of man's fundamental characteristics is a natural urge to survive. 11 Whereas in all previous discussion "sentiment" had been synonymous with sensation or an instinctive self-love, it now becomes a dynamic force with its own independent function:

La raison est le conseiller de l'ame, le sentiment est comme sa force ou le poids, qui la détermine, & cette force est plus grande ou plus petite selon les différences de ce sentiment. (p. 133).

"Le sentiment", where the desire for self-preservation is concerned, would therefore appear to be a capacity for

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10 "Ainsi l'amour de nous mêmes en soy est un penchant naturel ... Cette inclinaison n'attend donc pas les réflexions de nôtre esprit pour naître dans nôtre ame; elle précède tous nos raisonnement" (pp. 129-30).

11 Abbadie states, for instance, that "naturellement nous nous aymons nous-mêmes, étant sensibles au plaisir, haissant le mal, desirant le bien & ayant soin de nôtre conservation" (p. 75). He later elaborates on this statement in the following way: "Nous nous aymons ... nous-mêmes par Sentiment & non pas par Raison. L'amour de nous-mêmes précède le jugement que nous faisons, que nous devons nous aymer ..." (pp. 90-91).
feeling, to be guided, as we see, by the reason. In the plural, the word conveys feelings located in a separate part of ourselves, since self-love or "le soin de notre conservation, le désir de notre bonheur" (p. 256) are examples of the "premieres affections qui sont nécessairement légitimes, des sentiments sans lesquels la nature de l'homme ne sauroit être ..." (pp. 255-56), contained within the heart. Abbadie has thus given a precise name to a power of feeling, for which Locke had found no specific term.

Moreover, he has moved away from a psychology of man to a simple morals. If man is dominated by self-love and an instinct for self-preservation, neither of which are to be condemned since without them he would perish, it follows that he has a duty to satisfy this love, which is in fact no more than an obedience to the first law of nature. It is on such a law that the concept of good and evil in Abbadie's system depends:

Il faut demeurer d'accord de la différence essentielle qu'il y a entre le bien & le mal moral, puis que le premier consiste à suivre la loy de la nature raisonnable, & l'autre à la violer. (p. 76).

Moral good does not therefore consist in conforming to a pre-determined moral order, but in obeying a law which commands man to pursue that which is likely to promote his well-being and avoid that which is not. Furthermore, the feeling which underlies man's moral notions with regard to himself is also a foundation for his relations with his fellows. Although virtue may appear to be a placing of others before oneself, in reality it is merely a form of self-love, for in loving another, man is doing no more than loving himself:
L'intérêt peut tout sur les âmes. On se cherche dans l'objet de tous ses attachements ... Généralement parlant nous n'aymons les gens qu'autant qu'ils nous sont agréables ou utiles. (p. 286).

To make affection and solicitude for others dependent upon concern for oneself is naturally to imply that there is a degree of calculation in all man's relationships. For Abbadie, however, "aymer par intérêt, c'est s'aymer directement soi-même, au lieu que les (les hommes) aymer par d'autres principes, c'est s'aymer par detour & par reflexion" (p. 287). As "l'amour de nous-mêmes" is not morally wrong, neither is the attraction to others to which it gives rise. More than this, if man's love for others is essentially a love of himself in them, it is plain that it is a feeling belonging to the 'heart', functioning independently of the reason. Indeed Abbadie says:

Le cœur ... pese l'utilité & non pas la lumière, & ce n'est point la raison mais l'amour de nous-mêmes, qui nous détermine dans nos affections. (pp. 299-300).

In his analysis of the origins of man's moral notions, as in his psychology of man, Abbadie has made of him a feeling and not a thinking being. This the abbé Gamaches also does in his Systeme du cœur of 1704. Gamaches bases his argument on the premise that an object in the outside world contains nothing but its own essential attributes or what he calls "les propriétés qui constituent sa nature." This first principle means that "les qualitez sensibles" (p. 7) with which external phenomena are endowed can only come from within ourselves, Gamaches concluding that:

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... si les objets extérieurs nous paraissent revêtus de qualités sensibles, c'est à cause que par un jugement naturel nous leur raportons les différentes impressions qu'ils font sur nous, ou les divers sentiments qu'ils excitent en nous par leur présence. Mais de plus, on voit bien que comme ces objets nous paraissent avoir des qualités semblables à tous les sentiments qu'ils nous donnent par eux-mêmes, on peut établir comme une vérité de fait, que nous transportons sur tous ceux qui nous touchent, toutes les impressions que nous en recevons. (pp. 12-14).

This passage clearly indicates that for Gamaches a part of man quite separate from his intellect effects a judgment on objects around him. We see too that he uses the word "sentimens" when referring to that in man which is transferred to phenomena perceived in the outside world. The precise sense given to it is not easy to determine, however. Since it occurs in juxtaposition to "les différentes impressions" it might be taken to signify "sensation" rather than "feeling"; certainly when elaborating on his preliminary theories, Gamaches asserts that some "sentimens" are, as he puts it, "abandoned" if they seem to be of no positive value:

C'est ainsi que les couleurs, par exemple, nous paraissent estre hors de nous, & ne nous pas appartenir; au lieu que la chaleur nous paroit estre tout à la fois & dans nous, & dans les corps qui en excitent en nous le sentiment. (pp. 14-15).

Elsewhere, however, the term might designate a response of the affections following an impression on the senses:

Après cela, l'on voit bien que lorsqu'un objet nous touche agréablement, nous devons nous complaire dans le sentiment de plaisir qu'il nous donne, mais qu'en même temps nous devons aussi le parer de ce qu'il y a d'agréable dans l'impression sensible qu'il fait sur nous ... (p. 16).

The wider meaning of "sentiment" possible here is also present, it would seem, in this passage:
... quand un objet nous présente ses qualités agréables, s'il ne nous fait montre que des gratifications qu'il tient de la liberalité de nos sens & de celle de notre imagination, l'on peut dire que nous sommes sensibles à ses agrémens, & soutenir en même tems que nous n'aimons rien autre chose que le plaisir. En effet, aimer le plaisir comme un sentiment que l'on éprouve en soy, ou l'aimer comme une qualité sensible dont on pare quelque objet extérieur, cela ne revient-il pas toujours au même? (pp. 28-29).

Here the two senses of the word appear to come together and indeed to be used synonymously, such that a sensation caused in the body is also a feeling located in the affections. There is no doubt that for Gamaches it is ultimately the "heart", traditionally the centre of all emotion, which reacts to external objects. Like Abbadie, he believes that man seeks happiness in pleasure and thus avoids that which brings pain. If, therefore, phenomena in the outside world produce an agreeable sensation, they acquire an attraction for man:

... car dès qu'ils nous paraissent comme penetrez de la douceur du sentiment que nous donne leur presence, il leur est bien facile de déterminer vers eux le mouvement d'un cœur, qui ne les distingue plus du plaisir qu'il recherche avec empressement. (p. 17).

Gamaches thus believes man to possess an instinctive reaction to sense impressions; since he associates with it the "douceur du sentiment" occasioned by some objects, it seems that here again the word "sentiment" betokens for him a feeling in the affective part of man's nature as opposed to a sensation. Moreover, the qualities which man attributes to external things are in fact moral ones, as these objects become good or evil according to whether they are a source of pleasure or
pain. Indeed Gamaches defines the terms of love and hate in
the context of the attraction or repulsion experienced by man,
taking his discussion immediately into the moral sphere:

Selon cette idée, il est évident que l'Amour
n'est autre chose que ce penchant qui nous
porte au plaisir, & que la Haine ne diffère
point de cette impression naturelle qui
nous éloigne de tout sentiment penible &
 désagréable. (p. 19).

This process is repeated exactly where man's fellow human-
beings are concerned, so that his love for them may be said
to be born in the first instance of desire for pleasure:

... nous ne recherchons rien autre chose
dans ceux qui nous plaisent, que les
seuls sentiments agréables qu'ils nous
donnent, & dont ils nous paroissent revê-
tus ... ainsi le mouvement qui nous
approche d'eux, ne diffère nullement de
celuy qui nous porte au plaisir ...
(p. 21).

There is therefore the outline of a complete moral sys-
tem in the first part of Gamaches's work; the second part
deals specifically with the emotions of love and friendship,
together with the basis of man's relationships in the widest
sense with those around him. These are in many cases quite
spontaneous:

Il y a des personnes pour qui nous avons
de l'inclination sans les avoir jamais
cultivé, nous nous sentons dispost à
les aimer avant que de les connoistre ...
(p. 175).

Such a reaction may be explained by a resemblance to a person
already loved, but it is probable that there is a different
and more fundamental reason for it:

... la favorable prevention de notre
cœur pour ces sortes de personnes, vient
bien plus souvent des impressions sensi-
bles qu'elles font sur nous par l'air de
leur visage. (p. 176).
Man is thus attracted to his fellows in the very way that he had been drawn towards pleasurable or useful objects: struck by the physical aspect of another, he endows this man with agreeable qualities and is thus moved to seek his company. Gamaches, like Abbadie, believes that the mind may adequately judge the correlation between appearance and character, but that the process is a lengthy one. Man has therefore been given by nature a separate faculty of more immediate response which intervenes in his relations with his fellows:

... elle (la nature) se charge de nous avertir icy par la voye du sentiment de ce qu'elle voit que nous ne pourrions que difficilement attraper par celle de l'examen, & qu'ainsi à la seule presence des personnes qui nous sont les plus inconnues, elle nous fait interieurement sentir ce que nous devons juger d'elles par rapport à nos interests ... (p. 178).

We can see that Gamaches uses here the terminology already employed by Abbadie to express the idea that man possesses a quality independent of the intellect which is capable of forming a reliable judgment. While it may rest in the first place on evidence from the senses, it is clear that for Gamaches it is an active force and is more than a mere ability to experience sensation. He therefore gives to the phrase "la voye du sentiment" a wider meaning than Abbadie had done at the beginning of his work, where it had seemed to denote sensation only. As Gamaches uses it here, the expression is closer to Abbadie's "le sentiment", that is to say a power of feeling operating without reference to the reason. It is this on which all man's relationships are founded and which is the quality he should most value in others. To this basic human feeling which both ensures the sincerity of our
own regard and attracts us to our fellows Gamaches gives the name "sensibilité":

La sensibilité est le fondement de toutes les dispositions de l'âme qu'il nous est avantageux de trouver dans les autres & qui peuvent nous disposer à les aimer; en effet, sans elle on ne peut au plus avoir que les simples dehors des qualités du cœur, c'est-à-dire, de celles qui sont utiles aux intérêts de la société. Il faut estre sensible pour estre véritablement généreux, complaisant, doux, traitable, officieux ...

"Sensibilité" becomes here, by implication, more than a capacity for feeling: it betokens the opposite of pure self-interest and is a genuine solicitude for others. This "premiere qualité du cœur" is fundamental to all relationships, it is "le lien le plus ferme de la société" (p. 195), which enables man to fulfil readily and with pleasure his duty towards his fellow human-beings. For this reason, therefore, man's "sensibilité" is not only the most essential but also the most commendable of all his attributes:

... elle (la nature) nous fait souffrir lors que ceux avec qui nous avons quelque liaison se trouvent dans la peine, afin que recherchant comme par instinct à nous délivrer des inquiétudes qu'elle nous donne, nous cherchions en même temps à les soulager dans les disgraces qu'ils éprouvent; c'est pourquoi il faut convenir, que de ce côté-là notre sensibilité est toujours véritablement estimable, puis qu'elle nous met & qu'elle nous affermit dans les dispositions où nous devons estre pour les intérêts de la société, (pp. 205-7).

Although self-interest remains to some extent as a motive behind man's concern for others, in that their pain causes him a pain which he necessarily wishes to alleviate, it can also be a more positive quality, which being initially pleasure in their company, becomes a desire to promote their
happiness. Gamaches's *Système du cœur*, like the earlier work by Abbadie, develops a philosophy out of man's primitive reaction of the "heart" to his surroundings: it makes of man primarily a feeling being and builds on his "sensibilité" a complete moral system.

Lévesque de Pouilly's *Réflexions sur les sentimens agréables*, published in 1736, is also an attempt to devise a psychology of man and a morals based on the feelings. This writer contends that the laws which govern them are of the same kind and subject to the same certainty as the laws of physics and that they may therefore provide the foundation for a moral philosophy. In his system, knowledge is acquired in two ways, either by the action of an object on the senses or by the reflection of the mind. In both cases, however, the ideas gained do not remain mere "spectacles" or representations; they are capable of provoking a reaction of the feelings and thus become affective:

... ils mettent le cœur en mouvement par les biens qu'ils promettent, par les maux dont ils menacent. C'est dans ces différentes facultés des sens, de l'esprit & du cœur, que la nature a ouvert les sources du plaisir & de la douleur. 13

That which exercises the faculties without tiring them, which proves their perfection or gives hope of such proof, necessarily makes an agreeable impression and is endowed with favourable qualities. From the general principles outlined here as an introduction, he takes his first law, defined in these terms:

Il y a un sentiment agréable attaché à l'exercice de nos facultés. (p. 145).

It would seem that "sentiment" is used here with the force of an affection or movement of the "heart" and not with that of "sensation"; when speaking of the pleasure to be had from intellectual activity, for example, Lévesque de Pouilly claims that "le sentiment intérieur apprend à tous les hommes que souvent on ne lit que pour s'occuper agréablement ..." (p. 147). Whatever the activity, it is a capacity for feeling which reacts to and makes a judgment on the exertion involved. It is significant that it operates too in the area of moral questions where certain responses to his fellows prove to man the perfection of his being:

En effet, tout mouvement d'amour, d'amitié, de reconnaissances, de générosité, de bienveillance, est un sentiment de plaisir. Aussi tout homme né bienfaisant est-il naturellement gai, à tout homme né gai est-il naturellement bienfaisant. (p. 149).

The suggestion is therefore made from the first in this work that virtue is a source of contentment.

Lévesque de Pouilly's scheme of things is thus dependent on the belief that there is in man's make-up a separate power of feeling and that man seeks out that which is pleasurable for his own good. His response to others is occasioned, for instance, by their facial expression: "un air noble" indicates "de l'élévation dans les sentiments" and "un air tendre" would seem to be "un garant d'un retour d'amitié" (p. 158). Other expressions create a similar "idea" of the disposition of the person to whom they belong; communicated to the brain, they cause pleasure or pain and determine man's attitude to a particular individual:
Nos cerveaux semblent être comme des instruments composés de filets nerveux différemment tendus; les airs qui annoncent des sentiments nobles, tendres, fins, vifs, y font une impression de plaisir plus ou moins profonde, suivant qu'ils y trouvent plus ou moins de cordes à l'unisson. (p. 158).

This process, by which man attributes attractive qualities to people who are in some way the object of his perception without tiring his faculties, has an exact parallel in the physical world. The "filets nerveux" spread throughout man's body, act as a warning; if they cause pain, man instinctively avoids the object which had occasioned the sensation; if pleasure, he inevitably pursues it. These reactions have as their function man's survival:

... dès que les impressions qui se font en nous, ou que les mouvements du corps, de l'esprit, du cœur, sont tant soit peu de nature à favoriser la conservation ou la perfection de nos facultés, notre Auteur y a libéralement attaché du plaisir. (pp. 186-87).

Lévesque de Pouilly can therefore claim, as he had done at the outset when positing his first law on agreeable feelings, that physical laws form the basis of morals:

Telle est la loi des sentiments; l'expérience le démontre; & ce principe Physique, en se développant, va nous offrir tous les principes de la Morale. (p. 144).

If we seek happiness in the evidence of our own perfection, we shall find it not in "des biens étrangers, mais dans un usage de nos facultés, réglé par des jugemens dont la vérité nous soit clairement connue ..." (p. 198). While opulence and grandeur, for example, may seem to bring satisfaction, in reality they breed a spirit of evil and injustice and make us dependent on forces outside our control. True contentment
resides in abandoning a desire for wealth and in promoting the well-being of our fellows:

En effet, si tout mouvement de bienveillance est un plaisir, si tout mouvement de haine, de trouble, d'inquiétude, est une douleur ... notre bonheur sera d'autant plus complet, que notre façon de vivre portera dans le cœur plus de mouvements de bienveillance, & en écartera davantage tout mouvement de trouble, d'inquiétude & de haine. (p. 210).

In this way, man's heart "éxempt de haine & de crainte" lives only for the good of others, "c'est-a-dire, pour des sentiments de plaisir" (p. 218). Lévesque de Pouilly has thus made of man's feeling of pleasure in his own happiness a soliciitude for others and we see once again that a psychology of sentiment has produced a morals of sentiment.

For many years, political philosophers had expounded, with a different emphasis, the idea that man was desirous of living in harmony with his fellows. One of the most influential of such writers in France was Pufendorf, whose De officio hominis et civis juxta legem naturalem libri duo (1673) was translated by Darbeyrac and appeared as Les Devoirs de l'homme, et du citoyen in 1706. Pufendorf's analyses are straightforward and trenchant compared with those we have just studied, but his authority imposed the acceptance of a belief in the natural benevolence of men towards their companions. For Pufendorf, the predominant characteristic in man is self-love and he describes it in simple seventeenth-century terms:

... l'Homme, en cela semblable à tous les autres Animaux qui ont quelque connaissance, s' aime extrêmement lui-même, tâche de se conserver par toutes sortes de voies,
Additionally man is weak on entering the world and in need of the help of others; they too have their own interests at heart and being ambitious, vain and jealous are naturally inclined to do him harm:

Toutes ces dispositions sont capables de produire & produisent en effet pour l'ordin­naire dans le Cœur des Hommes une envie extrême de se nuire les uns aux autres. (p. 65).

The conflict which would seem inevitable in this situation, however, is avoided by virtue of a second fundamental instinct in man and that is his desire to live in peace with his fellows:

... il ne sauroit subsister, ni jouir des biens qui conviennent à l'état où il se trouve, s'il n'est sociable, c'est-à-dire, s'il ne veut vivre en bonne union avec ses semblables, & se conduire envers eux de telle manière, qu'il ne leur donne aucun sujet apparent de penser à lui faire du mal ... (p. 67).

In order to achieve the kind of society envisaged here, a law governing human conduct can therefore be devised:

... chacun doit travailler, autant qu'il dépend de lui, à procurer et à maintenir le bien de la société humaine en général. (p. 68).

Although man would appear to be disposed to obey this law, in Pufendorf's system his belief in or fear of God plays an important part. For him, God exacts obedience to the natural law, with the threat of punishment for disobedience. It is indeed fear of God which gives rise to "ces vifs sentiments de la Conscience," which make man realise "qu'en violant
la Loi Naturelle on offense celui qui a l'empire des Cœurs, & dont chacun doit redouter la juste colère ..." (p. 70). If, therefore, man had no fear of death and no apprehension of divine retribution, he would also have no notion of duty towards his fellows. In fact Pufendorf states explicitly that "sans la Religion il n'y a point de Conscience ..." (p. 89).

This concept of human conscience implies that there is an element of rational calculation underlying man's fulfilment of his duty. Despite this, however, man would seem to aspire towards relationships of sympathy partly for their own sake, since Pufendorf has said that he is "sociable" and "veut vivre en bonne union avec ses semblables." Man's examination of himself and his position in the universe which brings the realisation that his existence is linked to that of others and that "il fait partie du Genre Humain" (p. 95), entails in its turn three fundamental obligations towards mankind:

Le premier Devoir Absolu, ou de chacun envers tout autre, c'est qu'il ne faut faire du mal à personne. (p. 132).

Like the second, that man must regard his fellows as his equals, this duty poses little problem as it is negative and demands no action. The third, however, that "chacun doit contribuer, autant qu'il le peut commodément, à l'utilité d'autrui" (p. 151), is both more positive and more important, since it leads to this obligation:

... la Nature aiant établi une espèce de parenté entre les Hommes, il ne suffit pas de ne se point faire de mal les uns aux autres, & de ne témoigner aucun mépris pour personne; il faut encore entrer dans des sentiments d'une bienveillance mutuelle, & les entretenir par un commerce agréable d'offices & de services. (p. 151).
This is particularly significant because it advances the concept that mankind forms one family and proposes that impulses deriving from the affective side of their being are those which maintain the bonds between men. Thus virtue consists in disinterested solicitude for others born of a wider, more general concern:

... *le but propre & naturel d'un Bienfait*... c'est ... *de montrer, en n'exigeant rien de celui à qui l'on donne, qu'on lui fait du bien uniquement pour s'aquitter des Devoirs de l'Humanité, & non dans aucune vûe d'intérêt.* (pp. 158-59).

While man's obedience to the natural law may therefore stem from a fear of God, it is apparent that it should also be a spontaneous movement of good-will. It is true that certain civil laws are necessary to guide man's conduct and to ensure in him acts of humanity which might not otherwise be forthcoming. Aware, however, that he cannot exist in isolation and aware moreover that his happiness cannot be gained at the expense of that of his fellows, each man is inclined to perform socially beneficial acts.

Pufendorf's work marks a change in several respects when compared with the view of human nature current in France in the seventeenth century. In the first place, there is no suggestion in it that man is corrupt. He may possess a strong degree of "amour de soi", but this is essential to him if he is to survive. Secondly, it contains the belief that nature has established a sympathy between all men which cannot be destroyed and which therefore means that man is inevitably drawn towards his fellows. His affection for them cannot be condemned and his actions, based on an instinctive feeling of liking, pity or generosity, are acceptable and praiseworthy.
Ideas such as these were expounded in works of very different kinds during the first half of the eighteenth century. Indeed, even before Pufendorf's *Devoirs de l'homme, et du citoyen* was published in France, a writer such as Baudot de Juilly could propose that all men are united by bonds of affection. His *Dialogues entre Messieurs Patru & d'Ablancourt sur les plaisirs* (1701) confronts a stern, Christian morality with greater confidence in human nature and seeks to reconcile the pursuit of pleasure with religious faith, chiefly through the arguments of d'Ablancourt, an Epicurean, who defends the former on the grounds that it is a necessary distraction and essential if man is to perceive that which is useful to him. One senses that it is d'Ablancourt's view with which Baudot de Juilly is in sympathy; nevertheless, Patru's initial statements are of interest, both for the concepts they contain and for the language in which they are expressed. He has a clear notion, for example, of the qualities which are to be commended in man:

Que dirai-je maintenant de ces autres vertus, de la pudeur, de l'amitié, de la douceur, de la complaisance, de la bonté de cœur, de l'humanité, & de la générosité, qui sont les plus doux liens de la société civile?\(^{15}\)

It is worth noting that Patru's list of virtues includes not only "bonté de cœur" but also "humanité", which is already, it would seem, a regard for others as fellow human-beings. Furthermore, the qualities for which he is to be admired have their origin in a particular part of man's nature, to which Patru gives a name:

Virtue is thus impossible without a capacity for feeling, which Baudot de Juilly, in common with Abbadie, calls "le sentiment", qualifying it in a way which suggests that it might exist in varying degrees. Patru and d'Ablancourt are not far removed in their theories on human relationships, but the latter's conclusions are founded on a different premise and in particular a more lenient attitude to man's spontaneous inclinations. For him there is no shame attached to living according to the dictates of nature and man is indeed intended to do so:

Cet instinct & ces mouvements secrets qu'il, (Dieu) a impriméz dans chaque animal, selon les différentes especes, sont des droits sacrés, qu'on peut & qu'on doit suivre; il n'y a qu'à les bien démêler & à connoitre ce qui est effectivement de la nature. (I, 179-80).

These "mouvements secrets" guide man in his relations with his fellows and make of him a feeling being:

De-là vient que nous avons naturellement pitié des malheureux, que nous aimons à faire du bien, que nous nous sçavons bon gré d'en avoir fait; que nous sommes ravis quand nous en voisons faire aux autres ... que nous sçavons qu'on ne doit faire aux autres, que ce qu'on voudroit qui nous fut fait à nous-mêmes ...

(I, 203).

It is thus plain that for Baudot de Juilly man possesses natural moral principles and social affections. Furthermore, he offers an explanation of the way in which they come into
being; he bases it on a belief that man responds instinctively to beauty and that from such a response is born a feeling with wider implications:

Or cette émotion douce qu'on sent dans le cœur, à la vue de la beauté, est la naissance & le premier mouvement de l'amour. Ainsi cette passion est d'une part, le principe & le lien de la société humaine ...

If this first impulse, which Baudot de Juilly also calls a "sentiment" is reciprocated, a relationship of sympathy is formed, described as "une tendresse reciproque entre deux objets" (II, 22). It is in this way that the "émotion tendre" or "premier sentiment de l'amour" may become the foundation for all man's relationships with his fellows, whether they be ones of love, friendship or more general concern for their well-being.

There can be no doubt that all these relationships are formed without reference to the intellect. Moreover, the "union des cœurs" (II, 33), which is their essence, has a further quality to sustain it and that is man's natural feeling of "bienveillance" towards others. To deny that such a principle is present in man is to deny the existence of an important part of his nature:

Et sans mentir, c'est faire injure à la nature humaine, que de la croire incapable de cette sorte d'amour; c'est mal connaître notre cœur, & les sentiments délicats qu'il peut produire: Cette erreur n'est venue apparentemment que de ce qu'on n'a point démemlé un certain instinct grossier & brutal, que nous avons de commun avec les bêtes, de la tendresse & de la

16"Au reste, cette même émotion tendre, qui comme je viens de dire, est l'origine & le premier sentiment de l'amour, est quelquechose de fort doux ..." (II, 22).
bien-veillance qui resident toutes dans le cœur. (II, 34).

As the emotion inspired by beauty had produced a feeling of pleasure, so the fulfilment of his desire to help others brings enjoyment in this system. Virtue, in short, is made agreeable and the realisation that one is capable of feeling is almost as important and valuable as the feeling itself:

Je crois qu'il n'y a point de plaisir plus sensible & plus touchant pour un bon cœur, que celui d'avoir de la vertu ... (II, 225).

In his Dialogues des Dieux (1711), Rémond de Saint-Mard also proposes that man has a sympathy for his companions. While it may seem that nature has implanted seeds of hatred in all men and that a spirit of "bienveillance" is entirely superficial, "la Nature qui nous a donné un sentiment fait exprès pour nous ... a eu en même-temps la précaution de nous en donner un d'une autre espece, qui a pour objet l'avantage & le profit des autres." 18 Existing alongside his "amour de soi", therefore, is a feeling for others, such that the motivation for acts of generosity, for instance, is a concern which has its origins in the affections. Certainly discussion or reflection is useless in the sphere of morals as man does not act according to the dictates of the intellect:

Qu'on apprenne aux hommes à penser comme on voudra sur le chapitre des vertus & des vices, ils agiront toujours comme il plaira à leur cœur; c'est par le cœur que les hommes sont conduits; l'esprit n'est

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17 The love referred to by Baudot de Juilly here is "l'amour de pure tendresse."

18 T. Rémond de Saint-Mard, Dialogues des Dieux, Oeuvres de Monsieur Rémond de St.-Mard (Amsterdam, 1749), I, 171.
Desfourneaux's *Essay d'une philosophie naturelle* (1724) is a more extended and systematic analysis of man's relations with his fellows. The philosophy of the "honnête homme", to whom Desfourneaux is addressing himself, should have two main elements, the first being "les avantages du Philosophe, à régler par la raison; c'est sa première & sa plus grande affaire."

There are those, however, in whom an awareness of their own needs, an awareness to which Desfourneaux applies the term "sensibilité", is so predominant that it destroys any consideration for others:

... il n'y a pas de place dans leurs cœurs, pour ainsi dire, ou il y en a trop peu, pour ce qui pourroit intéresser les autres: ils ne sont capables qu'en quelques rencontres, où il ne leur en coûte guère, d'être bienfaisans, amis, & peut-être, honnêtes gens. (pp. 55-56).

Thus Desfourneaux gives to the man who wishes to be a true "philosophe" a second objective, which "consiste dans les avantages pour autrui, à régler aussi par la raison qui est notre balance..." (p. 50). In spite of the reference to "la raison" here, man's obligation towards his fellows demands for its fulfilment a certain quality quite unconnected with the intellect, although guided by it and this is "bonté, ou sensibilité pour les intérêts d'autrui; laquelle nous

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21 A fundamental precept in man's conduct is: "Être assez sensible à ses avantages, & à proportion de leur importance ..." (p. 55), and Desfourneaux adds to this: "Que cette sensibilité soit limitée ..." (p. 55).
Desfourniaux does not examine the process by which his "sensibilité" is born in man, either with respect to his own well-being or that of others. It seems clear, however, that his consciousness in both cases is one deriving from the feelings. Desfourniaux had spoken, for example, of men's hearts when condemning too great a concern for the self, the phrase "pour ainsi dire" indicating no doubt that the word is to be understood in a metaphorical sense. In addition to this, Desfourniaux makes "sensibilité" synonymous with "bonté", a desire to assist others which is carried out by a natural "penchant", merely guided by the reason. He is thus close to Gamaches in equating the term with a spontaneous impulse to do good; as the word is used by him it signifies not only a passive awareness of the needs of others, but also an active intent to satisfy those needs. This conclusion is borne out by Desfourniaux's subsequent description of "sensibilité", whether it be applied to man himself or to others:

La sensibilité est un état opposé à l'indolence: ceux qui sentent assez leurs intérêts, sont aussi disposé à agir assez pour leurs intérêts, que ceux qui vivent dans l'indolence, le sont peu... Par elle on pratique ce que beaucoup de gens voyent seulement dans la speculation...

"Sensibilité" allows man to do "avec goût, ce qui ne se ferait que par raison ou ne se ferait point du tout..." (p. 70), for it brings him a pleasure which ensures his own happiness as well as that of others. It is indeed to reawaken in man the desire for contentment, which he believes to be weak, that Desfourniaux is writing:
C'est pour réveiller cette sensibilité, plus désirabile, que des maximes de Morale, que j'ay cru devoir engager les sujets bien disposez à faire attention à quelques objets qui peuvent contribuer à leur bonheur. (pp. 82-83).

Despite his title, which had suggested that he was proposing to found a moral system on reason, Desfourneaux thus dismisses all principles drawn up by the intellect, since man's moral notions are to be found within his feeling for others. "La raison" plays a secondary role only and is often akin in meaning to "sagesse", or an understanding of the limits to be placed both on concern for oneself and for one's fellows.

Throughout his Essay d'une philosophie naturelle Desfourneaux links the "philosophe" and the "honnête homme" and bases his advice on the principle that both should be "bienfaisant". Nothing makes clearer the change in values taking place during the first half of the eighteenth century than this association of "bienfaisant" and "honnêteté", both of which, moreover, depend, as we have seen, on a certain "sensibilité". Two writers in particular at this time help to contribute to the transformation in outlook and to the evolution in meaning of several terms central to moral philosophy; they are the abbé de Saint-Pierre and Mme de Lambert.

The word "bienfaisant" is not uncommon in the seventeenth century as a qualification of both men and actions. It had existed indeed in Old French, conveying a general idea of "celui qui fait bien," so that it might be applied, for

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22 "... la Philosophie de celuy qui n'aime que soy, est un mauvais parti pour le Philosophe. Celle de l'honnête homme ... est bienfaissante; elle est aimable & capable d'attirer sur luy des avantages proportionez à la sagesse qui peut diriger le penchant qu'il a à faire le bien" (p. 49).
instance, to a soldier who had done well in battle. Littré also supplies examples of the term used to signify "dont l'influence est utile." Eventually, however, it comes most often to designate one "who enjoys doing good" and as such it is occasionally linked to the notion of charity. Saint-Evremond had, for instance, referred to "ce que nous avons de charitable et de bien-faisant" as an impulse to perform a beneficial act. In the eighteenth century, some effort is made to dissociate the two concepts and to apply "bienfaisant" to the man who possesses a spontaneous desire to help his companion.

As "bienfaisance" this concern for others was a quality much prized by the whole century. This word, too, is an old one, Brunot stating that examples of it may be found in the sixteenth century, although he does not in fact give any of them. It is synonymous with the Latin "beneficentia" and in French largely replaces "bénéficence." It is undoubtedly the abbé de Saint-Pierre who does most to make the term popular. In his Sur le grand Homme, & sur l'Homme Illustre,


25"Bénéficence" is often the word used by Barbeyrac in his translation of Pufendorf in the context of solicitude for others: "Il y a enfin une certaine manière d'exercer convenablement la Bénéficence & la Libéralité ..." (Devoirs de l'homme, et du citoyen, p. 156). The Latin for this is: "Modus quoque dandi mutum gratiae beneficiis addit ..." (De officio hominis et civis, ed. W. Schücking (New York, 1927), I, 52).
first published in 1726 and reprinted many times, he develops the idea of "bienfaisance" as one of the essential human attributes. He begins by separating the concepts of power and greatness, believing that the term "Grand Homme" implies more than simply "homme puissant". Whereas power is the result of rank and fortune, true greatness demands a more personal quality:

... on ne devient Grand Homme que par les seules qualités intérieures de l'esprit & du cœur, & par les grands bienfaits que l'on procure à la Société.

Whether by reflection or by action, by the discovery of the means of procuring general happiness or by direct intervention in the lives of others, the great man is the one who desires the greatest good for the greatest number. In short, the "Grand Homme" must be a "grand bien faicteur" (XI, 60), whose stature depends upon the scale of his achievement and the degree of difficulty overcome:

Plus le bienfait est grand, durable, étendu à un plus grand nombre de familles, & difficile à procurer, plus aussi celui qui le procure se distingue entre les Grans Hommes. (XI, 61).

Thus a seemingly great man such as Charles V cannot be regarded as a "Grand Homme", since his actions were undertaken with his own prestige in mind or the interests of a few courtiers around him. For Saint-Pierre such a man lacks an essential quality:

Pour le malheur de ses sujets & de ses voisins, il n'aprit point dans son Education, & ne conut pas dans le reste de sa vie de quelle importance lui étoit pour parvenir au titre de Grand Homme, de pratiquer plus constamment l'équité

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26 Ch.-I, Castel, abbé de Saint-Pierre, Sur le grand Homme, & sur l'Homme Illustre, Ouvrajes politiques (Rotterdam, 1738), XI, 33.
Saint-Pierre insists here and throughout this work that the "Grand Homme est toujours illustre, mais l'Homme Illustre n'est pas toujours Grand Homme" (XI, 71), the latter always possessing a spontaneous wish to improve the lot of his fellows. He also makes a distinction between the "Grand Homme" and the "Grand saint" who "travaille pour plaire à Dieu" (XI, 73), and who therefore has a higher aim than the "Grand Homme". In this way "le motif de l'Homme Saint est beaucoup plus élevé que celui du Grand Homme, il est plus conforme à la raison universelle qui n'est, qu'une étincèle de la Raison suprême" (XI, 73).

Such a view of moral perfection is reminiscent of the theories put forward by Malebranche in his *Traité de morale*. Certainly "bienfaisance" is a quality given to man by God, who desires man's happiness and there is no doubt that the impulse to help others is part of man's religious life:

... il (Dieu) nous invite par les grandes récompenses de la seconde vie, à l'imiter par des axions de bien faizanse dans notre première vie. (XI, 74).  

Saint-Pierre differs from Malebranche, however, in placing his emphasis on man's relationship with man and he in no way

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27 This is plain in the following question: "... que pouvant-il (Dieu) faire de plus saje que de nous donner d'un côté la liberté d'éviter le mal & de faire le bien, c'est à dire le pouvoir de nous abstenir des injustices, & de pratiquer la bienfaizanse ..." (XI, 74).

28 The same notion of effort is present in the statement that "cette bienfaizanse divine demande nécessairement des hommes qu'ils tachent de l'imiter, & par consequant qu'ils soient justes & bienfaizans les un, anvers les autres" (XI, 77).
disapproves of the urge to assist others for their own good.
When comparing the "Grand Homme" with "l'Homme Illustre", for example, he says:

... le Grand Homme a des sentiments & des motifs plus éléves, il se soucie fort du
plezir qu'il trouve à procurer un grand
bonheur à ses concitoyens, & préfère sou-
vant leurs intérêts au sien propre.

(XI, 72).

By making the possession of "bienfaisance" the hall-mark of
a great man, Saint-Pierre not only attaches to it some sig-
nificance, he indicates the possibility of a new scale of
values with regard to human nature.

Madame de Lambert has often been seen as a rationalist and
as one who maintains the moral philosophy of the previous
century.29 There are indeed elements in her theories, con-
tained mainly in advice offered to her son and daughter,
which propose both that reason is a sure guide in man's deal-
ings with his fellows and that sound principles must be
grounded in standards established by religion. A similarity

29See, for example, J.-P. Zimmermann, "La Morale laïque au
commencement du XVIIIe siècle. Madame de Lambert, "Revue
d'histoire littéraire de la France, 24 (1917), 42-64 and 440-
66. He believes Madame de Lambert to reflect the reaction
against a morals of religion and, in spite of a call to per-
fec the heart, to found her philosophy on "la raison", that
is to say, "la sagesse pratique" (60).

D. Mornet considers Madame de Lambert to be a proponent of
the morals of order; see his Le Romanticisme en France au XVIIIe
siècle (Paris, 1912), pp. 1-2. So, too, does A. Adam; see
his Le Mouvement philosophique dans la première moitié du 18e
siècle (Paris, 1967), pp. 85-86. He also suggests, however,
that she may be regarded as among those who associate "amour
de soi" and "amour des autres" (p. 99) and that she cannot
withstand the "mouvement général des esprits vers une morale
fondée sur la spontanéité du sentiment" (p. 98).
between Mme de Lambert and Malebranche, for example, is suggested in this assertion:

Les vertus morales sont en danger, sans les chrétiennes ... je demande seulement que l'amour de l'Ordre soumette à Dieu vos lumières & vos sentimens, que le même amour de l'Ordre se répande sur votre conduite: il vous donnera la Justice, & la Justice assure toutes les vertus.

The implication that man's realisation of the correct path to be followed is an intellectual one is present in Mme de Lambert's discussion of "amour-propre". This is of two kinds:

... l'un naturel, légitime & réglé par la justice & par la raison; l'autre, vicieux & corrompu. Notre premier objet, c'est nous mêmes; & nous ne revenons à la justice, que par la réflexion ... S'aimer comme il faut, c'est aimer la Vertu! aimer le Vice, c'est s'aimer d'un amour aveugle & mal-entendu. (pp. 29-30).

Such a statement would seem to demand that man's duty to himself, as to his companions, be decided and controlled by rational reflection on what is possible and appropriate.  

On the other hand, however, Mme de Lambert herself refers to the work written for her son as "des avis que vous donne une Amie, & qui partent du cœur" (p. 2), and much in these "avis" would lead us to conclude that it is the "heart" from which reliable moral impulses spring. Certainly, Mme

30 A.-Th. de Marguenat de Courcelles, marquise de Lambert, Avis d'une Mere à son Fils (1726), Œuvres de Madame la Marquise de Lambert (Lausanne, 1747), p. 15.

31 The same notion appears to underlie this observation on human nature: "Il y a d'aimables caracteres, qui ont une convenance naturelle & délicate avec la Vertu. Pour ceux à qui la Nature n'a pas fait ces heureux présens, il n'y a qu'à avoir de bons yeux & connoitre ses véritables intérêts, pour corriger un mauvais penchant: voilà comme l'esprit redresse le cœur" (p. 30).
de Lambert, like many of her contemporaries, dismisses the notion that birth or wealth are a sign of true value; "la supériorité réelle & véritable" which distinguishes one man from another is "le mérite" (p. 18). In short, she believes that: "Le titre d'honnête-homme est bien au-dessus des Titres de la fortune" (p. 19). Mme de Lambert is close therefore to Desfournceaux in prizing "honnêteté" above all other qualities.

While she may hold that societies between men are necessary and that "honnêteté" in one sense is obedience to the laws which have been found essential to maintain these communities, she also advances the idea that man may desire the good of others, as her definition of "honnêteté" begins to imply:

Tous les vices favorisent l'Amour-propre, & toutes les vertus s'accordent à le combattre ...

L'Amour-propre est une préférence de soi aux autres; & l'Honnêteté est une préférence des autres à soi. (p. 29).

There is an unmistakable association between virtue and "honnêteté" here, a juxtaposition which already points to the change of meaning which the second concept has undergone during the first third of the eighteenth century.

Throughout the Avis d'une Mère À son Fils Mme de Lambert constantly stresses the importance of consideration and generosity, always linking these moral qualities to the notion of pleasure:

32 In her discussion of man's social duties, Mme de Lambert says: "Les Hommes ont trouvé qu'il était nécessaire & agréable de s'unir pour le bien commun; ils ont fait des Lois pour reprimer les méchants; ils sont convenus entre eux des devoirs de la Société, & ont attaché l'idée de la gloire à la pratique de ces devoirs. Le plus honnête homme est celui qui les observe avec plus d'exactitude; on les multiplie à mesure que l'on a plus d'honneur & de délicatesse" (p. 22). It would seem that the word "délicatesse" begins to have a moral sense here.
Le plaisir le plus touchant pour les bonnes gens, c'est de faire du bien & de soulager les misérables. (p. 40).

Mme de Lambert condemns the search for "volupté" and is thus in no sense either an Epicurean or among those who consciously attempt to unite the Epicurean and Christian philosophies at this time. She does not reject the enjoyment of personal contentment, however; rather does she place it uniquely in beneficence to others:

Pourquoi dans ce nombre infini de goûts inventés par la volupté & par la mollesse, ne s'en est-on jamais fait un de soulager les malheureux? L'humanité ne vous fait elle point sentir le besoin de secourir vos semblables? Les bons cœurs sentent l'obligation de faire du bien, plus qu'on ne sent les autres besoins de la vie. (p. 20).

In this exhortation to her son, two features central to Mme de Lambert's moral theories emerge, the first being that the desire to assist others is specifically named "humanité" and the second that it is located in the affective side of man's nature. The term "humanité" exists with a meaning of a spirit of good-will in the seventeenth century, when it was possible to speak of fulfilling a "devoir d'humanité."

Pufendorf, for example, places some emphasis on the "Devoirs de l'Humanité." The word may also be used to convey that which defines man and which therefore links all men with indissoluble bonds. There is something of this usage in Mme de Lambert's advice to her son:

Sachez que les premières Loix à qui vous devez obéir, sont celles de l'humanité; songez que vous êtes homme, & que vous commandez à des hommes. (p. 43).

In the majority of cases, however, the term expresses in

33See p. 93 above.
her work the notion of an instinctive liking or solicitude for one's fellows, as it had already done in Jufendorf and in Baudot de Juilly. Moreover, it is clear in the Avis d'une Mère À son Fils that "humanité" is a feeling, both in the passage which we have quoted above and in this statement about generosity, for instance, which claims that: "La Liberalité se caractérise par la manière de donner; le Liberal double le mérite du présent, par le sentiment; l'Avare le gâte par le regret" (p. 41).

Indeed, the most important precepts which Mme de Lambert gives to her son demand a capacity for feeling as the one true source of judgments and moral energy in man's relations with his fellows. Stressing the value of friendship, for example, Mme de Lambert says: "Je vous renvoie à votre cœur, qui vous demandera un Ami, & qui vous en fera sentir le besoin. Je laisse à votre délicatesse à vous instruire des devoirs de l'Amitié" (pp. 28-29), advice which is doubly interesting, since it seems to suggest that "délicatesse" is being used once again with a moral force. Similarly, in rejecting the common view of "volupté", Mme de Lambert suggests that virtue comes from the heart, "la source de l'innocence & du bonheur" (p. 48). Her attitude would appear to be...
encapsulated in one of her last appeals to her son, which makes plain her belief in the primacy of the feelings over the reason:

Je vous exhorterai bien plus, mon fils, à travailler sur votre cœur, qu'à perfectionner votre esprit: ce doit être là l'étude de toute la vie. La vraie grandeur de l'homme est dans le cœur; il faut l'élever, pour aspirer à de grandes choses, & même oser s'en croire digne ...

... l'on n'est estimable que par le cœur, & l'on n'est heureux que par lui; puisque notre bonheur ne dépend que de la manière de sentir. (pp. 47-48).

Statements such as these coincide with others elsewhere in de Lambert's writings. In the Réflexions nouvelles sur les Femmes (1727), for example, she insists that a capacity for feeling is as sure a means of attaining the truth as the intellect and asserts, in language which recalls Gamaches, that on such a capacity depend the most desirable qualities which we possess:

La Sensibilité est une disposition de l'ame qu'il est avantageux de trouver dans les autres. Vous ne pouvez avoir ni humanité, ni générosité, sans Sensibilité. Un seul sentiment, un seul mouvement du cœur a plus de crédit sur l'ame, que toutes les Sentences des Philosophes.37

The Traité de l'Amitié (1732) also proposes that the feelings are at the centre of man's life. Friendship is "un sentiment qui est né avec nous,"38 and demands reactions of the heart

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36 This advice is almost exactly paralleled in the Avis d'une Mere à sa Fille: "... votre première attention doit être à perfectionner votre cœur & ses sentiments. Vous n'avez de vertu sûre & durable que par le cœur. C'est lui proprement qui vous caractérise" (p. 94).

37 Œuvres, pp. 186-87.

38 Œuvres, p. 119.
if it is to be regarded as sincere. More than this, however, Née de Lambert's attitude towards this relationship would seem to rest on a view of human nature in general which is expressed in this way:

... les ames tendres & délicates sentent les besoins du coeur plus qu'on ne sent les autres nécessités de la vie. ... Enfin, les caractères sensibles cherchent à s'unir par les sentiments; le cœur étant fait pour aimer, il est sans vie dès que vous lui refusez le plaisir d'aimer, & d'être aimé. (pp. 120-21).

It is true that Née de Lambert warns her daughter against "ces grands ébranlements de l'ame" (p. 73). She always makes a distinction, however, between passions and feelings and the latter, together with "le sentiment" or "la sensibilité" are held to be commendable and indeed essential in man's dealings with his fellows.

Ideas of a similar kind are advanced by Lemaître de Claville in his Traité du vrai mérite de l'homme (1734). This is a work written for a young man about to enter polite society and contains advice of the most varied kind, in its attempt to outline the happiness or "volupté" to be gained from every aspect of life. From the first, Lemaître de Claville associates "true merit" with virtue, saying that: "La vertu & le vrai mérite sont synonymes" and he recommends a particular kind of philosophy to achieve it:

Je ne conseille donc que l'usage d'une philosophie aisée, raisonnable, naturelle & chrétienne. C'est une philosophie de sentiment indépendante de la scholastique. (I, 18).

The assertion made here is developed in the second volume of the *Tracté*, in which Lemaitre de Claville describes in greater detail man's obligations to others. Remarking that serving one's fellows is a benefit to oneself and that such a principle can arouse "ou un sentiment réel, ou une réflexion qui vous fasse agir en conséquence" (II, 42), he adds the following advice, which is a clear indication of his preference for an instinctive concern for one's companions:

Vous, pour qui j'écris, & en qui je suppose une âme de la meilleure trompe, j'aime à croire que vous n'aurez pas besoin pour devenir bien-faisant de réfléchir sur les profits qu'on en tire. Livrez-vous tout entier à la bonté du cœur, le sentiment peut plus, pour mettre l'homme en mouvement, que toutes les démonstrations. (II, 42).

"Le sentiment" signifies for Lemaitre de Claville a spontaneous regard for others, located in the feelings; it is a dynamic force, as it had been for Abbadie and can be equated with Gamaches's "sensibilité".

Lemaitre de Claville's work, like that of Baudot de Juilly, is an attempt to reconcile the hedonist and Christian philosophies. Goodness is to be pursued, for instance, on the grounds that it is only through solicitude for one's fellows that happiness can be found: "...trouvons notre bonheur dans celui des autres, voilà le dernier période de la fine volupté" (II, 39). Christian virtue loses its austerity, however; the pleasures of the senses are no longer despised, although Lemaitre de Claville always praises above all the satisfaction to be had from the pleasures of the mind and the soul. The "volupté" of the Epicureans also undergoes a certain modification, since man has the potential to care for
all his fellows and not merely a restricted circle of friends:

Vivons pour nous, vivons encore plus pour nos amis; vivons sur-tout pour placer le mérite, pour protéger l'innocence, pour secourir l'homme qui souffre: songez que vous ne sauriez être heureux, qu'autant qu'on vous verra attentif au bonheur des autres...

As much as Laëme de Lambert, therefore, Lemaître de Claville shows the change in values which is taking place in the first half of the eighteenth century. This is exemplified not in his use of established terms with a meaning not previously associated with them, but in his belief in the insufficiency of those terms to express his ideal:

Toutes les qualités qui sont nécessaires au galant homme ne sont que la moindre partie du mérite personnel, & ne produisent que de légers plaisirs; ce sont de gracieux accidents qui ne doivent entrer que comme par addition dans le caractère de l'honnête homme; mais l'honnête homme & le galant homme ne sauront être parfaitement vertueux qu'autant qu'il remplira tous les devoirs de l'équité, de l'humanité, de la bonté...

Lemaître de Claville requires in his ideal man the qualities of "bienfaisance" and "humanité"; it has often been noted that Voltaire too whole-heartedly approved of what he saw as the invention of the term "bienfaisance" by the abbé de Saint-Pierre and of the regard for others which it betokens. He concludes the Discours en vers sur l'homme (1733) with these lines, for example:

... il (le mot bienfaisance) me plaît; il rassemble,
Si le cœur en est cru, bien des vertus ensemble.
Petits grammairiens, grands précepteurs des sots,
Qui pesez la parole et mesurez les mots,
Pareille expression vous semble hasardée;
Mais l'univers entier doit en chérir l'idée.

40 Voltaire, Discours en vers sur l'homme, Œuvres complètes de Voltaire, Nouvelle Edition... conforme pour le texte à l'édition de Beuchot (Paris, 1877-83), IX, 424.
Both Voltaire's life and his work bear witness to the fact that a desire to assist others is a fundamental urge in man. The Traité de métaphysique (1734) makes plain that he believes man to possess an inherent concern for his fellows:

L’homme n’est pas comme les autres animaux qui n’ont que l’instinct de l’amour-propre et celui de l’accouplement; non-seulement il a cet amour-propre nécessaire pour sa conservation, mais il a aussi, pour son espèce, une bienveillance naturelle qui ne se remarque point dans les bêtes.

The "sentiment de pitié et de bienveillance" is not born of self-love, as it is for several of the moralists whom we have examined, but exists in conjunction with it, if it is not extinguished by it. Like his "amour-propre", the good-will man experiences for others is an impulse which owes nothing to the intellect:

... que l’homme le plus sauvage voie un joli enfant prêt d’être dévoré par quelque animal, il sentira malgré lui une inquiétude, une anxiété que la pitié fait naître, et un désir d’aller à son secours.

It is this same feeling, moreover, "qui nous dispose à l’union avec les hommes." 41

In Voltaire’s system, man’s concepts of good and evil do not depend, however, on this basic moral urge; rather do they find definition within society and the laws which it has drawn up for its own sake:

Mais tous ces peuples, qui se conduisent si différemment, se réunissent tous en ce point, qu’ils appellent vertueux ce qui est conforme aux lois qu’ils ont établies, et criminel ce qui leur est contraire.... La vertu et le vice, le bien et le mal moral, est donc en tout pays ce qui est utile ou nuisible à la société....

(XXII, 224-25).

41 Traité de métaphysique, Oeuvres, XXII, 222.
Virtue is not above of and a desire to help all mankind, but an obedience to laws devised by man; the intellect must therefore intervene here. Nevertheless, although a difference in the conception of virtue is inevitable in view of the difference in civil laws, certain fundamental laws exist everywhere and are based on a number of principles in man, whatever his origins:

... il (Dieu) a donné à l'homme certains sentiments dont il ne peut jamais se défaire et qui sont les liens éternels et les premières lois de la société dans laquelle il a prévu que les hommes vivaient. La bienveillance pour notre espèce est née, par exemple, avec nous, et agit toujours en nous, à moins qu'elle ne soit combattue par l'amour-propre, qui doit toujours l'emporter sur elle. (XXII, 226).

That which determines the framework within which society operates is therefore man's natural feeling for others. In the Discours en vers sur l'homme such a feeling is far more than a basis for civil laws; it is the driving force behind all man's moral actions. Man having been commanded to love his fellows, Voltaire designates as virtuous the man who adheres to this most fundamental of all obligations:

Les miracles sont bons; mais soulager son frère,
Mais tirer son ami du sein de la misère,
Mais à ses ennemis pardonner leurs vertus,
C'est un plus grand miracle, et qui ne se fait plus. 42

The "honnête homme indolent" who lives oblivious of good and evil, pre-occupied only with his own pleasure, cannot be termed "virtueux":

Non; je donne ce titre au cœur tendre et sublime
Qui soutient hardiment son ami qu'on opprime. 42

The belief that man is naturally good finds increasing acceptance in these years of the century. In his Réflexions

42 Œuvres, IX, 423.
sur l'esprit et le cœur (1736), Charost too asserts that man has inherent moral qualities and that these are located in the affective part of his being. In examining the processes of the heart, he suggests that its unique function is to react to objects and people and to form a judgment on them; to feel and to judge are indeed one and the same:

Il juge le bon, le vrai, le délicat, mais il le juge par sentiment. Sentir le délicat, c'est juger le délicat, est pour le cœur l'opération du même instant, pour ne pas dire la même opération. On peut donc réduire au sentiment seul les opérations du cœur.

Like Abbadie, Charost holds that the spontaneous feeling aroused in the heart by impressions made upon it is more reliable than any evidence of the intellect:

Cet instinct qui conduit notre cœur, est un guide infiniment plus sûr, que les lumières qui éclairent l'esprit (p. 288).

It is doubtless for this reason that he believes impulses of the "heart" to be so important in man's relations with his fellows, to the extent indeed that human intercourse is almost impossible without them:

... les qualités du cœur sont essentielles à la douceur & à la sûreté de la société, bonnes & utiles dans le commerce des hommes ... (p. 285).

Added to this, man is born, for Charost, with a moral sense, which produces a feeling of grief at the sight of suffering and one of indignation at that of vice rewarded:

Nous naîssons tous avec un fonds de probité, avec un caractère de justice, si profondément gravé au fond du cœur, qu'il est ineffaçable. (p. 288).
It is impossible to do justice to all the books on psychology and morals which appeared in the first half of the eighteenth century. No mention has been made, for example, of the English philosophers, of Shaftesbury in particular and his theory of natural affection propounded in *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711). It has been decided here to concentrate on a relatively small number of works in order to analyse both a current of thought and, more especially, the terminology which it requires. It can be seen that in France the terms "sensibilité" and "sentiment", central to the new movement, have a moral and intellectual quality. Even if the word "sensibilité" is not always used to denote the source of man's moral notions, a significant group of writers nevertheless maintain that only a capacity for feeling can ensure the sincerity of man's dealings with his fellows. The difference between the psychologists whom we have considered and the moralists is that whereas Abbé de Saint-Félicien or Gamaches advance this idea after an examination of man and his "amour de soi", the moral and political philosophers expound the notion that a feeling for others is inherent and given to man by nature. This belief is therefore the premise and not the conclusion of their argument. Whatever the approach adopted, the systems and theories which we have studied create a climate of ideas which cannot be ignored as an influence on works of literature.
CHAPTER FOUR

Family relationships in the comedy of the first half of the eighteenth century

The comedy of the first half of the eighteenth century invariably takes place in a family setting, revolving usually around a relationship between a parent and son or daughter. Traditionally these characters are at loggerheads and it is normally from their antagonism that the principal action of the play derives. This convention goes back to classical drama, is adopted, in France, in the theatre of the Renaissance and then becomes a feature of much seventeenth-century comedy. Here, the characters of parent and son or daughter find themselves at odds in the first place because of the very bond between them, attitudes widespread in society no doubt making acceptable the situation on the stage. In addition, as was the case in several Greek or Roman comedies, the parent frequently forbids a son's or a daughter's choice of marriage partner, this indeed being the starting point of the plot. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for the conflict to be

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1Pierre de Larivey's Les Esprits, first published in 1579, for example, relies on the antagonism between a miserly father and his children, while in Odet de Turnèbe's Les Contens, published in 1584, the impetus to the action comes from a disagreement between Louyse and Genevieve, the former attempting to separate her daughter from her lover.

2As Valère says of the difficulty in befriending both father and son in Molière's L'Avarce (1668): "On ne peut pas ménager l'un et l'autre; et l'esprit du père et celui du fils sont des choses si opposées, qu'il est difficile d'accommoder ces deux confidences ensemble" (Act I, scene I).
aggravated by the discovery that father and son love the same woman.  

Family relationships are similar in the "comédie de mœurs" at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century. Father and daughter are in opposition over the choice of a husband for the latter in Regnard's *Les Ménechmes* (1705), for example, and in his *Le Légataire universel* (1708) there is a lack of affection and much cynicism in the relationship between uncle and nephew in what is a painful situation. The pattern persists in the old style comedy until 1719 and Dufresny's *La Réconciliation normande*. Here the most important members of the family, a brother and sister, share an unequivocal dislike for each other, the intrigue depends on the attempts of one to score a victory over the other and the ending is totally without harmony or reconciliation between them.

The traditional antipathy is still a feature of the new eighteenth-century comedy of such dramatists as Destouches and

3 One thinks immediately once again of *L'Avaré*. But in Donneau de Visé's *La Mère coquette* (1665), Arimant and his father Géronte are rivals for the love of Bélamire; in addition a mother and daughter, Lucinde and Bélamire, are in love with the same man, namely Arimant.

4 The plot revolves around Ergaste's attempts to trick the dying Géronte into leaving him his entire fortune.

5 The Marquise says to the Comte, for example: "Ma niece aura celui qui plus vous déplaira" (Act II, scene VI), and the Comte later remarks: "Traverser son amour, ah! quel plaisir pour moi! Ma sœur à cinquante ans devenir amoureuse! Oh! je m'en vengerai" (Act V, scene II).

The very title of the play indicates of course that there can be no question of sympathy between these two characters; as the servant Falaise observes: "Se réconcilier, veut dire en Normandie;/ Se le donner plus beau pour vexer l'ennemi" (Act III, scene VIII).
Nivelle de la Chaussée. In Destouches's *L'Ingrat* (1712), for instance, the plot is prepared in terms of a dispute between the characters of father and daughter, Géronte's attitude resembling that of, say, Arnolphe towards Agnès, or Démophon towards Isabelle in *Les Ménagères*. In the same dramatist's *Le Médisant* (1715), the choice of a husband has again been made for a daughter, in this case by the Baronne, who brushes aside the notion that Marianne might be allowed some freedom in the matter. Similarly, in Voltaire's *L'Enfant prodigue* (1736), there is the familiar clash of wills between Lise and her father Rondon, who, in language strongly reminiscent of Arnolphe's, upholds his right to control his daughter and marry her off to suit himself.\(^6\) In his *L'Obstacle imprévu* (1717), Destouches has created a relationship between the characters of father and son where Lisimon disapproves of Valère's way of life. In addition, like Cléante and Harpagon, both wish to marry the same woman, or rather, such is Valère's sense of outrage on hearing of his father's intention to marry a young girl, that he decides to ask for her hand himself, his sole motive being one of spite.

Piron's *L'Ecole des pères* (1728), contains a highly unusual situation of a father's feeling for his sons changing from affection to hatred. Géronte is prepared to give up the woman he loves in favour of a man more likely to attract her, namely one of his sons. His concern for them is not

\(^6\) Compare, for example, Arnolphe's words in *L'Ecole des femmes*: "Comme un morceau de cire entre mes mains elle est, / Et je lui puis donner la forme qui me plait" (Act III, scene III), those of Démophon in *Les Ménagères*: "Et, de plus, Isabelle est une cire molle/ Que je forme et pétris comme il me prend plaisir" (Act III, scene II) and those of Rondon in Voltaire's play: "A mon plaisir j'ai pétris sa jeune âme" (Act I, scene I).
reciprocated, however, and the callousness in them which he cannot ignore eventually transforms him, with the result that a mutual hostility is at the heart of their dealings on stage.

Other relationships of authority are also characterised by a lack of sympathy. In Campistron's Le Jaloux désabusé (1709), for instance, Dorante steadfastly refuses his consent to his sister's marriage with Clitandre, a stand which provides the impetus for the action of the play, as the rest of the characters unite to force him to change his mind. In Destouches's L'Homme singulier, Sanspair maintains it to be his right to decide on a husband for his sister, Julie. Antagonism of a slightly different kind occurs between the characters of aunt and niece in Nivelle de la Chaussée's La Fausse Antipathie (1733), where jealousy and not disagreement over a marriage partner underlies the relationship between Orphise and Léonore. With the same playwright's Le Préjugé à la mode (1735), we have a clash between the characters of uncle and niece, the opposition being intensified, because Argante is presumably acting as a kind of guardian to Sophie. In this instance the conflict arises over the very subject of marriage itself, a state which Sophie declares herself reluctant to enter.

All these relationships produce a discordant atmosphere in the plays we have mentioned and none of them, moreover,

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7 This play was originally intended for performance in 1744; it was withdrawn from rehearsal at the last minute by Destouches and published instead in the 1745 edition of his works. It was first performed in Paris in 1764. In subsequent chapters the date of 1745 will be given for this play.
undergoes any modification. If a character in authority does yield, thus contributing to the possibility of a satisfactory outcome to the action, it is more often than not through sheer self-interest, or because he has been defeated by the rest. Any reversal in the situation is due, in other words, to external circumstances rather than to a real change of heart or to a reappraisal of a relationship. The old ideas, hardened on occasion into cynicism, still persist, as this remark made towards the end of the first half of the century illustrates: "C'est pour le peuple enfin que sont faits les parents."\(^8\)

Attitudes on the stage continue to reflect the state of affairs in society, just as dramatic technique produces situations similar to those portrayed in studies of contemporary manners. There can surely be few better descriptions of the lack of affection in many families of the time than this one by Hippolyte Taine:

> Il y a d'abord la tradition aristocratique qui, entre les parents et les enfants, met une barrière pour mettre une distance. Quoique affaiblie et en voie de disparaitre, cette tradition subsiste ... d'ordinaire, en présence des parents, les enfants sont muets, et le sentiment habituel qui les pénètre est la déférence craintive.\(^9\)

We have noted on the other hand, however, when discussing the character of Géronte in Piron's *L'Ecole des pères*, that a different relationship between parent and child might obtain, were the father's affection to be returned. Even earlier than

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\(^8\) This statement is uttered by Cléon in Gresset's *Le Méchant* (1747), Act II, scene III.

this, in Dufresny's La Réconciliation normande, Angélique had cried out against hatred between members of the same family, thus suggesting that feelings of another kind could exist:

Comment peut-on hair? Hélas! quelle folie
De se remplir le cœur de fiel & de venin!
Il n'est pas naturel de hair. Car enfin,
On se fait plus de mal que l'on n'en fait aux autres.
Des parens se hair! (Act I, scene II).

These sentiments had already begun to find expression in certain works of political and moral philosophy. Pufendorf, for example, is among those who make stipulations regarding family relationships, his approach here being closely linked to his theory of Natural Law. As this law demands that man live sociably with his fellows, so it demands, on a smaller scale, that he live in harmony with the members of his family. To make this possible, Pufendorf suggests, nature has inspired all parents, in the first place, with love for their offspring:

La Loi Naturelle, par cela même qu'elle prescrit la Sociabilité, ordonne aux Pères & aux Mères d'avoir soin de leurs Enfans, sans quoi la Société ne saurait absolument subsister: & même, pour les engager plus fortement à la pratique d'un devoir si nécessaire, la Nature leur a inspiré une tendresse extrême pour ces fruits de leur union.

This regard is reciprocated by the child, who, even after he has left home, still has "des sentiments d'affection & de respect" (p. 305) for his parents.

There is thus a kind of contract between parent and child. The former has a duty within the family to feed and

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educate the child and to aid him subsequently in the choice of a profession. The latter has no less of an obligation to honour his parents, not only because they are his superiors, but because they have provided for him:

Les Enfans, de leur côté, sont tenus d'honorer leur Père & leur Mère, non seulement par des démonstrations extérieures de respect, mais beaucoup plus encore par des sentiments intérieurs de vénération, comme ceux de qui ils tiennent le jour, & à qui ils ont d'ailleurs de si grandes obligations. (p. 307).

Inherent in this moral philosophy, therefore, is a notion that the duty imposed by Natural Law on both parents and child is perceived by the intellect. Pufendorf lays some stress on the fact that mutual consideration is essential for the preservation of society. In referring to the "tendresse extrême" of parents and the "sentiments intérieurs de vénération" felt by the child, however, he is implying that their relationship is also based on reciprocal feelings of affection and that fundamental bonds of love unite them.

Lordelot, in a conduct book entitled Les Devoirs de la vie domestique, adopts a similar approach. He speaks in the first instance, for example, in terms of all parents' obligation towards their children:

Le premier & principal devoir des peres & mères, est de travailler sans cesse à la bonne éducation de leurs enfans.

Like Pufendorf, he believes that part at least of a child's attitude towards his parents is founded on a realisation of the care which he has been given. As a result, an understanding, by the intellect informs the relationship of parent and

child, but Lordelot suggests that the ties within a family are not characterised by this one element alone. The unfavourable comparison he draws between man and the animals is an indication of this:

Voilà une grande humiliation pour l'homme, de voir que les animaux ... soient souvent plus sages que lui, & que les soins qu'ils prennent pour élever leurs productions, lui servent de modèle pour ranimer dans son cœur l'amour & la tendresse qu'il doit avoir pour ses enfants. (pp. 39-40).

In the same vein, he attacks the majority of mothers for their neglect of their children:

Voilà un modèle bien sensible pour vous, meres barbares & cruelles, qui dans la crainte d'avoir un trop grand nombre d'enfans, passés le tems de vos grossesses à pleurer & gémir ... (p. 40).

These are appeals directed to the emotions of parents in an attempt to arouse their feelings for their offspring. Similarly the gratitude which he believes to form the basis of a child's regard for his parents contains an affective as well as a rational element. Discussing all that a child owes his parents, Lordelot concludes:

... il n'y a que des cœurs durs & dénaturérez qui ne ressentent pas interieurement cette reconnaissance. (p. 50).

Lemaître de Claville also believes that the notion of duty is instilled in all men by a kind of external force, in this case nature and religion:

La Nature de concert avec la Religion exige de nous tout le respect, toute la tendresse & toute la reconnaissance dont nous sommes capables envers nos peres & nos meres; nous devons toute notre attention à l'éducation & à l'établissement de nos enfans ...

There is a suggestion in these words, however, that a kind of sympathy exists between parent and child and indeed Lemaître de Claville paints an idyllic picture of the harmony which may be found in a household where all parties fulfill their obligations:

Dans les familles ... où la vertu & le mérite paraissent comme éternellement substitués, & passent sans s'alterer de génération en génération, quelle source de volupté ne produit pas l'accomplissement des devoirs du père à l'égard du fils, du fils à l'égard du père! Quel charme pour un bon père de voir son fils tendrement aimé répondre toujours respectueusement, toujours tendrement à ses bontés, de le voir par un excellent caractère faire honneur à sa famille & à sa patrie!

De toutes parts ce ne sont que tendres soins, qu'empressements: on voit succéder tour à tour le plaisir, le travail & l'étude. Je me trompe; tout est plaisir.
Tous les cœurs ne sont qu'un cœur ...

(II, 191-93).

In common with Pufendorf and Lordelot, therefore, Lemaître de Claville has moved from a conception of family ties based on an appreciation of duty to one in which they have their source in the affective side of man's nature.

In quite a different context, the works of Mme de Lambert reveal that affection between parents and children could exist in the eighteenth century. It is evident, for example, in the advice she gives to her son and daughter; it is clear also in an explicit statement to her son:

Je ne veux point de respect forcé; je ne veux que des soins du cœur. Que vos sentiments viennent à moi, sans que vos intérêts les amènent.

13 A.-Th. de Marguenat de Courcelles, marquise de Lambert, Avis d'une Mère À son Fils (1726), Œuvres de Madame la Marquise de Lambert (Lausanne, 1747), p. 17.
Some moral theorists in the first half of the eighteenth century thus combine with a discussion of man's nature and his relations with his fellows in the widest sense, a consideration of more specific human relationships, of the very relationships indeed on which the comedy has traditionally been based. We have noticed that antipathy exists in the new comedy and that where it disappears this is due not to sympathy or affection between the protagonists, but to force of circumstance. Quite a different reason, however, for the reversal of the old situation occurs early in the century in Boursault's *Esope à la cour* (1701).

Episodic in structure, the play revolves around a series of only loosely connected scenes in which Esope is asked for advice by a number of different characters. In Act III, Léonide, a mother shunned by her daughter, appeals to him for help. To Rhodope subsequently Esope recites a fable, which has the immediate effect of producing a change of heart in the daughter:

Faites, au nom des Dieux, qu'on me rende ma Mère;
Plus elle est malheureuse & plus elle m’est chère;
Je veux souffrir sa peine, ou me faire un honneur
De lui voir avec moi partager mon bonheur.
Calmez l'émotion où me met votre Fable.

*** il n'est pas croyable, à vous parler sans fard,
Qu'un Enfant pour sa Mère ait eu si peu d'égard.

(Act III, scene IX).

There is no evidence of the capacity for feeling manifest in
this remorse earlier in the play, when Rhodope had appeared proud and inflexible. Yet the tears she sheds are the expression of genuine shame, and her assertion in this scene that she has "trahi la nature /.../ Et fait taire le sang qui coule dans (ses) veines," appears to imply that love for her mother had always existed and had been deliberately repressed. She is not therefore experiencing a sudden, unknown emotion, but a rebirth of forgotten feeling. It is this which alters the situation. Léonide, whose affection for Rhodope had withstood scorn and arrogance, responds instinctively to the latter's new attitude and a reconciliation is thus effected between the characters of mother and daughter:

LÉONIDE (À part)
Ce que j'entends me perce les entrailles,
Mon cœur est pénétré des plus sensibles coups.

(Haut)
Venez ma chère Fille......

RHODOPE
Eh! ma Mère, est-ce vous?
Après ce que j'ai fait puis-je vous être chère?
Et reconnaîssez-vous qui méconnoît sa Mère?

(Act III, scene X).

Esope confirms this new relationship with: "Ayez pour votre fille une tendresse extrême" and "Et vous à l'avenir soumise à son aspect, / Ayez pour votre Mère un extrême respect," spoken to Léonide and Rhodope in turn.

In this short episode we have witnessed, firstly, a dramatist's desire to create characters with a certain "sensibilité"; the transformation in Rhodope stems from the affective side of her being only and Léonide, too, is entirely motivated by promptings of the heart. Indeed, the words: "Mon cœur est

14Léonide has overheard some of the previous scene between Esope and Rhodope.
pénétré des plus sensibles coups" make this clear, her expression "sensibles coups" especially conveying to what extent she can be moved by affection in another character. We see in the second place that feelings of this kind can bring about a change in what had previously been a familiar family relationship, founded, for one protagonist at least, on antipathy, since at the end of Act III harmony has been established between mother and daughter. Furthermore, it is treated seriously by the characters involved and is consequently intended, it would seem, to give pleasure to and invite the approval of the audience.

In Baron's _L'Andrienne_ (1703), an adaptation of Terence's _Andria_, there is the traditional conflict at the outset between the characters of father and son, Simon having decided that Pamphile shall marry the daughter of an old friend. This opposition, which provides a framework for the whole play, reaches a climax in Act V, when Simon, having heard that his son is secretly married, confronts him with this fact:

_S'excuse-t-il enfin? Voit-on sur son visage_  
_D'un léger repentir le moindre témoignage?_  
_Malgré les loix, les mœurs, contre ma volonté,_  
_Il aura l'insolence & la témérité_  
_D'épouser avec honte une femme étrangère?_  

(Act V, scene V).

To this Pamphile responds with an appeal that Simon hear the evidence of a stranger about his wife's birth and status. This appeal, which would have been rejected immediately in seventeenth-century comedy, arousing even greater anger, is heeded, Simon is persuaded to yield to Pamphile and a new effect is produced.

This change in Simon is perhaps not entirely surprising:
at the beginning of the play, for example, he had shown a certain capacity for feeling, particularly in his sympathy for Glicerie's sister:

Tout ce qu'on m'en disoit, me perçoit jusqu'au cœur;
Et je cherchois déjà comment je pourrois faire,
Pour soulager sous mains l'excès de sa misère. 15
(Act I, scene I).

In addition, he has an appreciation of Pamphile's good qualities, including his suffering on Chrysis's death:

J'aperçois qu'il tomboit des larmes de ses yeux;
Je trouvois cela bon, & disois en mon âme;
Il pleure, & ne connoit qu'à-peine cette femme;
S'il l'aimoit, qu'eût-il fait en un pareil malheur?
Et si je mourois moi, que ferait sa douleur?
(Act I, scene I).

In this opening scene Pamphile is presented as a man of feeling and so too, by implication, is Simon. Certainly his words betray an affection for Pamphile which his later authoritarianism tends to obscure. Reconciliation between the characters of father and son can thus be explained; above all, it introduces a note of seriousness into the play and produces a conclusion of sympathy.

The most intriguing question here perhaps is why Baron elected to adapt this particular play. He follows the original closely on the whole, the only major alteration being that Glicerie is ill and not pregnant in his version, a necessary change for an eighteenth-century audience at the Comédie-Glycérie is Pamphile's wife and Chrysis her sister; Simon is referring in Act I, scene I to Pamphile's behaviour at the funeral of Chrysis.

15 Glicerie is Pamphile's wife and Chrysis her sister; Simon is referring in Act I, scene I to Pamphile's behaviour at the funeral of Chrysis.
Française. He uses the mixture of affection and antagonism which characterises the relationship of father and son in the Latin comedy and sees no reason to modify the emphasis of Simon's speeches in the scene of exposition. We may perhaps conclude, therefore, that he approves of the potential sympathy between father and son and is inviting his audience to share his attitude.

In these two plays there is potential for a new kind of family relationship at a time when the satirical "comédie de mœurs" is still popular and the old tradition still strong. The particular feature which we have observed, namely an attitude of antipathy turning to one of sympathy, is a significant element of several new comedies, one of the first of them being Destouches's *La Philosophe marié* (1727). Here we have a conflict between uncle and nephew; while Ariste shows a degree of respect for Géronte, he, on the other hand, is irascible and unapproachable, oblivious of family ties and prone to issuing the kind of ultimatum frequent in the comedy:

LISIMON
Mon frère, nous parlions de notre mariage.

GÉRONTE
A demain, mon neveu; sinon déshérité.

ARISTE
Mais différez du moins ....

GÉRONTE
Le sort en est jeté.
(Act IV, scene III).

Nevertheless, when, in the final act, an appeal is made to him by Ariste's wife, quite another side of his nature asserts itself:

MÉLITE
Confirmez mon bonheur. Pour l'obtenir de vous, Je ne rougirai point d'embrasser vos genoux.
Mais si je presse en vain, si votre aigreur subsiste,
Je ne veux point causer l'infortune d'Ariste,
En brisant nos liens, rendez-lui votre cœur;
Un couvent cachera ma honte et ma douleur.

GÉRONTÉ, attendri
Qui pourroit résister à sa voix de Syrène?
Ma nièce, lovez-vous.  (Act V, scene IX).

This change is completely unprepared. Throughout the play, as we have suggested, Géronte seems insensitive. The implication in this scene, however, is presumably that he had been repressing a disposition of a different sort, which Népite's self-sacrifice and her reminder of what family relationships ought to be, bring into being again. As far as its structure is concerned, the transformation in Géronte furnishes the play with a "dénouement" in which all the protagonists can be united and a spirit of understanding can reign.

There is a relationship between father and son which changes from antipathy to sympathy in Destouches's Le Glorieux (1732). Although Lycandre might appear to have some feeling for his son, he is nonetheless angered by the Comte's selfishness and arrogance, with the result that a certain tension exists between the two characters, aggravated by the Comte's refusal to admit openly their true relationship. This situation is modified, however, with ultimate humiliation of the

16 He refers to Lisimon, his brother, for instance, as: "Mon vieux fou de frère!" in Act III, scene XII and his greeting in the following scene is: " Eh bien! que voulez-vous?" Lisimon himself emphasises this lack of feeling in Géronte when observing of his own pleasure in having Ariste as a prop in his old age: "Sentiments inconnus à votre mauvais cœur" (Act III, scene XIII).

17 Witness this exchange in Act IV, scene VII: "Le Comte. Pour mon intérêt même évitons un éclat./ Lycandre. Vous me faites pitié. Je vois votre faiblesse,/ Et veux, en m'y prêtant, vous prouver ma tendresse ..."
latter at the end of the play:

   Eh bien! vous le voulez; rendez-moi méprisable.
   Jouissez du plaisir de me voir si confus.
   Mon cœur, tout fier qu'il est, ne vous méconnoit plus.
   Oui, je suis votre fils, et vous êtes mon père.
   Rendez votre tendresse à ce retour sincère.
   (Act V, scene VI).

The Comte has thus been forced to confess that he is Lycandre's son, but this speech is also an offer of affection and appeal for that of a father in return and it establishes the possibility of a reconciliation. In the original version of this play, the Comte remained unmoved by the strictures of Lycandre and was punished for his pride, losing Isabelle to his rival. It would seem that Quinault-Dufresne, for whom the part was intended, refused to accept it unless the character of the Comte was changed in the fifth act by Destouches. There is little in the preceding action to prepare an audience for any alteration in the Comte, but the dramatist adopts the technique of suggesting that he had always possessed a capacity for feeling and that it had been replaced for a time by something else. The Comte had himself spoken of a "retour sincère," for example, and Lycandre adds to this: "Mais, malgré votre orgueil, la nature a parlé." It is certainly in the affective side of his being that the response to Lycandre originates; the latter in fact admits: "En sondant votre cœur, j'ai frémi, j'ai tremblé," and, as we have seen, the Comte refers to the change taking place within him with the words: "Mon cœur, tout fier qu'il est, ne vous méconnoit plus."

It is interesting to note that in this play it is the son and not the parent who is the unreasonable character whose obsession has to be destroyed. The transformation, which is swift and complete, eventually produces a harmony between all the major protagonists. Moreover, considerable weight is now attached by the dramatist to the new attitude in the Comte: discussion and analysis of it are a significant feature of the last scene of Act V, so that we can assume him to be placing some insistence on the desirability of the change which has occurred.

We may suspect Destouches of employing a convenient device in this play in order to solve a practical problem. He uses the same technique again, however, in La Fausse Agnès. Here the action is prepared in terms of the opposition between mother and daughter, whose antagonism is apparent from the beginning of the play:

There is a relationship between father and son which changes from antipathy to sympathy in Poisson's one-act play L'Impromptu de campagne (1733). On his father's arrival in the last scene, Eraste throws himself at Damis's feet and the latter yields: "Je veux bien oublier/ Tout le passé, mon fils, & nous réconcilier" (Scene derniere). This response is unnecessary as far as the plot is concerned, as it transpires that father and son had in fact chosen the same woman as a wife for Eraste. It would seem, therefore, to be a significant gesture from one character to another and evidence of a desire for affection.

The date of composition of this play is uncertain, but would seem to be 1726. See, for example, A. Bürner, "Philippe Néricault-Destouches (1630-1754): Essai de biographie," Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, 38 (1931), 70-71; J. Hankiss, Philippe Néricault Destouches: L'Homme et l'œuvre (Sébreczen, 1920), p. 135.

The play was published in 1736 and first performed in Paris in 1739. In subsequent chapters the date of 1736 will be given for this play.
... la tendresse que j'ai lieu d'attendre de vous doit vous inspirer la bonté d'entrer un peu dans mes sentiments.

Et le respect doit vous faire céder aux miens.

C'est dans celle-ci précisément, que j'exige de vous une parfaite obéissance.

Vous mourrez, dites-vous, si je n'épouse ce soir monsieur des Mazures; et moi, je mourrai si je l'épouse.

Eh! non, non, vous n'en mourrez pas.

(Act I, scene III).

The ensuing action, devised by Angélique to rid herself of her mother's choice, is fast-moving and witty, full of mockery of the pretentious des Mazures, with satisfaction for the audience in that the Baronne is being duped by Angélique and her lover Léandre. Yet, when it seems that Angélique has become deranged because of her mother's decision, the Baronne is suddenly filled with remorse:

Ah! quel égarement! Ma chère fille, ouvre les yeux, reconnais ta mère. L'état où je te vois ranime toute l'attendresse que j'ai eue pour toi. Malheureuse que je suis! C'est moi qui ai causé son extravagance.

(Act III, scene XIII).

We notice here not only the move from the "vous" to the "tu" form, an indication of affection for Angélique, but the Baronne's use of the word "ranime," which suggests that in fact her tenderness has been reborn. Such a feeling cannot be created from nothing; on the contrary, the dramatist implies that it had always existed and had merely been suppressed.
This is significant in itself, but, in addition, the rediscovery of a former feeling coupled with Angélique's readiness to respond to her mother's repentance, in spite of the latter's previously authoritarian spirit, radically affect the play in two ways. In the first place there is a new tone. A certain comic element remains, it is true, with the Baronne's realisation that Léandre has been masquerading as her gardener, a character for whom she had had a decided partiality. Once a change of heart has been experienced, however, she ceases on the whole to be comic and the new sympathy between herself and Angélique introduces into a play which had often been very funny a more serious note.

Secondly, the rebirth of affection removes all possibility of dramatic conflict and brings about a different kind of ending to the play from the one we might have expected: even with Angélique's admission that she has feigned madness in order to avoid marriage with des Mazures, the Baronne acts on her new feeling for Angélique and allows her to marry Léandre:

ANGÉLIQUE
Blâmez-moi, punissez-moi, je souffrirai tout sans me plaindre. Trop heureuse si ma soumission vous touche, et vous engage à combler mes vœux.

LA BARONNE
Et moi, trop heureuse de n'avoir eu qu'une fausse alarme sur votre sujet; je vous confirme la parole que je vous ai donnée de ne me plus opposer à vos inclinations. (Act III, scene XIV).

The solution to this play therefore derives not from a fortuitous event which saves the situation, but from the transformation in the relationship between the characters of mother and daughter.
In Voltaire's L'Enfant prodigue (1736) the family relationship central to the play is that of Euphémon père and Euphémon fils; that between Euphémon père and his second son Fierenfat receives scant attention, while the antipathy between Lise and Rondon is not exploited after the end of Act II. At the beginning of the play, Euphémon père has disowned his son, but his bitterness conceals feelings of another kind, revealed in these words spoken when he believes his son to be dead:

Dans ces moments un père est toujours père: 
Ses attenats et toutes ses erreurs 
Furent toujours le sujet de mes pleurs; 
Et ce qui pèse à mon âme attendrie, 
C'est qu'il est mort sans réparer sa vie. 
(Act II, scene VI).

Voltaire has also created in Euphémon fils a character of understanding and sensitivity. This is his reaction, for example, on catching sight of his father for the first time:

Ah! que mon cœur palpait à sa vue! 
Qu'il lui portait ses vœux humiliés! 
Que j'étais prêt de tomber à ses pieds! 
(Act III, scene V).

This is not a sudden birth of feeling; Euphémon had once been in love with Lise and is seen to despair on learning that she is to marry Fierenfat. Marthe, Lise's confidante, also recalls that he had never been entirely bad:

Même dans ces mélanges 
D'égarements, de sottises étranges, 
On découvrait aisément dans son cœur, 
Sous ces défauts, un certain fonds d'honneur. 
(Act I, scene III).

On seeing his son again, without in fact realising his identity, he says: "Il a l'air noble, et même certains traits/ Qui m'ont touché: las! je ne vois jamais/ De malheureux à peu près de cet âge,/ Que de mon fils la douloureuse image/ Ne vienne alors, par un retour cruel,/ Persécuter ce cœur trop paternel" (Act III, scene III).
Euphémon's affection for his father is therefore not surprising; further, it is deliberately exploited by the dramatist to provide a conclusion to the play. A perfectly satisfactory outcome, of the kind common in traditional comedy, could of course have been found in the reunion and marriage of Euphémon fils and Lise; Voltaire includes in his ending, however, a reconciliation between the characters of father and son, thus introducing a more serious mood into the play, but establishing a sympathy between the major protagonists:

EUPHÉMON FILS
De quels transports votre âme est-elle émue?
Est-ce la haine? Et ce fils condamné ...

EUPHÉMON PERE,
se levant et l'embrassant
C'est la tendresse, et tout est pardonné
Si la vertu règne enfin dans ton âme:
Je suis ton père.
(Act V, scene VI).

In La Gouvernante (1747) by Nivelle de la Chaussée, a certain tension exists between the characters of father and son, arising out of Sainville's refusal to obey his father's order to marry a rich woman. There is nevertheless an affection underlying their relationship: the Président is overjoyed, for example, when Sainville proposes to a problem occupying his father the same solution as he would himself have found and Sainville responds in this way:

Ah! grands Dieux! Que ma source m'est chère!
Que je suis enchanté de vous avoir pour père!
(II l'embrasse.)
Pardonnez ces transports à mon cœur éperdu.
(Act III, scene V).

It is hardly surprising, therefore, in view of this sentiment and the language in which it is couched, that with the discovery of the true identity of the woman Sainville loves, all antipathy should disappear between them.
It would seem that with this type of relationship we are witnessing an influence on the comedy of a transformation in outlook. If it is now desirable and praiseworthy to show a capacity for feeling, one of the most obvious ways for a dramatist to bring this out on the stage is to have characters display affection for members of their family. It seems difficult otherwise to account for the relationships we have discussed, which change in a way which the traditional comedy would not have deemed necessary: indeed in a great majority of cases reconciliation would be inconceivable, demanding as it does remorse on the part of the character behaving in an "unreasonable" way. The very nature of a Molière comedy, for instance, rules this out. More striking still, the new sympathy between members of a family provides the happy conclusion to the action: once again, classical comedy would have resolved a seemingly impossible situation quite differently, making use of chance or a "deus ex machina".

The new comedy also contains another kind of relationship which may owe something to the emergence of new attitudes, and that is one of sympathy between members of a family from the very start of the play. In this case the dramatist often presents us with observations about the ideal nature of the bonds between parent and child and then causes them to be put into practice, so that a capacity for feeling is seen in a character's behaviour. This is so, for instance, in Destouches's L'Irrésolu (1713). In the debate which opens the play, Pyrante outlines to Lisimon, a father of the traditional kind, his attitude to and treatment of his son:
Moi, je cherche son goût; il se conforme au mien.
Mon fils est mon ami, comme je suis le sien.

(Act I, scene I).

It is true that the friendship between father and son was achieved as a result of strict upbringing by Pyrante and a degree of rational argument; but it is clear in his claim to have "formé son cœur ..." that the affective side of Dorante's nature was not neglected and that a real sympathy exists between these two characters. Furthermore it seems that Destouches approves of this new relationship. A balance is provided to it by Lisimon's dismissive reaction to the statement quoted above: "Son cœur! Le beau langage!" and by his attitude to his own son, the Chevalier, which is what one would expect in the comedy. Lisimon's mockery of Pyrante's ideas might indeed be justified, as they explain, at least in part, Dorante's irresolution, a trait which makes of him the major comic character in the play. It is only this inability to make a decision which is ridiculed, however, and Destouches intended that Dorante should also be capable of arousing our compassion. It thus seems probable that the dramatist was not condemning the new attitude in parent and son. Further indications of this are firstly the fact that the Chevalier, a cynical manipulator, guided entirely by self-interest, is portrayed as being rather less likeable than Dorante, and secondly Lisimon's unwitting condemnation of his own approach.

In the preface to the play Destouches refers to Dorante as "un galant homme, qui n'a d'autre défaut que l'irrésolution, et qui, loin d'être méprisable, peut mériter d'être plaint" (Œuvres, I, 252).
to the problem. In spite of certain reservations, therefore, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the sympathy between father and son outlined at the beginning of the play is regarded as admirable and praiseworthy.

In Boissy's *Le François à Londres* (1727) there is something of the same kind of relationship between father and daughter. It seems probable initially that Milord Craff and Eliante will find themselves in conflict: the former has chosen for his daughter a man she despises and a satisfactory outcome is reached only because Milord Craff meets and changes his mind about his original choice. It is possible that a mutual affection could have solved the problem, however, for there is a suggestion from the outset that such a feeling exists between the characters; these are Eliante's words, for example, on learning of her father's decision:

Ma grande jeunesse, la tendresse que mon père m'a toujours témoignée, le bien même que je dois en attendre, ne me permettent pas de me soustraire à son obéissance. (Scene V).

If there is an element of self-interest here in Eliante's attitude to Milord Craff, a more genuine regard is revealed later, with her insistence that her brother invite their father to a dinner he is arranging, and, more important, her determination to follow Milord Craff's wishes, thus ensuring a spirit of harmony at the close of the play:

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23 Of his treatment of his sons he says: "Non fils aîné Clitandre/ Voulôit être d'épée; et, loin d'y condescendre,/ J'ai voulu qu'il portât la robe et le rabat./.../ Le second de mes fils n'est qu'une franche idole,/.../ J'en ai fait un abbé./ On m'a parlé pour lui, je n'ai point succombé./ Quand j'ai pris un parti, rien ne peut m'en distraire;/ Lorsqu'on est d'un avis, j'en prends un tout contraire" (Act I, scene I).
LE BARON à Eliante
Eh bien, Madame, êtes-vous déterminée?

ELIANTE
Oui, à suivre en tout les volontés de mon père. Ainsi, Monsieur, si vous voulez m'obtenir, c'est à lui qu'il faut s'adresser. (Scene XXI).

The pattern of contrast between two sets of protagonists already used by Destouches is to be seen again in his Le Philosophe marié, where the dislike of uncle and nephew and of the brothers Lisimon and Géronte is offset by the sympathy between the characters of father and son. This is immediately apparent in their first encounter on stage at the end of Act III, and one more here, in Act IV, when Lisimon accuses Ariste of annoyance at his return:

LISIMON
Si vous êtes fâché de me voir de retour,
Je suis prêt à partir avant la fin du jour.

ARISTE
Moi, fâché de vous voir! O ciel! quelle injustice!
Avoir un tel soupçon, c'est me mettre au supplice.
Que j'expire à vos yeux, s'il est plaisir pour moi
Plus grand que le plaisir que j'ai quand je vous vois.

(Act IV, scene II).

We have seen that a lack of family feeling in Géronte is directly attributed, by Lisimon, to a "mauvais cœur." Father and son, on the other hand, are drawn together by the opposite quality; this is how Lisimon reproaches Ariste for withholding his confidence, for example:

Pourquoi me parler à demi?
Suis-je pas votre père, et, de plus, votre ami?
Oui, votre ami, mon fils; et j'ai bien lieu de l'être

24 See page 131 above.
D'un fils dont le bon cœur s'est si bien fait connoître; 
D'un fils de qui l'amour, de qui les tendres soins 
Ont depuis si longtemps prouvé mes besoins. 

(Act IV, scene II).

These words find an echo in those of Ariste about his father later in the play:

Mais j'ai tort, après tout, de craindre que mon père 
Veuillez à cet attentat prêter son ministère: 
Sa bonté, sa vertu m'en sont de sûrs garants. 

(Act V, scene VIII).

Owing nothing to the intellect, the relationship between Lisimon and Ariste has its origins in the affections and it is characterised, as we can see, by a lucidity in both about the feeling and consideration which are its essential elements. These features help to explain why they set themselves apart from and above Géronte and why they consider themselves entitled to adopt a moral tone in reproof of his cynicism and indifference. In this conflict between attitudes of the new and the old comedy, the former are by no means ridiculed by the dramatist. It is true that in many ways Ariste is a figure of fun: happily married, he still fights the idea of marriage and has kept his changed status secret for two years, in spite of the fact that Mérite lives in his house. Géronte, however, is bad-tempered and domineering and Lisimon and Ariste, with their concern and understanding, more readily commend themselves, suggesting therefore that Destouches intended their relationship to appear more attractive.

Destouches also uses two kinds of family relationship in his L'Amorbinieux et l'indiscrète (1737). Here the lack of

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25 Ariste is referring to an attempt to separate him from Mérite.
sympathy between Don Félix and his son Don Fernand throws into sharper relief the liking of Don Félix for Don Philippe; the affection between them is evident in their first meeting on stage:

**D. PHILIPPE**

Du plaisir que je sens je ne puis me défendre.
Il est si grand, si pur, qu'il doit m'être permis.
Oubliez le ministre, et ne songez qu'au fils.
Dans son poste éclatant il prétend l'être encore;
Et plus le sort l'élève, et plus il vous honore.

**D. FÉLIX**

Oui, je le reconnais à cet accueil touchant.
Mon cœur avec transport se livre à son penchant.

*(Act I, scene IV).*

Such scenes of sympathy reveal in each of these characters a capacity for feeling and introduce into the play, moreover, a more serious and reflective note.

A most intriguing example of a family relationship is to be seen in Nivelle de la Chaussée's *Mélanide* (1741), where the characters of mother and daughter, Dorisée and Rosalie, are in conflict, but where the latter does not act upon their disagreement. The situation at the beginning of the play is the classic one of comedy: Dorisée, believing that she has found a suitable husband for her daughter, forbids her to see the man she loves. Rosalie submits, thus provoking a split not between herself and her mother, as would normally have been the case, but between herself and Darviana. The lovers do not therefore find themselves united against the tyranny of a parent, despite the real opposition between themselves and Dorisée. It is perhaps worth noting that the latter is
acting here out of genuine concern for Rosalie and not from any motives of self-interest, a point which immediately distinguishes her from the parent of traditional comedy. Nevertheless, Rosalie’s deference to her mother means that this part of the plot cannot be exploited to furnish the action of the play and that interest must inevitably shift elsewhere.

The plays we have been examining seem to reflect a changing attitude of the time towards family relations. This might well be summarised by Forlis’s statement in Boissy’s Les Dehors trompeurs (1740) that: “Le Ciel nous a donné des droits sur nos enfants, / Pour être leurs soutiens, & non pas leurs tyrans” (Act V, scene V). It is supported in his case by a refusal to dictate to his own daughter: “Ma bonté sçait borner l’autorité du Père.” The sympathy suggested here marks the relationships in a play after Mélanide, namely Nivelle de la Chaussée’s L’École des mères (1747). In that of Doligni père and Doligni fils, there is disagreement about the choice of a marriage partner, but as Doligni fils implies in the words: ”Il m’aime, je le sais, c’est sur quoi je me fonde” (Act I, scene III), there is in fact affection between them and when it is discovered that the girl they have chosen is one and the same, all possibilities for opposition and dislike are removed.

In another situation, although the Marquis is indifferent to anyone but himself, Mme Argant is besotted by him, declaring that: "Votre mere ne veut être que votre amie" (Act II, scene III) and devoting herself entirely to his well-being:

Votre établissement est l’objet le plus.
Que ma tendresse se propose ... (Act II, scene III).
In addition, Argant's response to the Marquis's highhandedness implies that he would welcome bonds of a closer kind within the family:

Le nom de père est-il devenu trop bourgeois,
Pouvez-vous à présent sortir de votre bouche?
Sachez, en m'appelant par mon nom véritable,
Que le titre de père est le plus respectable
Qu'un fils puisse donner à l'auteur de ses jours.

(Act II, scene IV).

Voltaire's Nanine (1749), however, contains a relationship of reciprocal affection between the character of parent and child. In Act II, scene VII, for example, a letter intercepted and read by the Baronne expresses Nanine's pleasure on the arrival of Philippe Hombert, her father:

Ma joie et ma tendresse,
Sont sans mesure, ainsi que mon bonheur.
Vous arrivez: quel moment pour mon cœur!
Quoi! je ne puis vous voir et vous entendre!
Entre vos bras je ne puis me jeter!

Moreover, part of the final act takes the form of a reunion, after long separation, of these two protagonists; here Nanine's impatience illustrates the strength of the bond between them:

NANINE, courant entre les bras de Philippe Hombert, après s'être baissée devant la marquise.
Ah! la nature a mon premier hommage.
Mon père!

PHILIPPE HOMBERT
O ciel! ô ma fille! ah, monsieur!
Vous réparez quarante ans de malheur.

(Act III, scene VIII).
The question of family ties is complicated where characters are connected unbeknown to themselves, where the relationship is, as it were, disguised. In some cases the protagonists involved are thought to be totally unrelated, in others the bond between them is stronger than had at first been supposed. Whatever the position, we shall see patterns similar to those which we have already examined. In the first place, the disguised relationship may be one of sympathy from the outset, as it is, for example, in Baron's *L'Andrienne*. In this play, Chremés and Glicerie, father and daughter, do not know themselves to be related, but there is nevertheless an instinctive response in the former to Glicerie's appeal for help: it amounts in fact to a "cri du sang" and suggests the possibility of real affection between them:

**GLICERIE**

Vous, en qui je crois voir un protecteur, un père,
Ne m'abandonnez pas à toute ma misère.
En m'étant mon époux, vous me donnez la mort.
Vous pouvez d'un seul mot faire changer mon sort.
C'est donc entre vos mains qu'aujourd'hui je confie
Mon repos, mon honneur, ma fortune, & ma vie.

**CHREMÉS**

Que veux dire ceci? Je tremble, & dans mon cœur
Un secret mouvement me parle en sa faveur.

(Act IV, scène VIII).

This scene is not in Terence. It may be that this is a strand in the plot chosen by Baron to replace that part of the original revolving around the birth of Glicerie's baby. Whether this is so or not, Baron's decision to include such a situation is surely intriguing: it would appear to suggest
that it is the dramatist's intention to appeal to and arouse the feelings of his audience, for this is the result of such a scene. The language which he gives to Chremés is also of interest, particularly the phrase "un secret mouvement," used of his response to Glicerie. Moreover, Chremés's affection, hinted at here in this first meeting, is only strengthened by the discovery of the true relationship between himself and Glicerie; admittedly, Dave stirs up events to provoke antipathy between them, but there is no question of this attitude persisting once all the facts are known and a bond is revealed to exist between Glicerie and Chremés. Their knowledge of each other is slight, and they do not meet again on stage, but the notion that they are related is sufficient for Chremés to show an eagerness to see Glicerie and to bestow on her his approval of her marriage with Pamphile:

Allons, Criton, allons la voir & l'embrasser.
Monsieur, un long discours me ferait trop attendre.
Je vous donne une bru, vous me devez un gendre.
Il suffit. (Act V, scene VII).

As far as the play as a whole is concerned, this expression of liking and goodwill adds to the harmony at the close produced by the reconciliation between Simon and Pamphile.

In L'Obstacle imprévu, Licandre and Julie are believed to be uncle and niece, Licandre alone being aware that they are in fact father and daughter. From the beginning it is evident that, whatever the relationship, they share an affection for each other, apparent in Julie's case from her words on learning of her uncle's return: "Mon oncle est ici? Ah ciel! ...
Voilà un jour bien heureux pour moi!" (Act III, scene VIII),
and her instinctive faith in his desire to help her:

Il y a long-temps que mon oncle a mandé qu'il reviendroit bientôt. Il me tirera d'esclavage.

(Act I, scene VIII).

In this play the characters of father and daughter are brought together on stage in the last act when Julie is apprised of the facts about her birth: here she responds with even greater affection to Licandre and we notice her belief that her feelings should have awoken her to the real nature of the bond between them:

LICANDRE
Oui, me chère Julie, reconnoisiez celui qui vous a donné le jour.

JULIE
Ah! je dois vous reconnaître à la tendresse que j'avois pour vous, et à celle dont vous m'avez toujours honorée.

(Act V, scene XI).

The relationship between Lycandre and Lisette in Destouches’s Le Glorieux is also one of sympathy. Unaware that she is his daughter, Lisette always shows a regard for Lycandre and an appreciation of his kindness, indicating in her account of his qualities the extent of his own regard for her:

Depuis près de deux ans, cet ami vertueux, Sensible à mes besoins, empressé, généreux, Fait de me secourir sa principale affaire

(Act I, scene VIII).

Moreover, by her constant entreaties to Lycandre to be told her father's identity and her vow that, despite his poverty, her love will be his, she reveals that she too has a capacity for feeling. We see this quality in both characters expressed in the form of mutual affection throughout the course of the action and it explains the intensification of their affection
in Act IV, scene III when Lycandre confesses the truth:

**LYCANDRE**
Oui, ma fille, voici ce père malheureux;  
Il vous voit; il vous parle; il est devant  
vos yeux.

**LISTETTE,** se jetant à ses pieds,
Quoi! c'est vous-même? Ciel! qu'est mon âme  
est ravie!
Je goûte le moment le plus doux de ma vie.

**LYCANDRE**
Ma fille, levez-vous. Je connois votre  
cœur,
Et je vous l'ai prédit, vous ferez mon  
bonheur.

It can be seen from this exchange that the reactions of  
the characters involved in this situation are accorded great-  
er prominence than they were in either *L'Andrienne* or  
*L'Obstacle imprévu*; they have become in fact one of the play's  
central issues, clearly intended, it would seem, to absorb  
the attention of the audience. Lisette's love and her contin-  
ual references to a father she believes she has never seen,  
are deliberately stressed in order to build up to a climax in  
Act IV, scene III, where it becomes plain that the very  
notion of the bond between them is enough, for Lisette, to  
strengthen an already firm affection.

This tendency for scenes of discovery and recognition to  
form an important part of the comedy can be observed in  
*Mélanide* and several of the plays of Nivelle de la Chaussée  
after this. In the former, there is a pattern by now familiar:  
Darviane and Mélanide are believed to nephew and aunt, where-  
as Darviane is in fact Mélanide's son, a fact of which she  
alone is aware. The relationship between them is uneasy as  
Mélanide considers herself under an obligation to assert her  
authority and forbid Darviane's marriage to Rosalie. For
this reason it might be said that the antipathy between them is not one of temperament or one developing out of a real clash of interests, but one imposed by external factors. There is indeed much in the play to suggest that they share a relationship of sympathy: Mélanide has always manifested concern for Darviane, a sign of her affection for him, and he in his turn is grateful to her. The true nature of their attitude to each other is clear in their major encounter in Act IV, which, beginning with Mélanide’s condemnation of Darviane for insulting the Marquis, soon moves towards a discussion of the XXXXer’s parentage, a subject in itself sufficient to arouse the emotion of both characters. This reaches a climax with Mélanide’s confession:

MÉLANIDE
Que vous êtes pressant!

DARVIANE
Que vous êtes cruelle!

VOTRE mere se rend; vous l'emportez sur elle...

Ah! mon fils!

DARVIANE
Quoi! c'est vous? Mon cœur est satisfait.
Le Ciel a fait, pour moi, le choix que j'aurais fait.

MÉLANIDE
Hélas! votre destin n'est pas moins déplorable.

DARVIANE
O mere la plus tendre & la plus adorable!
(Act IV, scene V).

It is significant that any resentment felt by Darviane is immediately forgotten with the discovery that Mélanide is his mother: the very idea, in other words, of the real bond which unites them is enough to destroy what degree of dislike
may have existed and to deepen the sympathy between these characters. Furthermore, Jarviane's exclamation: "Le Ciel a fait, pour moi, le choix que j'aurais fait," reveals that there had been only reluctant antagonism on his part towards Mélanie.

Nivelle de la Chaussée uses this technique of concealing a relationship between the characters of parent and child, in the majority of his remaining plays and it is most frequently one of sympathy from the start. Such is the case, for example, with that of M. Argant and Marianne in *L'École des mères*, of Angélique and La Gouvernante in the play of that name, and finally in *L'Homme de fortune* (1750). In the first of these, M. Argant's affection for Marianne, who is thought to be his niece, is evident throughout the play and especially in his words to Doligni pere, expressing a refusal to send his daughter back to the convent:

Ma fille ... Non, Monsieur, je ne puis m'en priver:
Pour la sacrifier, la victime est trop chère.
(Act III, scene I).

This particular theme in the play, namely Marianne's identity and the nature of the feelings between her and the rest of the family, is exploited to provide one of the central moments of the action, in a scene of confession in Act IV; Marianne, on learning of the real bond between her and M. Argant, experiences the happiness we have seen in Lisette or Darviane:

M. ARGANT
Apprends que toute ma tendresse
N'est que de l'amour paternel.
Ah ! ... ma fille ....
MARTANNE

Qui! vous .... mon pere?
Sh! pourquoi si long-tems me cacher mon
bonheur?

Duisque j'ai le bonheur de vous appartenir,
Le sort peut, à son gré, regler mon avenir.
Il m'a plus fait de bien qu'il n'en sauroit détruire.
(Act IV, scene IX).

In La Gouvernante, Angélique's mother has an affection
for her, which is apparent mainly in pity for the state to
which she has reduced her:

O tendresse du sang! Doux charme de ma vie,
Qui devroit dès long-tems m'avoir été ravie!

Continuous les soins de la plus tendre mere;

Ah! Ciel, permets enfin qu'à travers un
nuage,
J'acheve de verser sur l'objet de mes pleurs,
Les seuls biens qui me soient restés de mes malheurs ...
(Act II, scene 1).

In this play, however, there is potential conflict between
these two characters, arising out of La Gouvernante's advice
to Angélique to enter a convent, while she in fact loves
Sainville. Significantly enough, although this suggestion is
at first resisted by Angélique, the discovery that La Gouver-
nante is her mother brings complete obedience and immediate
affection followed by remorse, in spite of the seeming lack of
understanding and harsh treatment:

Ah! vous êtes ma mere; oui, je n'en veux
point d'autre.
Tout me le dit; cédez, & qu'un aveu si doux
Couronne tous les biens que j'ai reçus de vous.

Ah! Ciel! Mais quel remords vient déchirer mon coeur!
(Elle se jette à ses genoux.)
C'est vous que j'ai traitée avec tant de rigueur!
(Act V, scene IV).
In Nivelle de la Chaussée's last play quite a different kind of situation exists, in that the characters of father and daughter do not meet until Act IV scene XII and neither knows of the family tie. The resemblance in Méranie to his wife, however, produces an instinctive recognition in the Vicomte d'Ilion that she is his daughter. Suspense is deliberately created through a series of questions from Méranie, punctuated by exclamations such as "Quel trouble me saisit?" and "Plus je la vois, plus mes sens sont émus" from the Vicomte. Moreover, Méranie's spontaneous response to this emotion and her appeal to the Vicomte for help, quickly establish a sympathy between them, which is only strengthened with Brice pore's revelation of the truth:

MÉRANIE, en se jetant à ses pieds.
C'est vous; jamais mon cœur ne m'a si bien
servie.

Mon père, qu'il m'est doux de me voir dans vos bras!
Enfin, vous répondez à mes vives tendresses.
Pour la première fois, je reçois vos caresses.

LE VICOMTE
Hélas! c'est le seul bien qui soit en mon pouvoir.

(Act IV, scene XIII).

Such ready affection becomes easier to understand perhaps when one remembers that both the Vicomte and Méranie had previously expressed interest in and indeed love for the other, in spite of the fact that they had not met. These words from the Vicomte, for example:

Mais parmi les transports de la plus douce ivresse,
Pardonnez ce soupir à ma vive tendresse;
Un intérêt bien cher, & qui vous est connu,
L'arrache de mon sein. Ami, qu'est devenu
L'unique rejetton de toute ma famille,
Le reste de mon sang, ma déplorable fille?

(Act IV, scene IX).
are paralleled in this entreaty from Méranie, unaware that
she is in fact addressing her father:

J'entretiens un ami de mon père.
Ah! daignez me parler d'une tête si chère

Si je l'avoir connu, que je l'aurois aimé!
(Act IV, scene XII).

It seems likely that Nivelle de la Chausée is deliber-
ately increasing the poignancy of scenes such as these by
leaving at least one of the protagonists ignorant of the
truth; it is again striking, moreover, that he has created
characters for whom the mere notion of possessing a near
relation is sufficient to arouse curiosity and affection, the
feelings inspired by the idea of family ties being deepened
by the revelation of the truth.

Finally, there is a relationship of the same kind in
Destouches's last play La Force du naturel (1750). Here too
the protagonists are unaware of the bond which unites them,
but the Marquis's first words on seeing Babet, who is his
daughter, reveal an immediate attraction towards her: "Oh!
qu'elle a l'air décent! quelle figure aimable!" (Act II,
scene IV). She reacts instinctively to the sympathy she
senses in him, begging him to prevent a marriage she does not
want:

BABET, au Marquis
J'implore à vos genoux votre protection.

LE MARQUIS
Ah! je vous la promets. Mon inclination,
La pitié, tout m'y porte.

BABET, se levant avec transport
Ah! que je suis ravi!
Vos bontés, Monseigneur, vont me sauver
la vie.
(Act II, scene IV).
Mutual affection has clearly been rapidly established in this scene and the Marquis consequently wishes his wife to receive Babet. A degree of hostility might be expected in this situation, but there is an instinctive response in the Marquise, as there had been in her husband, to Babet's appearance and to the affection manifested by her while attempting to reassure the Marquise that her husband's interest is genuine pity:

LA MARQUISE
Mais souvent la pitié va plus loin qu'on ne pense.

BABET
Celle qu'il a de moi n'a rien que d'innocent, Madame; et, si mon cœur en est reconnaissant,
Ce n'est qu'un sentiment et pur et légitime.
Quoi! si je vous aimois, m'en feriez-vous un crime?

LA MARQUISE
Tu m'aimes donc, Babet?

BABET
Autant qu'il est possible. Votre premier aspect rend mon cœur si sensible,
Vous m'inspirez pour vous un si tendre penchant,
Que je n'ai jamais rien senti de si touchant.

(Act III, scene V)

To Babet's continued protestations of love, the Marquise finally replies: "Tais-toi donc, mon enfant, je n'y puis plus tenir." Furthermore the dramatist uses the complete understanding between mother and daughter, expressed in the Marquise's appeal: "Viens, jouis dans mes bras de l'amour maternel. Ô jour heureux! Ô jour à jamais solennel!" and Babet's reply: "Jour que je dois nommer le plus beau de ma
vie!” (Act V, scene IX) to provide part of the dramatic impact of the close of the play.

The disguised relationships we have so far examined are ones of sympathy from the outset, whatever the circumstances or situation of the play; rarer, but nonetheless important, are those which move from antipathy to sympathy. Here we see even more clearly the power which the mere idea of a family tie may have over a character. We have already discussed the course taken by the relationship between father and daughter in Destouches's Le Glorieux and noted the increase in affection brought about by the revelation that they are related. Alongside this, there is the relationship of Lisette and the Comte, who are of course brother and sister, without realising it. Their attitude to each other is perhaps unusual: the Comte's brusque question to Isabelle: "Quoi! Lisette avec vous est en société?/ Je ne vous croyois pas cet excès de bonté" (Act III, scene II), betrays a complete lack of interest in and respect for Lisette, understandable in view of his character and her position as confidante. She, on the other hand, feels a liking for him, impossible to account for, but inspiring in her a desire to further his well-being despite his "duretés"; these cause her pain but are overcome with: "N'importe, à le servir je trouve mille charmes" (Act IV, scene III).

The relationship between these two characters is therefore a mixture of sympathy and antipathy for the greater part of the play. Once the truth is revealed by Lycandre their reactions must of course be different: in Lisette, for instance, we see, as in other characters already analysed,
a deepening of affection for the Comte, together with a lack of surprise that they are related:

Sans doute, nous sortons de la même famille; 
Oui, le Comte est mon frère; et, dès que je l'ai vu, 
à travers ses mépris mon cœur l'a reconnu. De mon foible pour lui je ne suis plus surprise.
(Act IV, scene III).

This ability to understand through the feelings the possibility of a bond between herself and the Comte, emerging from her words "mon cœur l'a reconnu," is only another aspect of Lisette's "sensibilité", which had rendered her superior to the Comte throughout the play. The latter, devoid of feeling, as we have seen, until humbled by his father, can then obey what is a natural tendency to goodness within him and offer Lisette affection, which she, forgetting his previous dislike, immediately accepts.

The change in the Comte, albeit expressed in a somewhat restrained fashion, is due in part quite simply to Lycandre's announcement, and therefore to the idea that he and Lisette are closely related: here, such an idea is seen to have the power not only to increase an already existing sympathy, but radically to alter feelings from contempt to love. This transformation in the Comte, moreover, brings about complete reconciliation at the end of the play, adding to the affection between the characters of father and daughter and his own new-found respect for Lycandre. With the union of Lisette and Valère and an assurance to Isabelle that she will be able to effect a lasting improvement in the Comte, nothing remains to mar the spirit of harmony at the close.

The impression which a changing attitude to family relationships is seen to make on the comedy in Le Glorieux is to
be observed again in Nivelle de la Chaussée's Mélanie. Here, in addition to a change from antipathy to sympathy between characters related more closely than one of them at least had thought, there is also antagonism at the start between characters believing themselves totally unrelated, namely Darviane and the Marquis. In this case the conflict is real as father and son are in love with the same woman. Darviane indeed says to Rosalie: "Je vous laisse au Marquis que mon âme déteste" (Act III, scene II), and, as we have mentioned, he also insults the Marquis in Dorisée's house. The situation has, therefore, for much of the play, many of the features of the central situation in a traditional comedy. There are some significant differences, however: in the first instance, the Marquis, unlike Arnolphe, say, or Harpagon, is not a figure of fun; afraid that as an older man he will hardly attract Rosalie and could easily in fact be a subject for ridicule, he betrays an awareness of his position and a certain kind of sensitivity quite inconceivable in any of Molière's protagonists. It is precisely these qualities which prevent him becoming the butt of the other characters; on the contrary, Théodon at least has compassion for him. In addition, Darviane too has a capacity for feeling and when, in Act V, he seeks enlightenment about the relationship between himself and the Marquis, Nivelle de la Chaussée deliberately exploits the potential in the encounter to build up a climax to the play. A scene of increasing tension between the two begins with a plea from Darviane:

Quand, jusqu'au fond du cœur pénétré de regret,
Je cherche à réparer un transport indiscret,
Avec quelque bonté daignerez-vous m'entendre?
Je viens chercher ma grâce. À quoi dois-
je m'attendre?

(Act V, scene II).

After a refusal to reveal the truth, followed by urgent entreaties from Darviane, the Marquis ultimately yields, faced with a demand that he should take his son's life:

DARVIANE
Vous allez m'arracher Rosalie; achevez,
prenez aussi ma vie; elle me désespère.

LE MARQUIS
Malheureux! qu'oses-tu proposer à ton père?

DARVIANE
Ah! je renaïs! (Act V, scene II).

The fact that the Marquis is his father suffices to change Darviane's attitude and the Marquis too makes plain his love for Darviane. It seems that, as the nature of the bond in seventeenth-century comedy had decided that the relationship between father and son be one of antipathy, so in the new comedy it determines that it shall be one of sympathy. In Mélanide, the harmony between these characters adds to that already established between Mélanide and Darviane and to the reconciliation of the Marquis and Mélanide, thus assuring total agreement and understanding at the close.

Finally, there is again in Nivelle de la Chaussée's L'École des mères a disguised family relationship which is a mixture of sympathy and antipathy involving the characters of mother and daughter. Marianne experiences an affection for Mme Argant, which she, like Lisette in Le Glorieux, is unable to explain:

Que dis-je? un sentiment que je ne puis comprendre;
A mon obéissance a servi de soutien;
Et mon cœur, étonné de se trouver si tendre,
There is perhaps a suggestion in Mme Argant's words reported by Rosette: "Il faudra s'en laisser charmer; Cette petite créature/ Finira par se faire aimer" (Act IV, scene VII), that this affection might be reciprocated, but during much of the play we see a dislike in Mme Argant for Marianne, which is heightened by rumours that Marianne is M. Argant's mistress. Marianne herself recounts to M. Argant the cruelty of which his wife is capable, making clear too her own capacity for feeling:

Et ma tante elle-même, avec la dureté
La plus grande à la plus cruelle,
Vient de me chasser de chez elle,
Elle a poussé la cruauté
Jusques à me défendre à jamais sa présence.
(Act IV, scene VIII).

The reaction in Marianne to the discovery that Mme Argant is her mother is one of great joy, this spontaneous forgiveness of previously callous treatment being further proof of her generosity:

MAD. ARGANT, embrassant sa fille, qui se jette à ses genoux.
0 trop heureuse mere!

MARIANNE
Qu'il m'est doux de me voir entre des bras si chers!
(Act V, scene IX).

Just as interesting, however, is the immediate birth of affection in Mme Argant, although in view of the words quoted above, we can perhaps conclude that M. Argant's revelation brings into being feelings which had been denied. Her change in attitude is exploited by the dramatist to provide a happy dénouement to the play.
The comedy had always confronted the prudent and the foolish where the handling of a son or daughter is concerned. While "classical" comedy, whether it be that of Terence and Plautus or of French dramatists in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, uses the relationship between an unreasonable, irascible parent and his offspring as a framework for the action, the new eighteenth-century comedy focuses attention on the understanding parent and his sympathetic treatment of son or daughter. The patterns which we have noted in plays written for the Comédie Française are also a feature of some performed at the Théâtre Italien in the first half of the century. The conclusion to Boissy's *La Vie est un songe* (1732), for example, is a reunion between father and son after an initial, immediate interest has turned to hatred. The relations between parent and child in Marivaux are invariably ones of sympathy; the most famous expression of the indulgence of most fathers is undoubtedly that of Monsieur Orgon in *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard* (1730): "Eh bien, abuse, va, dans ce monde, il faut être un peu trop bon pour l'être assez" (Act I, scene II). In *Les Serments indiscrets* (1732), however, Monsieur Orgon and Monsieur Lrgaste are equally respectful of Lucile's and Damis's wishes and their regard is returned.

There is a crucial distinction to be made between the plays we have been examining and those of Marivaux. Whether writing for the French or Italian troupe, Marivaux makes no use of the disguised relationship between parent and child.
In the new comedy, it is one of the most striking, as it illustrates the significance attached to a close family tie. It has no comic potential, however. Furthermore, it removes from the play an important source of action. It is true that revelation and reconciliation are employed to create a major dramatic effect and often replace the force of the antagonism between characters in the old comedy. Nevertheless, in uniting his protagonists in affection and consideration, the playwright is destroying the traditional comic structure and forcing the comedy to take another form.
CHAPTER FIVE

The marriage relationship in the comedy in the first half of the eighteenth century.

It is well known that for many during the Ancien Régime marriage was little more than a contract. Hippolyte Taine, for example, in his *Origines de la France contemporaine* has suggested that, governed by the conventions and lifestyle of the age, most aristocratic marriages were characterised by polite civility and a reluctance on the part of husband and wife, stemming from a fear of ridicule, to display any genuine feeling.¹ In *La Femme au dix-huitième siècle* the Goncourt brothers concede that there may have been a small number of couples who shared affection and understanding, but they too argue that for the majority the relationship was merely a convenient arrangement which allowed great freedom to both partners.² More recently the historian Lebrun has shown that middle class marriages were viewed in the same way as those of the aristocracy: a son or daughter was not necessarily consulted and a partner was very often found not only in the same class but in the same profession as that of the father.³ At every level, marriage was, in Lebrun's words "une affaire d'intérêt" (p. 21).


All these assertions are supported in works of many different kinds in the first half of the eighteenth century. Muralt, a Swiss traveller in England and France, comments at some length on women of quality in France, their disregard of moral obligations and of qualities normally associated with their sex:

Les Femmes de qualité, sur tout, dédaignent cette Timidité, cette Pudeur scrupuleuse. Elle leur paroit quelque chose de petit & de contraint, qui sied bien à des Bourgeoisies, & pour s'éloigner de cette extrémité, elles s'éloignent de la Modestie.

A letter from Rica to Ibben in Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* (1721) describes the liberty within marriage:

Ici les maris prennent leur parti de bonne grâce et regardent les infidélités comme des coups d'une étoile inévitable. Un mari qui voudroit seul posséder sa femme seroit regardé comme un perturbeur de la joie publique ...

Ils (les Français) croient qu'il est aussi ridicule de jurer à une femme qu'on l'aimera toujours, que de soutenir qu'on se portera toujours bien, ou qu'on sera toujours heureux.

The *Journal et Mémoires* of Mathieu Marais, a Parisian lawyer dealing particularly with marital problems and divorce, also leave us with an impression of the unstable nature of many marriages:

Depuis que l'on a vu cette dame renvoyée, il a pris en gré à d'autres maris d'en faire de même, et M. de Lautrec, gendre de M. le Premier Président, a remis la sienne entre les mains de son père ...

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Ils n'ont point d'enfants. Le mari vivot mal avec elle ... Il y a aussi M. et Mme d'Estaing qui se sont quittés. Enfin la mode vient de quitter les femmes comme on quitte une maîtresse infidèle.

On the stage, marriage had long been a topic for jokes or an opportunity for facetiousness and the comedy at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries continues to poke fun at the institution. In Dancourt's Les Vendanges de Suresne (1694), for instance, Lorange remarks to M. Vivien at the close of the play:

... nous vous avons empêché de vous marier, ce n'est pas vous rendre un mauvais office. (Scene derniere).

Valentin, in Regnard's Les Ménechmes (1705) jauntily adopts a light-hearted approach to a proposal of marriage in order to reassure his master:

Sur cet engagement bannissez votre crainte. Bon! si l'on épousait autant qu'on le promet, On se marierait plus que la loi ne permet. (Act II, scene I).

This convention continues into the new comedy. In Destouches's Le Médisant (1715), for example, Lisette flipantly lumps together all husbands:

LE BARON
Mais, Lisette, après tout, donnerai-je ma fille
A ce nouveau marquis? C'est un sot, franchement.

LISSETTE
Et qu'importe? Un mari l'est ordinaire-
ment. (Act III, scene I).

So strong indeed is the tradition that even those characters usually keen to marry, the young lovers, may express something

less than enthusiasm for the idea; in Destouches's *L'Obstacle imprévu* (1717), for example, there is the following exchange between Julie and Lisimon, who is attempting to marry her against her will to his son:

**JULIE**

Il faudroit que ce fût l'Amour même pour me faire oublier Léandre; encore ne sais-je s'il en viendroit à bout.

**LISIMON**

Il est bien question d'amour, ma foi, quand il s'agit de se marier. Il ne faut songer qu'à la raison.

**JULIE**

Eh! Monsieur, si on ne songeait qu'à la raison, on ne se marierait jamais.  
(Act I, scene VII).

If Julie's attitude is surprising, Lisimon's is common; the "raison", good sense or self-interest to which he refers here is usually financial. In the old comedy, M. Migaud in Dancourt's *Le Chevalier à la mode* (1687) plans a marriage in the coolest way purely in order to obtain money. Moreover, we have in this play the archetype of a new character who emerges at the turn of the century, namely the Chevalier de Villefontaine, a penniless fortune-hunter totally unsuited to marriage. He is paying court to two women, until such time as the extent of their wealth becomes clear and would have no scruples in addressing himself to a third should it prove worth his while. Such a character reappears in the Damis of Destouches's *L'Ingrat* (1712), who accepts the girl offered to him "par raison seulement" (Act I, scene VI), and in the Cléon of Gresset's *Le Méchant* (1747). In addition, "raison" can also be the necessity to carry on the family line.

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7See his remarks to Lisette in Act I, scene V.
and the unpleasant fact that for many women marriage is a state preferable to spinsterhood or a convent.

Given these views, it is scarcely surprising to discover that husband and wife do or are expected to pursue separate interests. More than this, however, their attitude to each other is not usually more worldly indifference; it is almost invariably outright antipathy. This is an old tradition dating back to Medieval times. Here, the husband, weak and cowardly, stupid and blind to his wife's infidelity or unwilling to take action if aware of it, is forever tricked by a wife superior in intelligence and stronger in character. Renaissance comedy relies on such the same relationship, despite the claims of the dramatists themselves to have broken

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8 In D'Allainval's L'Ecole des bourgeois (1723), for example, Le Marquis states: "À la cour un homme se marie pour avoir des héritiers; une femme pour avoir un nom ..." (Act I, scene XII). See, too, Regnard's Les Ménechmes, where Finette warns Araminte that "rester vieille fille est un mal plus affreux/ que tout ce que l'hymen a de plus dangereux" (Act V, scene I).

9 There is a most striking example of the lack of interest in each other of husband and wife in Dancourt's Les Bourgeoises à la mode (1692), where Angélique and M. Simon, a man much older than her, with whom she has nothing in common, meet only seldom. In the new comedy, Lisidor in Destouches's Les Philosophes amoureux (1739) maintains that this is the only way for husband and wife to tolerate each other. See his words in Act II, scene II. Jealousy, or the manifestation of jealousy, is out of the question. See, for example, Angélique's reaction to the fact that her husband is in love with Araminte (Les Bourgeoises à la mode, Act I, scene V). Many characters in the comedy have a horror of openly acknowledged feeling; see, for instance, the Marquis's reluctance to show any "empressement" in a love affair in Act IV, scene II of Lesage's Turcaret (1710), the words of the Marquis in Act I, scene XII of L'Ecole des bourgeois and Clarice's description of married life in Les Philosophes amoureux, Act II, scene IV.
with the Middle Ages. The marriage of an ill-tempered and often authoritarian woman to a timid and gullible man immediately calls to mind several of Molière's plays, in particular perhaps *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1670) and *Les Femmes savantes* (1672). Disliking each other and opposed, ironically enough, over the choice of a partner for their daughters, husband and wife struggle to assert their will in a battle for supremacy which provides the framework of the play.

Playwrights continue to use the conventional structure at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries, when there is antipathy between husband and wife on the stage at all levels of society. Nor does this pattern die out with the "classical" comedy. Destouches's *Le Médisant*, for instance, opens with an argument between husband and wife which concerns the subject of a partner for their daughter. In Destouches's *La Fausse Agnès* (1736) and

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10. In Jodelle's *L'Eugène* (1553), for example, the plot revolves around the attempts of Florimond and the abbé Eugène to seduce Alix, the "plus grand putain/Qu'on puisse voir en aucun lieu..." (Act I, scene II), Guillaume, her slow-witted husband being trapped in the centre of the intrigue, used and duped by all. It is not uncommon for woman to be regarded as a creature of easy virtue in the comedy; this view perhaps underlies Arnolphe's mistrust of women and fear of cuckoldry in *L'École des femmes*.

11. In Dancourt's *Le Mari retrouvé* (1698), Mme Julienne greets her husband on his return from the dead with: "Ah, ah! te voilà, je pense? & de quoi t'avises-tu de revenir ici, bon vaurien?" (Scene VIII), while in Lesage's *Turcaret Turcaret* and Madame Turcaret, who belong to the bourgeoisie, share dislike and a similar reaction on meeting again in Act V, scene X: "M. Turcaret, à part. Je n'ose la regarder; je crois voir mon mauvais génie. Madame Turcaret, à part. Je ne puis l'envisager sans horreur." Much of Dancourt's *Les Bourgeoises à la mode* is based on Angélique's tricks to extract huge sums of money from M. Simon.
Nivelle de la Chaussée's *L'École des mères* (1744), we have in the Baronne and Mme Argant ruthless characters who obtain their wish by dissolving into tears. With Destouches's *L'Ambitieux et l'indiscrète* (1737), a "tragi-comédie", we have come a long way from the farce, but the lack of harmony between Dona Béatrice and Don Philippe, their conflict over a husband for their niece, beginning with minor skirmishes and culminating in Don Philippe's decision to destroy his wife's plans, all belong to the old tradition. We can see, therefore, that whether it provides an impetus to the action, or whether it is the subject of this rather dour remark by the Pasquin of *L'Obstacle imprévu*: "Dieu m'en garde, je ne plaisante plus depuis que je suis marié" (Act II, scene IV), marriage can still be employed for comic effect.

From the end of the seventeenth century, however, a number of writers had begun to suggest that a more serious concept of marriage was desirable. Pufendorf approaches the subject from what might be called a political point of view and, considering it in terms of what is best for society and for the raising of children, lays emphasis on unity and fidelity in marriage. The former is necessary to ensure that the wife remains faithful and fulfills her duty:

*C'est aussi un grand plaisir pour des gens mariés, bien assortis, que d'être toujours ensemble; et par là en même temps le Mari peut être plus assuré de la chasteté de sa Femme, que si elle ne demeuroit pas avec lui. La Femme doit donc s'engager encore à être toujours auprès de celui qu'elle épouse, à vivre avec lui dans une société très-étroite & à ne faire avec
In this relationship, the man would seem to be the dominant partner and to possess a greater degree of freedom than his wife, but Pufendorf's account of it also suggests that pleasure may be found in marriage and that husband and wife should share a common interest.

Lordelot, too, is categorical about the importance of the relationship, stating that: "La première & la plus Sainte de toutes les Societez est celle du Mariage." In addition, he places some stress on the thought needed in the choice of a partner:

Comme il (le mariage) forme une union qui doit durer autant que la vie, il faut bien prendre ses mesures avant de s'y engager: il n'y a que les bonnes mœurs & la conformité d'inclinations qui la puisse rendre heureuse.

(p. 18).

Marriage would thus appear to be an affair of the intellect, but the reflection called for by Lordelot is intended to produce a kind of sympathy between husband and wife. The relationship is not one of equality, since the husband possesses the authority, but it is an authority which carries with it certain responsibilities of care and protection and which Lordelot describes as "une domination douce & agréable" (p. 23). If a man has power over his wife

... ce ne doit être que pour la protéger; s'il l'a associée avec lui, c'est pour être sa compagne fidele, & non pas son esclave. La gloire d'un honnête homme est d'aimer, de considerer, & de rendre une Femme heureuse: la veritable marque de son amour, est de lui garder une fidelité inviolable ...

(p. 23).

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13 B. Lordelot, Les Devoirs de la vie domestique, Par un pere de famille (Bruxelles, 1707), p. 15.
Lordelet's ideal of a wife whose modesty reveals itself "dans la pureté des regards, dans le douceur des paroles, dans un maintien noble, qui inspire du respect" (p. 33), differs completely from the sophisticated, frivolous woman of contemporary and historical accounts. Nor could his vision of the almost idyllic life she should create be further removed from the majority of marriages of the time, either in society or on the stage:

... elle chérît le respect de son mari, elle a un soin continu de ses enfants, elle tient ses domestiques dans le devoir ...

... elle fait de sa maison un lieu ...

... où les vices sont chassés, où les vertus sont pratiquées, où l'on trouve le bien-être, où les soins de la paix.

Lemaître de Claville, who maintains that the duties of marriage are more important than any others, also advocates a knowledge of a prospective partner, in order that there should not be incompatibility:

À l'homme rangé, ni joueuse, ni femme dissipée ... À l'homme égal, point de capricieuse; en un mot, je veux absolument qu'on examine, qu'on connoisse & qu'on trouve dans le caractère un peu de sympathie, ou si on l'aime mieux, une espèce d'assortiment qui produise enfin la convenance des humeurs.

Once again the intellect plays a large part in the choice of a partner, but its role is to ensure a liking after marriage; indeed Lemaître de Claville states explicitly:

Je veux donc que l'amour soit plutôt la suite que le motif du mariage; je veux un amour produit par la raison, un amour où nous passions entrer la connaissance & le goût de nos devoirs, & non pas un amour extravagant qui ne fait faire que...
des folies. Il n'appartient qu'aux hommes corrompus de croire qu'un amour raisonnable soit un paradoxe. (II, 171).

While a capacity for feeling may not form a relationship in the first instance, Lemaître de Claville nevertheless believes in the necessity for sympathy between husband and wife.

Baudot de Juilly also condemns the marriage of convenience, but he lays more emphasis than others on the existence of a natural feeling before marriage:

Il me semble que bien loin de le blâmer (l'amour), il seroit à souhaiter qu'on le pût inspirer sur tout à ceux qui songent au mariage; car nous voyons que ces sortes d'engagemens ne sont malheureux que parce que l'on s'y jette sans amour.

The love envisaged by Baudot de Juilly is not a destructive passion, but an "émotion tendre," producing what he terms "ces plaisirs si délicats" (II, 42); it is a spontaneous attraction which owes nothing to the intellect:

Car ce premier trait qui frappe, & qui pénètre jusqu'au fond du cœur, s'y insinue avec un agrément infini! & quand on continué, que la personne qui a touché, se laisse toucher elle-même, & qu'il se forme une tendresse reciproque entre deux objets; ce commerce est le plus délicieux qui se puisse imaginer ...

(II, 21-22).

Pufendorf and the other writers whom we have discussed extend the "bourgeois" concept of marriage to all classes. In so doing, they place particular emphasis on the character of the wife, tending to condemn the volatile pleasure-seeker of polite society and praising the virtuous woman who devotes herself to her family. This view of the ideal woman also appears in works which do not treat the subject of marriage.

15 N. Baudot de Juilly, Dialogues entre Messieurs Patru et D'Ablancourt sur les Plaisirs (Paris, 1701), II, 43.
In his "Réflexions sur le Goût" (1702), for example, Morvan de Bellegarde, while stating that he has no liking for prudes, nevertheless says:

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\text{Je n'approuve nullement celles qui se décrient elles-mêmes de gaieté de cœur, par des manières trop évaporées... la gloire d'une femme... consiste dans la régularité de sa conduite. Une sévérité scrupuleuse sied bien à une femme de mérite, qui ne doit jamais permettre que l'on s'émanipe devant elle...}
\]

Mme de Lambert advises her daughter that she must have the courage to devote herself to the pursuit of private, inner qualities and to the happiness of her family. Virtue alone brings contentment:

\[
\text{Il faut, ma fille, être persuadée que la perfection & le bonheur se tiennent: que vous ne serez heureuse que par la Vertu, & presque jamais malheureuse que par le dérèglement.}
\]

The moralists approach the subject of the relationship between husband and wife from several different angles and do not necessarily believe that it should be primarily based on feeling. Nevertheless, for all these writers, success in marriage is not measured by the discretion with which each partner pursues his or her own affairs, nor is ridicule the attitude adopted towards the relationship. On the contrary,

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\[17\] A.-Th. de Marguenat de Courcelles, marquise de Lambert, Avis d'une Mère À sa Fille (1728), Oeuvres de Madame la Marquise de Lambert (Lausanne, 1747), p. 65. She adds to the words quoted above: "... il y a à la suite de la Vertu un sentiment de douceur, qui paye comptant ceux qui lui sont fideles." (p. 65).
these works allow a more serious view to be taken and demand a sympathy between husband and wife.

Marriage had not always been regarded on the stage with amusement and cynicism. Certain characters in Molière, for example, such as Dorine in *Le Tartuffe* (1664) or Valère in *L'Avaré* (1668) demand understanding and compatibility between husband and wife. The predominant theme in their advice, however, is perhaps the need for good sense or prudence; as Angélique in *Le Malade imaginaire* (1673) says of marriage: "... je vous avoue que j'y cherche quelque précaution" (Act II, scene VI). Traditionally the young lovers in the comedy show no reluctance to be married and many plays are of course based on their efforts to be united in the face of opposition. For them love alone is important and outweighs any considerations of wealth or rank. In Regnard's *Le Légataire universel* (1708) Isabelle declares to Eraste:

Les biens dont vous pouvez hériter chaque jour
N'ont point du tout pour vous déterminé l'amour:
Votre personne seule est le bien qui me flatte ...
(Act V, scene I).

Assertions of this kind are common in the comedy in the first half of the eighteenth century. Lucile's avowal in Boissy's *L'Impatien* (1724) that: "... moi je vais au cœur:/ Je veux des sentiments, une tendresse pure,/ Et préfère un transport à toute la parure" (Act II, scene V), is echoed by Clarice in Destouches's *L'Amboitieux*, who desires:

Un séjour sans éclat, une vie innocente,

See Dorine's words to Orgon in Act II, scene II, for example, and Valère's to Harpagon in Act I, scene V.
Avec un tendre époux, qui, content de mon cœur,
En me donnant le sien, pût faire son bonheur. (Act IV, scene VI).

In general the lovers have no objection to the union itself, their resistance being aroused only if they are forced into it against their will. One of the most striking features of the comedy in the eighteenth century, however, is the uneasiness felt by many characters about marriage. In L'Obstacle imprévu, Julie defines a husband as one who "vous honore de son indifférence" once the ceremony has taken place, or, if by any miracle love should last, as "le censeur de tous vos discours ... le contrôleur de toutes vos actions" (Act III, scene I). Nevertheless, she will marry Léandre:

... parce que je l'aime de tout mon cœur,
et qu'il faut qu'une fille se marie.
D'ailleurs, je suis fortement persuadée que j'aurais moins de chagrins avec lui qu'avec un autre.

Julie's fears had already been voiced in some of the "comédies de mœurs"; in Les Ménechmes, for instance, Isabelle rejects the idea of marriage with this statement:

Aujourd'hui les époux
Sont tous, pour la plupart, inconstants ou jaloux;
Ils veulent qu'une femme épouse leurs caprices;
Les plus parfaits sont ceux qui n'ont que peu de vices. 19

(Act III, scene IV).

Equally significant is Marianne's reply to the Chevalier's proposal in Les Bourgeoises à la mode:

19 In the same play Araminte remarks to Le Chevalier: "... dans le siècle où nous sommes, / Le dégoût dans l'hymen est naturel aux hommes; / Et la possession souvent du premier jour / Leur ôte tout le sel et le goût de l'amour" (Act I, scene III).
Both these speeches betray not only an awareness of current attitudes, but, more important, a concern for the future on the part of a younger character where previously none would have existed. Constance, in Le Préjugé à la mode (1735) points to a similar apprehension in Sophie when referring to her "incertitude" and her need to "s'assurer du cœur qu'elle a rendu sensible" (Act I, scene III).

It would seem that the flippancy of certain characters, together with the cynicism felt to be predominant in society, affect the outlook of those normally enthusiastic about marriage. There can be no doubt that a new element enters into the comedy in the first half of the eighteenth century, namely far greater discussion between the lovers of both their own relationship and marriage in general and that in this discussion the protagonists have no hesitation in speaking of their own capacity for feeling and demanding affection in return. This involves more than a mere statement that "il faut aimer celle à qui l'on se donne" and can become a debate of central importance in the play. This is the case, for example, in Destouches's Le Curieux impertinent (1710). Here, Léandre is a kind of Arnolphe, afraid of infidelity, but apprehensive too that love will disappear after marriage, a fear unknown to

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20. These are the words of Valère in Le Médisant, Act II, scene II.
Arnolphe. He is a comic character to the extent that, having asked a friend to test Julie, he persists, despite all assurances to the contrary, in believing that she might be unfaithful. Ironically, Julie is so angered by his apparent indifference to Damon's advances that she does in fact leave Léandre for his friend and the former is thus caught in his own trap. He is serious in the sense that he is obsessed with himself, just as Arnolphe had been, but he has a quality not found in Molière's great comic characters and this is an ability to reflect on his own feelings. To Damon he says:

Je suis sûr d'être aimé; mais je tremble qu'un jour ....
Souvent le mariage est la fin de l'amour:

Je veux aimer ma femme, et l'aider à ma mode;
J'en veux en même temps être amant et mari,
Mais aussi j'en veux être également chéri.

(Act I, scene VII)

A reaction against what appears to him a growing tendency has clearly led Léandre to formulate the notion that a husband must be both "amant et mari" and to state a need for affection. The note of gravity which inevitably characterises this scene is also a feature of Léandre's discussions with Julie, which turn on his imperturbability over Damon's declarations and his seeming reluctance to marry. There is an element of reproach in Julie's words to Léandre in their first encounter on stage:

Mais cependant le peu de sensibilité
Que cause à votre cœur son infidélité,
Me fait connoître en vous un amant bien facile.
On aime faiblement quand on est si tranquille.

(Act III, scene III).

Her use of the term "sensibilité" here is difficult to define,
but might be held to indicate that she expects Léandre to be sufficiently disturbed to respond to a challenge. Certainly in a later scene between them, it is evident that Julie would welcome at least one sign of regret:

Quelque indigne que soit l'affront que vous me faites,
Je vous aime toujours, tout ingrat que vous êtes.
Ah! cruel, si ton cœur s'ouvrit au repentir,
S'il t'échappoit du moins une larme, un soupir! ....
(Act V, scene II).

These words introduce a more sombre note into the comedy, which together with the liking for analysis of feeling, robs the central relationship of the quality which belongs to that of, say, Agnès and Horace in L'École des femmes.

This pattern is continued in Destouches's L'Irrésolu (1713), a play which again revolves around the theme of marriage, with the lovers at the very heart of the action. Comedy derives from Dorante's inability to reach a permanent decision on any matter and his sudden changes of mind. His hesitation about marriage, however, has its origins in part at least in an awareness that the relationship is often devoid of significance. His own capacity for feeling emerges from this passage:

Un mari complaisant, libéral, jeune et tendre,
Au bonheur d'être aimé peut aisément prêter;
Si, lorsqu'il se marie, il possède le cœur De celle dont il veut faire tout son bonheur,
Son exemple est puissant sur l'esprit de sa femme.
Vertueux, il soutient la vertu dans son âme;
Rempli d'égards pour elle, il en est respecté;
Fidèle, il la maintient dans sa fidélité.
(Act I, scene VII).
The resemblance between this speech and the one which we have quoted by Léandre in *Le Curieux impertinent* is strong; in both men there is a desire for affection and a "lien des cœurs," together with the belief that a husband must be "plus amant qu'époux." In the later play, however, we see in Dorante a kind of moral scruple, expressed in the notion that a husband has a duty to set an example in order to ensure that both partners remain virtuous and thus faithful.

Dorante's debates with himself are a marked characteristic of *L'Irrésolu*; continually undecided about his choice of wife, he experiences throughout the action a struggle between mind and feelings, as he determines to marry "par estime" to avoid suffering or for love to be assured of true happiness. Analysis and self-examination follow each new resolution and form a substantial part of the play; moreover, Dorante suggests that his ability to study his reactions in this way sets him apart from other men:

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D'un homme irrésolu la noble inquiétude
Est l'ordinaire effet d'une profonde étude,
D'un raisonnement sain, et des réflexions,
D'où naissent sur un fait plusieurs opinions.

Un pareil embarras n'est connu que du sage:
Mais un esprit grossier suit ce qu'il enseigne... (Act III, scene 1).
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Reflection about his own feelings leads eventually to discussion with Julie about their relationship. There is agreement and sympathy between them on the necessity for affection in marriage:

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FRONTIN (à Dorante.)
Mais vous ne risquez rien; car vous êtes tout fait
Pour aimer votre femme.
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DORANTE

Oui, je sens en effet
Que je l'adorerai, quoi qu'on en puisse
dire;
Et les mœurs d'aujourd'hui ne pourront me
séduire.

JULIE

Ni moi non plus, ...
J'aimerai un mari qui seroit mon amant;
Pour l'en récompenser, je serois sa maîtresse.

(Act IV, scene IV)

The real debate centres on their attitude towards their
own status within marriage; here conflict had been inevitable.
Julie is not a languishing heroine and has indicated in this
same scene that she will not tolerate domination in a hus-
band. Dorante, for his part, has often expressed a desire
to remain his own master. Their argument is sparked off by
the last words of Julie's speech quoted above, which Dorante
chooses to misunderstand and to which he replies: "Et peut-
être un peu trop." Julie explains her views on marriage:

Quand on s'aime, je croi
Que le désir de plaire est la suprême loi:
Sur deux cœurs bien unis, l'amour seul a
l'empire;
Mais rien n'est plus choquant que de s'en-
tendre dire,
Je veux, je ne veux pas. ....
Il faut, de part et d'autre, égale complai-
sance:

Et, s'il faut achever de me faire connoître,
J'aimerai un mari, je haïrois un maître.

(Act IV, scene IV)

Julie's insistence here on equality stems mainly from
her belief that love is essential to marriage: it is natural

21 See also her words to Nérine: "Pussent me railler les
femmes d'aujourd'hui,/ Tous mes vœux, tous mes soins ne seront
que pour lui./ Mais à condition, pour prix de ma tendresse,
Que je lui tiendrai lieu de femme et de maîtresse./ S'il s'en
tient à l'estime, et porte ailleurs l'amour ...." (Act II,
scene IV), which reveal both a capacity for feeling and strength
of will.
that with love should come respect and a wish on the part of both husband and wife to consider the other. Apart from the ideas advanced in this scene, its very nature and the place which it occupies in the action are worthy of note. It can be argued that it forms the climax to the play: all the statements and actions lead naturally to it and it is the major confrontation on stage of these two protagonists. It is not based on a minor tiff, however, nor is it a scene of hatred; rather is it one of discussion in which both Dorante and Julie analyse their feelings in a way which is taken entirely seriously by the dramatist.

This tendency to examine the nature of love is a feature of shorter plays, too, as Boissy's one-act Le François à Londres (1727) reveals. Here Eliante adopts a didactic tone with the Marquis:

... Mais ce n'est pas ici (en Angleterre) de même; nous sommes de meilleure foi, nous n'aimons uniquement que pour avoir le plaisir d'aimer, nous nous en faisons une affaire sérieuse, & la tendresse parmi nous est un commerce de sentiments, & non pas un trafic de paroles. (Scene II).

It is significant that it is Eliante, with her inclination to reflect on the feelings, who is the character most given to outlining her predicament:

... Mon cœur est agité de divers mouvemens que je ne puis accorder. J'aime le Marquis, & je dois peu l'estimer. J'estime le Baron, & je voudrois l'aider. Je hais Rosbif, & il faut que je l'épouse, puisque mon père le veut. (Scene V).

This kind of self-examination is not as elaborate as it had been in Destouches's play, but it is interesting to see the terms employed by Eliante and in particular her use of the word "mouvement" to refer to conflicting emotions and desires.
There is greater complexity in the relationship of the lovers in *Le Philosophe marié* (1727), for although Damon is a straightforward character, Destouches has created a contrast to him in Céliante, and conflict between the two is inevitable. Céliante is at once rational and irrational. She is capable of capricious behaviour and a desire to wound Damon, but in times of lucidity she reveals an ability to understand her own nature:

Depuis plus de deux ans, avec un soin extrême,
J'élude mon penchant, et le combats moi-même,
J'ai maltraité souvent un amant trop aimé:
Contre lui mon orgueil s'est hautement armé.
Enfin, pour me guérir, je me suis exilée;
Tout cela vainement. Je suis ensorcelée.

(Act II, scene I)

Here we see again the struggle between the intellect and the emotions so characteristic of Dorante in *L'Irrésolu*; in the later play the split in Céliante no doubt explains her harsh treatment of Damon. The relationship of these two is made up of separations and reconciliations; their first encounter on stage, for instance, quickly develops into an argument which is then followed by a reunion. In this situation the lovers move together in an attempt to comprehend their feelings, with Céliante always displaying a capacity for analysis:

Il (mon esprit) se venge
De ce qu'il ne peut pas régler mes sentiments:
Il m'inspire souvent de certains mouvements
Qui suspendent l'effet du penchant qui m'entraîne,
Et tiennent du mépris, et même de la haine.
Vous êtes soutenu par l'inclinaison,
Mais souvent maltraité par la réflexion.

(Act II, scene II).
There is thus a very distinctive sub-plot to this play, which takes the form not of a trivial quarrel soon over, but of reflection and self-examination, with the result that an important part of the action is made up of discussion.

This striking combination of a capacity for feeling and an ability to comment objectively on that very quality is also present in Sophie in Nivelle de la Chaussée’s Le Préséjugé à la mode. The first of these elements in her nature is revealed in her assessment of Constance, whose suffering she clearly perceives: “Au fond de votre cœur j’ai surpris vos douleurs” (Act I, scene IV). It also causes her to spurn the idea of marriage. Her speech to Constance on this occasion contains evidence of a liking for general observation, a need for affection and an understanding of her own make-up:

L'estime d'un époux doit être de l'amour; Oui, ce sentiment-là renferme tous les autres. 
Quoi! les hommes ont-ils d'autres droits que les nôtres? Se contenteront-ils de n'être qu'estimés? Tout perfides qu'ils sont, ils veulent être aimés.
Quant à moi, je suis née & trop tendre, & trop vive, Pour oser m'exposer à ce qui vous arrive! J'aimerois trop Damon; j'en ferois un ingrat, Et j'en mourrois, après le plus terrible éclat. (Act I, scene V).

These feelings have an effect both on the tone and on the structure of the play. Sophie rejects Damon because of Durval's treatment of Constance, but there is no real antipathy between the lovers, as there had been none between Céliant and Damon. They know what they feel and as a result there is no comic potential in this part of the intrigue. Furthermore, because of Sophie's fears, the sub-plot takes the form not of
action deriving from conflict between guardian and ward, but of debate about marriage and the character of a husband.

Argument and discussion again form a major part of the plot concerning the lovers in Nivelle de la Chaussée's Mélanide (1741). Rosalie's compliance with her mother's command to send Darviane away provokes him into this expression of his own attitude:

J'ai tort d'être sensible,
Et de ne point avoir cet air toujours paisible,

Plus je sens vivement, plus je sens que je suis.
L'égalité d'humeur vient de l'indifférence;
Et quoi que vous puissiez dire pour sa défense,
L'insensibilité ne sauroit être un bien.
Quoi! jamais n'être ému, n'être affecté de rien,
Rester au même point tout le temps de sa vie,

Est-ce là vivre? Non. C'est à peine exister.
(Act I, scene IV).

This is an explicit and striking assertion that in every sphere existence is defined by a capacity for feeling. Moreover, in condemning "insensibilité" and thus praising the opposite quality, Darviane is setting himself apart as a member of an élite. It is clear that the word "sensible" is not being used in this scene to convey only a feeling of love, but to imply a much more general response which is admirable in every respect. What would in the traditional comedy have been a superficial quarrel easily resolved in a fairly stylised manner, becomes here, and later in Act III, a significant confrontation, relying on analysis of feeling rather than petty accusations.
It is often difficult to separate discussions about love and those concerning marriage; since it is generally assumed in the comedy that the union of the lovers will be the outcome of the action, it is natural that the two themes should be closely related. Increasingly, however, the subject of marriage itself is one for debate, dramatists commonly using the device of opposing a dismissive or cynical attitude to one which denotes a more serious outlook. Already in Baron's *L'Homme à bonne fortune* (1686) Moncade, a character who is unscrupulous in his dealings with women, is challenged by Eraste in this exchange:

**MONCADE**

Je ne veux point me marier.

[Act III, scene IX]

**ERASTE**

Ne m'avez-vous pas dit que vous aimez ma Sœur?

**MONCADE**

J'en demeure d'accord.

**ERASTE**

Hé! que prétendiez-vous en l'aimant?

**MONCADE**

L'aimer.

**ERASTE**

Vous aimez ma Sœur, & ne songiez point à l'épouser!

**MONCADE**

Epouse-t-on toutes celles qu'on aime?

**ERASTE**

Il y a certaines gens qu'on feroit mieux de ne pas aimer, avec de pareils sentiments.
What is only a short scene in this play becomes a more important episode in Boursault's *Esope à la cour* (1701). Here the King, torn between a marriage of convenience, which would increase his power, and one of love, seeks advice from his courtiers; while two of them attempt to persuade him that considerations of prestige are the only valid ones, Esope argues that affection is essential in marriage:

> Il faut que pour bien vivre ensemble  
> L'Amour ait soin d'unir ce que l'Hymen assemble:  
> Il est sûr qu'on s'entend bien mieux.  
> (Act II, scene II).

Esope in fact believes that marriage is based on two qualities, sympathy and virtue; he demands firstly "des liens par où le cœur s'engage," but adds of Arsinoé: "Sa vertu vous répond d'un bonheur infaillible" (Act II, scene II). This statement echoes his words to Rhodope in the previous scene:

> Soit que je vous épouse, ou qu'un autre le fasse,  
> S'il en est temps encor, faites que votre époux  
> N'ait aucune raison de se plaindre de vous;  
> Et portez-lui pour dot, comme une rare offrande  
> Toute l'intégrité que l'Hymen vous demande.  
> (Act II, scene I).

Boursault is exploring this theme by confronting two conflicting attitudes, as Baron had done; as we can see, Esope, like Eraste, tends to become didactic and to link with the idea of happiness that of virtue and moral respectability. These notions are not mocked by any character and the King indeed replies to Esope: "Que tu me touches bien par où je suis sensible!" (Act II, scene II), making clear that he accepts Esope's advice not because the course he suggests would be sensible or prudent, but because he instinctively
feels it to be the best. He, like Esope, is a man of feeling and
the sympathy between these two means that the discussion
about marriage takes place in a serious fashion and that comic
treatment of the theme would be quite inappropriate.

In Destouches's L'Incrat Géronte, insisting that Isabelle
marry Damis, offers her this vision of married life:

Il (Damis) n'est point relevé par des ti­
tres pompeux;
Mais il m'aime, il vous aime, et c'est ce
que je veux;
Vous ne vous direz point, ni Monsieur ni
Madame;
Il sera votre époux, et vous serez sa
femme;
Ces beaux noms consacrés à la société,
Et bannis par l'orgueil et l'infidélité,
Seront, conformément aux coutumes antiques,
Vos titres les plus doux et les plus magni­
fiques.

(Act III, scene VII).

It is not easy to assess how these words are to be interpre­
ted, however; Géronte is not a likeable character and he is
of course mistaken in his judgment of Damis. Furthermore,
Lisette makes fun of his terms "femme" and "époux", a fact
which might imply that the audience too should laugh at
Géronte's ideas. Nevertheless, these seem to spring from a
genuine concern that Isabelle should not risk unhappiness by
marrying out of her class and we might perhaps conclude that
his is an attitude for which the dramatist is inviting
approval.

There seems no doubt, on the other hand, that in
L'Irrésolu Pyrante's support for Dorante and thus his view of
marriage is intended to be taken seriously. For him love is
essential to the relationship:

Mais comme en ma jeunesse
J'ai goûté les plaisirs d'une vive ten­
dresse,
The lovers in the comedy also tend to discuss the nature of marriage in the context of the moral obligations which it imposes. It is interesting to note that already in Dancourt's *Le Mari retrouvé* Clitandre, formerly something of a libertine, has been reformed by love and has given some consideration to the qualities which are necessary in marriage. Rejecting any suggestion that Colette's birth makes her unsuitable for him, he believes that "c'est le mérite & la vertu qui font des mariages" (Scene I). This more serious view exists alongside the relationship between Julien and Mme Julienne which we have mentioned, providing a contrast to it and challenging in addition the assumptions of Lépine. A new or changing outlook is thus opposed to the old.

In *L'Obstacle imprévu* Destouches confronts the cynical view held by Valère and Pasquin that no affection is possible between husband and wife and the moralistic outlook of Angélique, first expressed in this speech:

"Voilà ce que c'est. Je vous suis destinée pour femme; ce titre vous déplait d'avance. Que je pense différemment! Plus je songe que vous serez mon époux, et plus mon cœur s'attache à vous."  

22See p. 168, footnote 11 above.

23In reply to Clitandre's claim that "jamais je n'aimerai qu'elle," Lépine says: "C'est-à-dire que vous voilà déterminé à ne vous point marier; car, apparemment, vous ne voulez pas faire la petite Meunière autre chose qu'une maîtresse?" (Scene I).
sincèrement. Dans les cœurs tendres et vertueux, il se forme les passions les plus violentes, quand le devoir autorise l'inclination. (Act I, scene II).

While marriage is repugnant to Valère, Angélique is drawn to the very idea of the relationship in the abstract and we see not only that she has a capacity for feeling, but also that she links the notion of love to that of duty. Furthermore, there is an intellectual quality in her feeling, since she is well able to examine her own heart. Angélique's awareness of her nature and of the fact that she is unusual at this time leads her ultimately to a sense of her superiority. It is no doubt this which inspires in her a desire to reform Valère; to Pasquin's description of the course of most love affairs in Paris, she replies:

Je veux que vous m’aimiez autrement que cela, Valère, et que vous vous distinguiez des personnes de votre âge; qu’enfin vous rameniez la mode des beaux sentiments. (Act I, scene II).

Angélique is unsuccessful in her attempt to change Valère, it is true, but this does not necessarily imply that her words are to be discounted; she is sympathetically portrayed throughout the play and possesses some nobility of character. This becomes apparent in Act V, when she allays Valère's fears that, seeking revenge, she will attempt to harm him; she assures him, for example, that "je vous ai trop aimé pour pouvoir vous nuire ..." (Act V, scene V). Angélique emerges at the end of this scene a more attractive protagonist than Valère and we might therefore conclude that her standards are those approved by the dramatist.

There are two distinct features in L’Obstacle imprévu, namely a new set of values and the particular technique used
by Destouches to represent them, he retains a character of traditional view, but deliberately exploits him to emphasise an attitude of a different kind. This device is employed again in *Les Philosopphones amoureux* where the theme of marriage and discussions about it are predominant. Here Léandre has a tendency, like Angélique, to analyse his responses, especially where his relationship with Clarice is concerned:

> Enfin j'aimai Clarice; oui. L'aimerois-je encore?
> Cela se pourroit bien. Mais pourquoi? Je l'ignore.
> Comment puis-je l'aimer? je ne l'estime pas.
> Qu'importe? C'est le cœur qui juge des appas ...

*(Act II, scene I).*

Torn between his reason and the affective side of his nature, he is clearly guided by the latter, but betrays nevertheless an ability and moreover a desire to understand his feelings. He then brings this more rational part of his being to bear on the subject of marriage, around which the first scenes of Act II all revolve, and he asks: "Et que dit la raison touchant le mariage?" *(Act II, scene II).* His own opinion is this:

> Que de deux cœurs unis c'est un saint assemblage
> Que forment de concert l'amour et la vertu.
> Tel est mon sentiment, aujourd'hui combattu.
> Par l'attraite odieux d'un intérêt sordide.

For Léandre marriage, a "lien sacré," is a relationship based on mutual affection and virtue; this second concept remains rather vague, but presumably contains above all the notion of fidelity. Léandre certainly rejects in a subsequent scene with Clarice the accepted idea that either partner may take a
lover and that neither may show jealousy. He further gives this account of the shape of their life together:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Je serai tout à vous, vous serez tout à moi.} \\
\text{Car je veux que ma femme aime ma solitude;} \\
\text{Nous y vivrons sans trouble et sans inquiétude;} \\
\text{Et nous nous y ferons cent plaisirs innocents.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Act II, scene IV).

Clarice, as we have seen, follows the fashion of her day and remains totally opposed to his vision, unaffected by the didactic manner in which he couches it. Nevertheless it is not she but Léandre whose concept of marriage is taken seriously by Destouches and who seems to be regarded as the superior character. It is interesting to note, for instance, that Polémon, in referring to Léandre's wish to be better acquainted with Clarice before marriage, says: "Il faut bien compatir à sa délicatesse" (Act II, scene II). Léandre himself declares, of his assertion that giving reason for jealousy and not jealousy itself is a cause for shame: "Vous ne comprenez pas cette délicatesse,/ Dans ma femme, en un mot, je veux une maîtresse" (Act II, scene IV). Both these statements place Léandre on a different level from Clarice.

In Voltaire's L'Enfant prodigue (1736) Lise also has a strong sense of duty where marriage is concerned:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Je sais, mon père, à quoi ce nœud sacré} \\
\text{Oblige un cœur de vertu pénétré;} \\
\text{Je sais qu'il faut, aimable en sa sagesse,} \\
\text{De son époux mériter la tendresse,} \\
\text{Et réparer du moins par la bonté} \\
\text{Ce que le sort nous refuse en beauté ...} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Act I, scene II).

As the rest of this speech reveals, however, she also believes genuine feeling to be essential in the relationship:

\(^{24}\) See page 167, footnote 9 above.
Quant à l'amour, c'est tout un autre point; Les sentiments ne se commandent point. N'ordez rien; l'amour fuit l'esclavage. De mon époux le reste est le partage; Mais pour mon cœur, il le doit mériter ...

The two sides of Lise's nature, namely her capacity for feeling and her tendency towards reflection, are seen again in Act II when, considering the marriage proposed for her by her father, she describes an ideal of the pleasure possible in this relationship:

... l'état du mariage
Est des humains le plus cher avantage
Quand le rapport des esprits et des cœurs,
Des sentiments, des goûts, et des humeurs,
Serre ces nœuds tissus par la nature,
Que l'amour forme et que l'honneur épure.
Dieu! quel plaisir d'aimer publiquement,
Et de porter le nom de son amant!
(Act II, scene I).

This, and in particular the phrase "quel plaisir d'aimer publiquement" is in stark contrast to the attitude of, say, Clarice in Les Philosophes amoureux. Her enthusiasm is akin to that of Isabelle in Poisson's one-act play Le Procureur arbitre (1728), who also speaks of the obligations inherent in marriage when attempting to convince Ariste that she is of an age to undertake its responsibilities:

Faire de son Epoux tout son contentement,
Ne mettre qu'en lui seul tout son attachement,
Régler ses volontez sans cesse sur les siennes,
Ainsi qu'à ses plaisirs, prendre part à ses peines,
Donner à ses enfans de l'éducation;
C'est, je croi, ce qu'exige une telle union.
(Scene XVII).

In Poisson's Le Mariage fait par lettre de change (1735), Hortense also anticipates marriage with pleasure:

Une union parfaite émeut si fort mon ame,
Que cette seule idée & m'enchante, & m'enflâme.
A celui qui m'attend, & qui m'est destiné,
Aussi je vais offrir un cœur passionné.
Que l'hymen & l'amour vont nous être pro-
pices!
Que nous allons goûter de charmes, de dé-
lices!
(Scene VIII).

Lise, in Voltaire's play, goes on to speak of children,
in what becomes a vivid evocation not only of marriage, but of
family life:

Et vos enfants, ces gages précieux,
Nés de l'amour, en sont de nouveaux nœuds.
Un tel hymen, une union si chère,
Si l'on en voit, c'est le ciel sur la
terre.
(Act II, scene I).

The same importance is attached to the idea of marriage
by the Infanta in Destouches's L'Amirteux; indeed she is
present incognito at the court of Castille in order to judge
the character of the King before committing herself to him.
Don Philippe, to whom she confides her plan, calls it "héroi-
que" and adds:

J'y vois de vos vertus une preuve authen-
tique:
Et vouloir que la main soit un présent du
cœur,
C'est chercher dans l'hymen le souverain
bonheur.
(Act III, scene II).

Here once again we see the notion that marriage should be
founded on affection, but it is clear too that Don Philippe
gives to the Infanta's scheme a kind of moral quality, a
scruple which makes of her a praiseworthy and superior charac-
ter. Adoption of a disguise is therefore used for a purpose
other than contributing complexity to the intrigue. The more
serious theme which it introduces into this play is continued
in the encounter between the Infanta and the King. Here the
former states her views without shame or hesitation:
... se faire aimer, c'est son ambition. 
Elle veut tout un cœur; et le moindre partage
Ferait de son haut rang un affreux esclavage.
Du reste, à dominer elle n'a nul penchant.
Elle ne connaît point de plaisir si touchant,
tant que les tendres douceurs d'une amour mutuelle ...
(Act III, scene VII).

There is a resemblance between this part of the plot and
Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard (1730), but whereas Marivaux's intrigue has great comic potential, that of L'Ambralieux has none. The Infanta is not trapped in a scheme of her own devising as Silvia had been and she is allowed to remain in control of the situation. This would seem in itself to be an indication of Destouches's aim, which is to present in a serious context the ideas of a central protagonist on a major subject.

In Poisson's L'Amour secret (1740), marriage is again associated with certain moral considerations; Clitandre, a former libertine, states, for example, that:

Il est vrai qu'une femme aimable, jeune, sage,
Arrête comme un frein, fixe un homme voilage,
Forme ses sentiments, règle ses actions,
Et change en revenus ses dissipations.
(Scene III).

This attitude is further taken up in an exchange in the same scene with Eraste, where, in addition to approval of the relationship, we also see ideas expressed in the theoretical writings of the first half of the century:

ERASTE

Il est des unions dont mon âme est ravie,
Et que je ne puis voir sans y porter envie.
Qui pourrions-nous choisir qui pût nous convenir?
We have so far examined two features associated with the theme of marriage in the new comedy, that is to say, the relationship between the lovers and discussions about marriage itself. A third, namely a new kind of attitude between husband and wife on the stage, is suggested in Baron's L'Andrienne (1703). In particular Misis's account of her mistress's unhappiness apart from Pamphile and his speech of remorse in reply, reveal to what extent Glicerie and Pamphile are united in affection:

Ah, malheureux! C'est moi qui l'aurait donc trompée!
Je l'abandonnerois au mépris de ma foi,
Elle qui n'attend rien que du Ciel & de moi?
(Act I, scene VII).

Moreover, throughout the play there is some insistence on the moral qualities of both characters; Misis talks, for example of Glicerie's "fidele cœur" (Act I, scene VII) and Pamphile of her "vertu non commune" (Act I, scene VII), while he himself has an overriding sense of duty towards her. In addition, the relationship between them is designed to arouse, not laughter, but understanding and pity; their clandestine marriage does provide some comic effect, it is true, but only to the extent that it gives rise to the antics and intriguing of the servant Dave. In itself the relationship has no comic potential.
The development which we see in L'Andrienne at a time when sarcasm about marriage is still the predominant note in the comedy reappears with Campistron's Le Jaloux désabusé (1709), in a relationship between husband and wife of much greater complexity. At first it would seem that there is a complete lack of sympathy between them. The servant Justine's description of Dorante as a pleasure-seeker who "plaint, commande, aux belles de Paris" (Act I, scene I) contrasts with her portrayal of Célie as a woman who, while enjoying fashionable society, has a fundamental virtue. Their relations are based on no more than mutual tolerance.

At the beginning of Act II, however, when Dorante outlines the nature of his life before the opening of the play, it becomes apparent that he has undergone an important change:

Rien de ce que j'aimois ne flatte mes désirs,  
Et le Ciel m'a donné, pour finir mes plaisirs,  
Un bourreau de mes jours, un tyran de mon âme.  
(Act II, scene II).

Campistron has chosen to create, in short, a character who has fallen in love with his wife and whose jealousy reveals his feeling: "Je n'ai connu ma flamme, / Qu'aux mouvements jaloux qui déchirent mon âme ..." Coupled with this is a certain respect for moral standards which had been stifled by the frivolous life into which he had been tempted; Dorante now rails, for instance, against the common outlook in France:

Ah! François qu'à bon droit les autres Nations.

Justine claims that Célie "croit, lorsque le cœur est en effet fidèle, / Qu'un souris, qu'un regard n'est qu'une bagatelle" (Act I, scene I).
Regardent en pitié toutes vos actions;
Et blâmant votre carkit de mode & de cabale,
Condamnent justement votre fausse morale!
(Act II, scene II).

We might have supposed, to judge from Justine's words in Act I, scene 1, that Dorante would resemble the cynical libertine of the time, but he has sincerity and experiences a real dilemma, of which he is acutely conscious. From the beginning of Act II, therefore, there is a new interest in the play and the dramatist exploits it immediately to make of it the focal point of the action, by bringing together husband and wife in Act II, scene III.

Here and for the rest of Le Jalous Mésabusé the dramatist creates a certain tension between the two as Celie refuses to believe in Dorante's transformation and she joins the plot of the others to force him into allowing his sister to marry the man of her choice, albeit with some reservations. Campistron is using a misunderstanding between husband and wife for the purposes of plot, but it is significant that there is no real dislike between these two protagonists. That we are witnessing a change in the familiar framework of the comedy becomes evident at the close of the play when, with Celie's confession to Dorante of her part in the scheme and his recognition of her virtue, the two are united and Celie agrees to leave for the country with Dorante.

See his analysis of his situation at the end of Act II, scene II, where part of his debate contains the following speech: "Parlerai-je à ma femme? ou faudra-t-il me taire?/Quand je veux avec elle entamer ce discours,/La honte que je sens m'en empêche toujours."

In Act II, scene V, for example, she says: "... sans être perfide enfin ni criminelle,/Je cause à mon Époux une peine mortelle./Ne pardonnera-t-il son trouble, sa douleur?" and to this she adds such remarks as: "Je crains de l'offenser; mon devoir m'épouvante."
DORANTE
J'admire la vertu que vous me faites voir,
Et croirois faire un crime osant m'en pré-
valoir.
Demeurez à Paris; vivez à l'ordinaire.

CELIE
Je mourrois mille fois avant que de le
faire.
Je rends graces au Ciel de m'avoir en ce
jour
contré par vos transports jusqu'où va
Votre amour.
Cet amour fait lui seul le bonheur où
j'aspire.
Je veux le ménager, quoique vous puissiez
dire;
Et me cachant au monde, au moins pour quel-
que temps,
Vous prouver qu'avec vous tous mes vœux
sont contents.
(Act V, scene VII).

The most striking feature of this play is the change in the
relationship between characters who, in classical comedy,
would have been as implacably opposed at the end as they had
been at the beginning.

In Destouches's Le Philosophe marié Ariste and Mélide
are in sympathy from the outset. Despite his fear of being
ridiculed as he has ridiculed others, Ariste is attracted to
the mere idea of the status of husband, as these words to
Damon demonstrate:

Entre nous, ma foiblesse
Est de rougir d'un titre et vénérable et
doux,
D'un titre autorisé, du beau titre d'époux,
Qui me fait tressaillir lorsque je l'arti-
cule;
Et que les mœurs du temps ont rendu ridi-
cule.
(Act I, scene II).

Mélide later makes this simple and direct statement of her
feelings to Ariste:

Vous avoir pour époux
Est un bonheur pour moi si touchant et si
doux;
Il me flatte à tel point, j'en suis si
    glorieuse,
que, s'il étoit connu, je serois troy heureuse.
(Act I, scene VI).

Le Philosophe curieux is therefore important in that inter-
est centres from the first on two characters who explicitly
declare their affection for each other. This is not to say
that a degree of tension does not exist in their relationship,
for Ariste is reluctant to make it public. Destouches choos-
es not to exploit the potential conflict at the end of Act I,
however, with the result that the relations between husband
and wife cannot provide the comic and dramatic action of the
play. Only once, in Act III, does attention focus directly
on them, in a scene overheard by Ariste, revolving around a
confession of love to Mélite by the Marquis du Laurent.
Ariste's position here is somewhat ridiculous: the situation
arises after all from his own refusal to make it known that
Mélite is his wife and it was doubtless intended by the drama-
tist to arouse laughter. Nevertheless, all Mélite's words
are a deliberate proof to Ariste of her feelings for him and
no real antipathy between the two can be said to exist.

There must as a consequence be another source of action
in the play. This takes the form of Géronte's arrival with
the announcement that he has found a wife for Ariste; the in-
trigue thus concerns the measures needed to avert this danger
and Ariste's desperate attempts to explain the presence in
his house of Mélite and Céliante. Once the causes for secrecy
have disappeared, Ariste can express their complete understand-
ing in a moral at the end of the play:

Pour vous mettre, Mélite, au comble de vos
En face du public resserrons nos doux nœuds ;
Et prouvons aux railleurs que, malgré leurs outrages,
La solide vertu fait d'heureux mariages,*
(Act V, scene X).

Superficial opposition and underlying harmony are again features of the relationship between husband and wife in Nivelle de la Chaussée's La Fausse Antipathie (1733). The misunderstanding here stems from the ignorance of the central characters about the bond which unites them: married against their will many years previously, Damon and Léonore fail now to recognise each other and both in addition believe themselves bound to another partner. This apparent obstacle to happiness is particularly strong for Léonore, whose moral scruples forbid affection for Damon, refuse to allow him to divorce his wife and dictate that she remain faithful to her husband when she discovers him to be alive. The encounters of husband and wife on stage thus contain some antagonism, with Léonore often unwilling to consider a solution to their problem; in Act II, for example, she dismisses the subject:

Epargnez-vous le soin
D'un éclaircissement, dont je n'ai pas besoin.
Nous nous devons toujours éviter l'un & l'autre.
Partez, Monsieur, partez; & cessons de nous voir ...
(Act II, scene VIII).

Here and elsewhere in the play, however, no real clash of wills is observed since Damon, far from being provoked by Léonore, resists dispute, attempting to appease her, and never expresses feelings of hatred. Moreover, Léonore's protestations in the scene from which we have just quoted are followed in Act II, scene IX by a confession of her love for Damon:
J'ai rencontré l'objet que je devois aimer. 
Un mutuel amour a su nous enflammer. 
C'est une sympathie invincible, absolue, 
que j'ai d'abord sentie à la première vue. 
Ji le même rapport n'eût agi dans son cœur, 
Jamais je n'aurais pu survivre à ce malheur.

It is this spontaneous sympathy which is finally established 
at the end of the play when their identity and thus their 
relationship to each other is revealed:

DAMON 
Retrouvez un époux dans le plus tendre 

amant.

LéONORE
O sort trop fortuné! C'est mon époux que 
je j'aime. 
(Act III, scene VI).

Similarly a misunderstanding or lack of full knowledge 
delays the harmony between husband and wife in Destouches's 
Le Tambour nocturne. On the one hand the Baronne's affection 
is exemplified in this speech about her husband:

Pour moi, oui aimois le mien de tout mon cœur, et qui le trouvois digne de toute ma tendresse, il faudra que je l'oublie absolument, avant que je puisse me résoudre à me remarier; et je sens bien que je ne l'oublierai jamais. (Act II, scene V).

These sentiments are not unexpected in one who can adopt a 
moral tone in declaring: "Croyez-moi, Marquis, quand on parle 
de mariage, c'est un sujet bien sérieux" (Act IV, scene VII). 
Moreover, her feelings are reciprocated by the Baron whose 
pleasure on seeing her again is immediate:

Que j'ai de plaisir à la revoir! que je suis impatient de l'embrasser! 
(Act V, scene VI).

28 This play was published in 1736 and first performed at the Comédie Française in 1762. In subsequent chapters, the date of 1736 will be given for this play.
What he terms "les mouvements de ma tendresse," however, are repressed in order that he may test the Baronne; indeed this plan is proof both of the sincerity and the delicacy of his own feelings, a quality to which he himself draws attention:

\[ \text{Autant que j'en puis juger ... il n'y a rien de répréhensible dans la conduite de ma femme; cependant il me reste de certains doutes, de petits scrupules très-fâcheux pour un homme qui aime aussi délicatement que moi. (Act V, scene V).} \]

Destouches thus relies on a kind of tension to provide the interest in the latter part of this play. It rests on a situation in which the Baronne, unbeknown to herself, describes her love to her husband and proves the extent of her fidelity. Moreover, the suspense is maintained for as long as possible by the dramatist, and it is only in the last scene that the Baron drops his mask and that the characters are finally reunited:

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{LA BARONNE, accourant.} \\
\text{... quel bonheur de vous revoir! Est-il possible que je vous possède encore?} \\
\text{Est-ce bien vous? J'ai peine à croire mes yeux. Je suis si charmée, si transportée,} \\
\text{que je ne puis exprimer ma joie.}
\end{align*} \]

\[ \text{LE BARON} \]

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{Oui, je respire encore pour vous estimer,} \\
\text{pour vous chérir, et pour vous aimer mille fois plus que moi-même.} \\
\text{(Act V, scene XIII).}
\end{align*} \]

In Nivelle de la Chaussée's *Le Préjugé à la mode* it would seem that once again the action depends on a difference in temperament and outlook in husband and wife. In the central scene of Act I, for example, where Constance and Durval meet on stage for the first time, they are at odds over gifts received by Constance; Durval's apparent lack of concern about her sense of shame and his suggestion that she keep them
establish a rift between them.

Their disagreement is, however, a false one: as in Le Jaloux désabusé, the interest revolves here around a husband who has fallen in love with his own wife. His feelings are expressed in Act II, scene 1 to Damon:

*J'aime ... Hélas! que ce terme exprime* 

*Un peu ... qui n'est pourtant qu'un renouvellement,* 

*Qu'un retour de tendresse imprévue, inouie,* 

*Niais qui va décider du reste de ma vie!*

It is significant that in using words such as "reprendre" and "renouvellement" here, Durval is suggesting that his feelings are not new but have simply been rediscovered. A certain weakness or a fear of fashionable opinion still guides his conduct, as this declaration makes clear: "Je me sens retenu par une fausse honte. . . . Je sens le ridicule où cet amour m'expose." This apart, however, he reveals in this scene a tendency to reject the cynicism of his time and to see his present attitude in a moral context. Of his treatment of Constance, he remarks, for instance: "Mes infidélités vont être bien vengées...." Furthermore, he now has an appreciation of Constance's nature and can say to Damon "je viens de jouir de toute sa vertu."

From the beginning of Act II, therefore, the audience is aware that there is no conflict between the characters of husband and wife and certainly no dislike. As far as Constance is concerned, affection for Durval is evident in her distress

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29 He also says to Damon, for example: "Cet objet si charmant dont je reprends les loix; / Mais que je crois aimer pour la première fois; / Cette femme adorable à qui je rends les armes, / Qui du moins à mes yeux a repris tant de charmes . . . / C'est la mienne."
at his neglect, while her refusal to create antagonism between them is plain in her reluctance openly to criticise his conduct. Indeed her statement to Argante in Act I scene III that: "Un éclat indiscret ne fait qu'aliéner/ Un cœur que la douceur auraît pu ramener" bears witness both to the gentleness of her disposition and to her desire for a relationship of sympathy with Durval.

The playwright uses this situation to provide the main dramatic interest in Le préjugé à la mode. In Act II, scene II, for example, that is to say immediately after Durval has confessed his love for Constance to Damon, husband and wife are brought together on stage for the second time in a scene which revolves around attempts by both to express their regard. Durval responds instinctively now to the unhappiness conveyed in Constance's: "Ah! j'étais respectée, je ne le suis plus," and the stage direction that he "l'embrasse, & tendrement" is deliberately inserted to emphasise his affection. Any exchange of feeling between these two protagonists must in a sense be implicit, however, in view of Durval's continuing hesitation to reveal his love. There is no doubt that this is genuine, but Durval addresses himself to Constance through Sophie and Damon:

S'il est un sort heureux, c'est celui d'un époux,
qui rencontre à la fois dans l'objet qui l'enchante,
Une épouse chérie, une amie, une amante.
Quel moyen de n'y pas fixer tous ses desirs!
Il trouve son devoir dans le sein des plaisirs.
(Act II, scene II).

Once again the dramatist insists on the latent sympathy between these characters by adding stage directions to the exchange
which follows this speech:

CONSTANCE, tendrement.
Je sens que ce portrait devroit être fidèle.

DURVAL, en la regardant de meme.
Madame, on en pourroit trouver plus d'un
temple.

The potential sympathy between husband and wife in this
play is therefore considerable. It is true that it is shat-
tered for a time by Durval's belief that Constance is unfaith-
ful, but as this belief is entirely unfounded, the affection
which is at the heart of their relationship is quickly reborn.
In Act V, in a scene deliberately engineered by Jamon,
Constance's description of torment provokes remorse in Durval
and this finally brings about a reunion. To a statement of
devotion made in a letter to her, Constance replies:

Cher époux, lève-toi. Va, je reçois ton cœur;
Je reviens avec lui ma vie & mon bonheur.

Dorante's question: "Quoi! vous me pardonnez l'outrage & le
parjure?" is answered with: "Oui; laisse-moi goûter une joie
aussi pure" (Act V, scene V) and the couple finally achieve
an understanding which brings about the dénouement.

A comparison between Le Préjugé à la mode and, say, Le
Jaloux désabusé to which it bears some resemblance, is inter-
esting when an attempt is made to assess the development of
eighteenth-century comedy as far as the theme of marriage is
concerned. There is a definite moral tone in the later play
and the harmony in the relationship of husband and wife is
more explicit at the end as indeed their affection had been
throughout the action. Even when Durval's hatred for
Constance seems to be at its height, it rapidly changes, when
he learns the truth, to repentance and to a fear that her love
for him might have died.

To create a permanent relationship of sympathy between the characters of husband and wife after many years' separation is one of the major concerns of action in Mélanide. Mélanide's own desires emerge in a speech to Théodon:

Croyez-vous que l'âge, que l'époux le plus tendre
La laisse dans l'abîme de son plus profond
oubli?

Mai le dois-je accuser de tant de perfidie?
Non, le moindre soupçon m'aurait coûté la
vin.

C'est pour le retrouver que mon cœur vous
implore.
Tout peut se réparer. S'il respire, il
m'adore.
(Act II, scene III).

There is no doubt that the Marquis once reciprocated Mélanide's affection as he refers to their relationship as a "secret hymenée,/ dont on ne fit baiser la chaîne fortunée./ Vous savez quelle fut la douleur que j'en eus" (Act II, scene I). Moreover, he now experiences a certain guilt because he has broken vows never to love again in wishing to marry Rosalie. The dramatist indeed insists throughout not only on the potential sympathy between husband and wife but on the moral implications of this situation. Mélanide, for instance, is prepared to resort to reminding the Marquis of his family ties:

Renouvelez-lui bien la foi que je lui
donne
De lui garder toujours ce cœur qu’il abandonne;
Ce cœur qui lui parut un don si précieux.
Parlez-lui de son fils; il sauvera sa mère.
Qui peut mieux resserrer une chaîne si
chère?
(Act IV, scene I).

Théodon too, emphasises to the Marquis his obligations:
Etouffez un amour qui n'est plus légitime.
Le penchant doit finir où commence le crime.
(Act III, scene VI).

The Marquis himself claims that "que[ue soit cet amour si funeste;/ j'armorai contre lui la vertu qui me reste" (Act III, scene VI). It is this virtue, and the sight of Mélanide, which cause a rebirth of his feeling for her, such that husband and wife can once again be reconciled at the close of the play and that the dénouement can take the form of a reunion of all members of the family. Even here part of the conclusion takes the form of an analysis and explanation by the Marquis of his former dilemma and present happiness:

Avant que de revoir un objet si touchant,
J'ai cru ne pouvoir vaincre un coupable penchant:
Mais j'éprouve, en sortant de cette erreur extrême,
Qu'en me rendant à vous, je me rends à moi-même.
Mon cœur et mon amour vont se renouveler.
Heureux que vous ayez dîxagné les rappeler!
( en l'embrassant.)
Quelle félicité m'alloit être ravie!
(Act V, scene III).

The concept of marriage in the new comedy can be seen against the morals of "sensibilité" in general and the serious moralising works on family relations in particular. One of the most striking features of the relationships which we have been examining, whether they be those of the lovers or of a married couple, is that the characters involved both feel and know that they feel. They are quite different, therefore, from Marivaux's characters, from the Silvia of Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard (1730), for example, and her: "Ah! je vois clair dans mon cœur" (Act II, scene XII), Marivaux moves
his lovers to the front of the stage and makes of the establishment of a relationship of sympathy the main intrigue. His characters possess a capacity for feeling and it is undoubtedly this which forms a bond between them, whether or not they realise it. In the Seconde Surprise de l'amour (1728), the Marquise says to the Chevalier, for instance:

... il n'y aura que moi qui vous plairai véritablement, et vous êtes le seul qui rendra justice à mes pleurs; vous me ressemblez, vous êtes né sensible, je le vois bien. (Act I, scene VII).

In many scenes in Marivaux's theatre the feelings are the subject of discussion; indeed one might say that the lovers talk themselves from one attitude into another, for once a possibility has been stated it must remain in the mind and influence subsequent behaviour. In the Seconde Surprise the Marquise replies to the Chevalier's "ce n'est point une amitié faite comme les autres":

... c'est là précisément l'amitié que je demande, là voilà, c'est la véritable, elle est délicate, elle est jalouse, elle a droit de l'être ...

(Act II, scene IX).

Moreover the Chevalier mentions love:

Ma foi, je défie un amant de vous aimer plus que je le fais; je n'aurais jamais cru que l'amitié allât si loin, cela est surprenant; l'amour est moins vif.

"Amitié" and "amour" are almost synonymous here, although the characters themselves may be unconscious of the fact, but once the second word has been spoken, it makes inevitable the feeling which it denotes. As this relationship reveals, the timidity or resistance to love in many of Marivaux's protagonists means that there is a gap between the coming into being and the coming into consciousness of a feeling which can be
exploited by the dramatist to provide comic and dramatic irony.

In the new comedy there is no such possibility. Lovers and married couples alike have a capacity for feeling and believe in the supremacy of that feeling. Mélite's pronouncement in Le Philosophe marié: "Et le plus, quand un cœur consent à se donner, il ne l'examine pas, il se laisse entraîner" (Act III, scene IV), is echoed by Damon in the same play: "Oh! délibére-t-on quand on donne son cœur? Il se donne lui-même, et nous fait violence" (Act III, scene VIII). In spite of the fact that the protagonists allow the heart to triumph, they use the rational side of their being to observe a split in their own or human nature in general. The intellectual quality of "sensibilité" is indeed manifest in all the scenes in which characters analyse in a logical and coherent fashion conflicting or successive "movements". Their pride in a capacity for feeling is such that it would be unthinkable for them not to comment on it. There is thus no discrepancy between a character's image of himself and what the spectator perceives to be the truth and therefore no comic potential in his relations with others.

Where a married couple is at the centre of the intrigue, we have seen a gradual movement towards a new or better understanding between the characters of husband and wife at the end of the play. In general the sympathy established is in effect an expression of a feeling which had always existed and not one which has come into being during the course of the action. The disagreement between the characters, which is in any case superficial, is not exploited to any significant
extent and a number of devices are therefore employed in order to create a kind of tension on which the play may be based, once again we may say that playwrights are breaking what might be called the traditional rules of dramatic structure.
CHAPTER SIX

Comedy and moral approval

The principle established by Horace that art, and poetry in particular, should be both pleasurable and useful (De Arte Poetica, 11. 343-44), is a common one in European literature. It came to France mainly by way of the Italian Renaissance and was widely adopted in the sixteenth century and subsequently in the seventeenth, as "plaire et instruire," by poets and critics alike. Writers such as Chapelain and La Mesnardièrre take up the idea that art, to merit the name, must have a serious purpose and the statements of the major classical authors on the subject are by now well-known. ¹

The eighteenth century had a great interest in morals and studies in human nature, which constituted the only legitimate reading. As far as comic drama is concerned, several playwrights, while offering a commentary in a general sense on human behaviour, claim to be producing works of an improving kind. That Boursault, for example, had a definite moral aim in writing Esope à la cour (1701) is evident in the Prologue to the play:

Et je souhaiterois, avec l'aide d'Esope,
Pouvoir déraciner des cœurs
Les vices qu'on y développe.

His method, in attempting this, is to present his audience not with "les plus judicieux conseils," but with their own

¹ For a study of this subject see R. Bray, La Formation de la doctrine classique en France (Paris, 1927), Seconde Partie, Chapitre premier, pp. 63-84.

² E. Boursault, Esope à la cour, Prologue, Theatre de feu Monsieur Boursault (Paris, 1746), III, 374.
likeness which will shame them into reform. He thus agrees, in part at least, with dramatists such as Molière when he states:

Si quelqu'un par hazard d'un mauvais caractère
S'y trouve si bien peint qu'il soit presque parlant;
Il ne tient qu'à lui de bien faire,
Il ne sera plus ressemblant.

(III, 375).

Later in the century these ideas find expression in Poisson's L'Impromptu de campagne (1733), where Éraste, defending his disguise as an actor, claims:

La Comédie est belle;
Et je ne trouve rien de condamnable en elle:
Elle est du ridicule un si parfait miroir,
Qu'on peut devenir sage à force de s'y voir.
La Comédie enfin, par d'heureux artifices,
Fait aimer la vertu, & détester les vices.

Corrige les défauts, instruit en amusant,
En morale agréable en mille endroits abonde,
Et pour dire le vrai, c'est l'École du monde.

(Scene II).

It is Destouches, however, who seems the most consistent and enthusiastic adherent to the classical notion that art should be instructive. Indeed he quotes Horace when discussing the function of comedy:

On sait que j'ai toujours devant les yeux ce grand principe dicté par Horace:

Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci.

et que je crois que l'art dramatique n'est estimable, qu'autant qu'il a pour but d'instruire en divertissant.

There can be no doubt that for him comedy is imperfect, even dangerous, if the playwright does not intend to "corriger les
... to slander ridicule, to denounce vice, and to extol virtue upon such a beautiful day, as she attires esteem and veneration (II, 708). In all the Prefaces and prologues which Destouches has left us, this theme is one which constantly returns. The prologue to Le Curieux impertinent (1710), for example, declares of the dramatist that:

\[ \text{Il a pour objet principal} \\
\text{de prêcher la vertu, de décrier le vice;} \\
\text{en son innocente malice} \\
\text{Nous étoiq aux dépens de quelque original;} \\
\text{on divertissant il instruit ...} \]

(V, 429).

The Prologue to L'Ambitieux et l'Indiscrète (1737) reiterates this assertion, and makes plain that there is pleasure for the audience in the moral aim of the play:

... au public elle (la pièce) prouve le zèle \\
D'un auteur dont tous les travaux, \\
Et les innocentes malices, \\
Ont pour objet de plaire en corrigeant les vices. 

(V, 453).

The most obvious way for a playwright to offer this kind of pleasure and indeed to be instructive is for his characters to utter observations on life: the "sentences" of sixteenth and seventeenth-century drama, for example, help to fulfil this purpose. What one might call well-formulated maxims are frequent in the new comedy of the eighteenth century, being very often remarks made in conclusion to a discussion. Don Fernand's statement in L'Ambitieux:

\[ \text{This Prologue was written several years after the play itself for a private production in the country. See "Septième Lettre, A Madame La Comtesse de C\textsuperscript{x}x, "Oeuvres, V, 415-6.} \]
amounts to a rule of conduct and is evidence of a liking for observations of general and universal significance, based in the first instance on a particular circumstance. In Poisson's Le Procureur arbitre (1728) Lisette, commenting on her mistress's desire to examine Ariste before marriage, ends her speech with this judgement on contemporary society:

Une telle prudence est rare parmi nous; Et par l'extérieur nos cœurs se prennent tous. On étale à nos yeux des graces singulières; Ce sera de l'esprit, ce seront des manières, On se rend; & l'on voit que ces déhors charmans Estoient des imposteurs, lorsqu'il n'en est plus tems. (Scene XII).

Ariste himself reveals the same tendency when drawing from his encounter with and opinion of a client a rule about human behaviour:

Des hommes la plûpart voilà le foible af-freux: Ils blâment dans chacun ce qui domine en eux. (Scene IV).

In Nivelle de la Chaussée's L'École de la jeunesse (1749), the servant Rosette says to the Marquis: "Souvent .../ Le cœur a des secrets que l'esprit ne sçait pas" (Act I, scene IV), while Géronte in La Fausse Antipathie (1733) delivers the following speech about women, derived from his experience of Léonore's conduct:

La femme est une espece à qui rien ne res­semble; C'est tout bien ou tout mal; & tous les deux ensemble.
Est-elle vertueuse? elle l'est à l'excès.

C'est toujours à l'extrême où son penchant la guide.

(Act III, scene II).

Similarly, Géronte, in Le Dissipateur (1736), observes of one individual woman's success:

Je remarque

Qu'une femme prudente et qui se donne au bien,

Vaut cent fois mieux qu'un homme.

(Act IV, scene I).

It can be seen that these statements are made in isolation and demand no reply: indeed, as we have suggested, they are intended to conclude, in the neatest possible fashion, a train of thought or a preceding discussion. It is not uncommon, however, for a conversation to take the shape of an exchange of such maxims, as it does for example in Act III of Les Philosophes amoureux (1729):

ARTÉNICE

Les sages sont discrets.

DAMIS

Les sages... s'il en est, ignorent le mystère;

Car ils ne pensent rien qu'ils soient forcés de taire.

C'est aux fous à cacher ce qu'ils ont dans le cœur.

ARTÉNICE

Ils ne le peuvent pas; et c'est là leur malheur;

Mais le sage se tait; c'est là son privilège.

(Act III, scene III).

There are clearly limits to the length of such a conversation,

5 Le Dissipateur was published in 1736 and first performed in Paris in 1753. In subsequent chapters the date of this play will be given as 1736. It has been suggested that Destouches had a plan for it before he left for England in 1717. See A. Bürner, "Philippe Néricault-Destouches (1680-1754): Essai de biographie," Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, 38 (1931), 63-64.
but Damis's words: "O ciel! à tant d'appas comment échapperai-je?" (Act III, scene III), reveal an admiration for Arténice's ability to argue in this way. The tendency we have been examining is not therefore regarded as pompous; on the contrary, it is an indication of a character's superiority.

The facility for expressing ideas in neatly phrased epigrams can also be seen in observations made by certain characters on themselves or their fellows. In Destouches's L'Homme singulier (1745) the Comte claims to Sanspair:

\[ \text{J'ai l'air d'un étourdi; mais, ô futur beau-frère!} \]
\[ \text{L'air ne décide pas toujours du caractère} \]

(Act V, scene XII).

This statement about Julie in La Force du naturel (1750) is no more original:

\[ \text{Non, l'éducation, malgré tous ses efforts, Ne parvient pas toujours à parer les dehors. Quand même elle y parvient, le naturel subsiste ...} \]

(Act III, scene V).

These remarks are proof of the predilection for drawing a general conclusion, amounting almost to a lesson, from personal acquaintance. We are moving away here, however, from comments intended as abstract guides of behaviour to comments more closely related to people, showing an attempt at insight into human nature. Nowhere is this inclination clearer than in the liking, common in the seventeenth century and still evident in the new comedy, for portrait-painting. In Baron's L'Homme à bonne fortune (1696), for example, Marton remarks on Moncade's character with some pride in her knowledge of his "type" and of the way in which he is likely to react:
... tout ce qui s'est passé, le rendra peut-être sage.

MARTON
Lui? cela le rendra cent fois plus fou; je vous en répons, vous vous connaissez bien mal en caractère; il compte, à l'heure que je vous parle, qu'il ferait accroire à Lucinde que ce qui est blanc est noir; l'expérience qu'il en a, ne servira qu'à le rendre plus téméraire. Vous verrez si je ne me connais pas bien en gens. (Act IV, scene I).

This traditional ability of the servant to understand character is seen in many of the valets and soubrettes in Destouches and in the Pasquin of Piron's L'école des pères (1728), who sums up Géronte's sons most swiftly with:

Tous les trois sont égaux: le Financier habile
Est un vrai Financier, un Arabe, en un mot,
Le Capitaine un fat; & l'Auditeur un sot.
Tous trois enfin, soit dit sans offenser mon Maître,
Les trois plus francs vauriens que vous puissiez connaître.
(Act I, scene IV).

The same tendency to generalise is seen in many portraits outlining two contrasting characters, a technique popular in the comedy; in L'Homme singulier Lisette points out the difference between brother and sister with these words:

Du comte de Sanspair vous êtes le contraste:
La mode lui fait peur; il abhorrre le faste.
Non, je ne comprends pas qu'un frère et qu'une sœur
Puissent, à cet excès, différer par l'humeur ...
(Act II, scene I).

She concludes her assertion, moreover, with the maxim that "la variété fait briller la nature."

It seems therefore that characters of several kinds can say with the Lisette of L'Amour usé (1741): "Je connais le cœur humain ..." (Act III, scene IV). Their statements act as
a guide for others and are intended to be useful while containing no explicit moral "lesson". Many protagonists also tend towards introspection. Damon, in Le Curieux impertinent, for example, reveals clear self-knowledge when comparing himself with Léandre:

... j'ai plus d'amour, plus de délicatesse; Je porte un cœur exempt d'une telle foibllesse. Croyez-vous que ce cœur ait pu feindre avec vous? Il fait, de vous aimer, son bonheur le plus doux ...

(Act IV, scene XI)

Furthermore, this speech to Julie establishes a scale of values and suggests qualities which are worthy of consideration. The same approach is adopted by Léandre in Les Philosophes amoureux, when analysing his own nature and the sources of his happiness:

Ma solitude à tous moments abonde En plaisirs innocents que n'offre point le monde. Dans un repos parfait, exempt de passions, Ici tout est matière à mes réflexions. ... quand je veux m'étudier moi-même, Je sens que je suis né pour un bonheur supérieur ...

(Act I, scene III)

To study oneself in this way is therefore a pleasurable and useful pursuit; it is mocked by Lisidor, but is not for that to be condemned: Lisidor is an irascible and authoritarian father, unlikely to arouse sympathy in either reader or audience. It is Léandre's standards and not those of Lisidor or a superficial and hectic polite society which are being praised by the dramatist here. This is indeed the case whenever a "philosophe" such as Léandre appears in the new comedy.

6 The "foibllesse" referred to by Damon is Léandre's uncertainty.
Both Ariste, in the first scene of *Le Philosophe marié* (1727), and Arténice in *Les Philosophes amoureux* are allowed to expand on the contentment to be found in retreat from society. This is Arténice's meditation on solitude which combines appreciation of its pleasures with comment on the moral benefit to be derived from it:

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Ah! que deux cœurs, unis par l'hymen et l'amour,
Goûteroient de plaisirs dans ce charmant séjour!
J'en ferois mon bonheur, j'en ferois mes délices.
La vertu, la raison, en banniroient les vices,
Pour n'y faire régner que la tranquillité,
L'amour, la complaisance et la fidélité.
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(Act III, scene I).

Many characters also pause to reflect on the motives for and the propriety of their actions. A servant is as capable of this in the new comedy as are the main protagonists; in Nivelle de la Chaussée's *La Fausse Antipathie*, for example, Nérine questions her acceptance of a ring from Damon:

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Je ne sais, à présent que j'ai le diamant,
Je vois que je me suis oubliée un moment:
Réfléchissons un peu sur mon étourderie.
Je devois refuser cette galanterie.
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(Act II, scene VII).

Nérine's self-recrimination is short-lived, it is true, and her dilemma easily resolved, but she possesses nonetheless certain scruples which, moreover, she feels compelled to examine. Damon in *L'Amour usé* subjects his generosity to a similar scrutiny:

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Mais cette action est-elle bien pure, et n'y entre-t-il point un peu de dépit, de malice et de ressentiment? Ne suis-je pas piqué contre Lisidor, qui se cache de moi, et contre Isabelle, que j'ai si longtemps aimée, et qui m'a toujours méprisé?
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(Act IV, scene IV).
In Mélanide, Théodon pauses to consider events together with his own conduct:

Ce que je viens de faire est un coup de partie
Qui les sauve tous quatre, & moi-même avec eux.
Car enfin il étoit pour moi bien douloureux
D'être, sans y penser, le complice d'un crime
Dont Mélanide alloit devenir la victime.
Mais, en réparant tout, j'ai rempli mon devoir...

(Act III, scene VIII).

As we can see from this, pleasure at having brought the lovers together is less important to Théodon than satisfaction in the knowledge that Mélanide will not suffer and that his own integrity has been maintained.

A character's examination of himself and others is, therefore, not always objective. Alongside the portraits we have mentioned and the traditional comments about appearance, age and wealth, are statements about moral qualities. They are didactic in the sense that they make a value judgment and ultimately seek to establish ideal moral standards. Léandre's opinion of Damon in Le Curieux impertinent, for example "En mérite, en vertu, tu n'as guère d'égal" (Act I, scene VII), is far from being a detached observation, as his words contain a suggestion of that which characterises a man of true worth.

This tendency had already been present in the comedy. Justine remarks of Celie in Campistron's Le Jaloux désabusé (1709): "Elle a de la vertu, mais elle est belle, & femme ..." (Act I, scene I). A more positive assessment, containing potential approval of virtue, is offered by Dubois, when

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7 Théodon has reunited Darviane and Rosalie, thus making impossible a marriage between the latter and the Marquis, Mélanide's husband. At this stage in the play he, the Marquis, is unaware that Mélanide is still alive.
urging Dorante to confess his love to Celie: "La vertu dans son âme est si bien établie,/ .../ Que vous n'en recevrez que du contentement" (Act II, scene II). It is true that the terms "vertu" or "merite" are vague. Lisette says of Cléon, for example, in L'Ingrat: "Il joint bien du mérite à sa haute naissance" (Act I, scene III), and Lisimon speaks to Julie of "vos charmes, votre bon esprit, votre vertu" (Act III, scene IV) in L'Obstacle imprévu (1717). A new attitude is nevertheless discernible. In L'Ingrat, for instance, Damis says of Géronte: "Son trop de probité, sa candeur, sa droiture,/ Tiennent incessamment mon âme à la torture ..."(Act IV, scene VII), an observation in which is clearly implied a condemnation of Géronte's virtue. The dramatist, however, is surely suggesting that these qualities, ridiculed by an unscrupulous character, are admirable. In L'Irrésolu (1713) Frontin describes Célimène as "tendre, et fidèle, et constante" (Act I, scene II), while in Le Philosophe marié Mélite, according to Ariste, is "sage et vertueuse" (Act I, scene I).

In L'École des pères, Angélique says of Géronte: "J'ai vu sa gratitude, & sa vertu m'est chère" (Act IV, scene X) and Géronte in his turn refers to Angélique as: "D'appas & de vertus un si rare assemblage" (Act V, scene VII). A similar technique is evident in Destouches's Le Glorieux where Lisette speaks of Lycandre as "cet ami vertueux" (Act I, scene VIII) and her judgment that Valère has "toute la sagesse et la vertu d'un père" (Act I, scene IV), is almost exactly echoed by Lycandre's assessment that her desire to leave Lisimon's house before he can refuse her marriage to Valère is "une preuve insigne/ Et de votre prudence, et de votre vertu" (Act I, scene IX).
In *Le Tambour nocturne* (1736) the Baronne uses slightly different words when describing her husband to express an attitude which is essentially the same as those which we have already noted:

C'étoit l'honneur, la probité, la sincérité même. Sa bonté, sa douceur, sa complaisance ne se sont jamais démenties un seul moment. (Act V, scene VI).

These terms, "douceur", "complaisance" and in particular "probité", are those which recur in judgments of a character in the new comedy and the qualities which they denote are intended by the dramatist for approval. As the Comtesse's statement about Sanspair in *L'Homme singulier* suggests, they are the attributes of an admirable character:

Et Sanspair est au fond un caractère aimable:
Il est doux, complaisant; sa singularité, Effet de sa candeur et de sa probité, Ne met dans son esprit ni travers, ni caprice. Ami de la vertu, fier ennemi du vice, Il ose ouvertement pratiquer la vertu ... (Act V, scene VII).

The notion of "probité" is taken up again in the Marquis's judgment, in the same play, of both his son and Sanspair: "C'est un jeune éventé;/ Mais il a le cœur noble, et d'une probité/ Qu'on ne peut justement comparer qu'à la vôtre" (Act V, scene XI). In Boissy's *Les Dehors trompeurs* (1740), Lucile gives the preference to virtuous qualities when drawing a contrast between the Marquis and the Baron:

Jugez combien il perd dans le fond de mon ame Par la comparaison que je fais de sa flamme, Avec le feu constant, tendre & respectueux D'un Amant jeune & sage, aimable & vertueux Vous possédez, Marquis, le mérite solide ... (Act IV, scene XIII).
Act I, scene VII of Voltaire's Nanine abounds in admiration of one character by another. The Comte states to Nanine, for instance, that "je vous rends ce que votre conduite,/Votre beauté, votre vertu mérite," while Nanine herself recognises the Comte's superiority:

Eh! que ferais-je, et que verrais-je au monde,
Après avoir admiré vos vertus?

Comment on or analysis of another character thus gradually takes on a didactic overtone, which gives the plays one of their most recognisable features. It can be seen that the same words and notions tend to recur without precise explanation; even this definition of merit made by the Commandeur when speaking of the Marquis in Nivelle de la Chaussée's L'École de la jeunesse, adds little to what can only be an impression of the quality mentioned: "Voilà le vrai mérite. Il est simple, modeste/Ne présume de rien, & se vante encore moins" (Act II, scene II). A simple allusion to goodness or probity is clearly sufficient to indicate a completely virtuous nature. It is interesting to note, however, some of the terms which are used in association with "vertu" and which, in some cases indeed, even supplant this word. In Le Glorieux, for example, where, as we have seen, the virtue of several characters is commented upon with approval, Lycandre in giving advice to Lisette, says this:

Songez qu'urn naissance illustre
Des sentiments du cœur reçoit son plus beau lustre.

In addition there is this exchange between the two characters: "NANINE. Au dernier rang les destins m'ont compris.
LE COMTE. Dans le premier vos vertus vous ont mise."
Et si le sort cruel vous a ravi vos biens,
D'un plus rare trésor enviant le partage,
Soyez riche en vertus: c'est là votre appa­nage.
(Act I, scene IX)

We see that allied to virtue are attributes belonging to the affective side of man's being, namely "sentiments du cœur."

Feelings and moral scruples are thus closely linked in Lyandre's mind; indeed, feelings are moral scruples and "sentiment" can mean "vertu", or at least a kind of moral principle. This is a new and extended usage of the word and is present from the first in the new comedy, even where the moral sense in question is condemned. In Le Curieux impertinent, for example, Crispin observes of Damon's reluctance to act as rival to Léandre:

Quoi! se sacrifier pour un ami? Ma foi,
Ces beaux sentiments-là ne sont pas faits pour moi.
(Act I, scene II).

In Nivelle de la Chaussée's La Fausse Antipathie, Léonore's refusal to obtain a divorce in order to marry Damon is dismissed firstly with these words: "Ma nièce, en vérité, tous ces grands sentiments/ Sont des inventions pour orner des romans" (Act III, scene IV) and subsequently with this reproof which connects "sentiment" and moral sense even more closely: "Pourquoi s’abandonner au torrent des scrupules?/ De trop grands sentiments sont souvent ridicules" (Act III, scene VI). 9

In by far the greatest number of cases, however, the term "sentiment", often in the plural, is used to convey approval of the moral sense it denotes, and is often qualified by

9 Léonore's refusal is based on a fear of hurting both Damon's wife and her own husband.
adjectives such as "beau" or "noble", which suggest that attitude. In Destouches's L'Ingrat Géronte refers to Damis's apparent willingness to sacrifice Isabelle to Cléon as "de si beaux sentiments" (Act II, scene V). Don Félix reacts to his son's decision to place King and State before Don Fernand, his brother, with the words: "O nobles sentiments, qui m'arrachent des larmes!" (Act I, scene IV). In Pamela (1743), the association of "noble" and "sentiment" is automatic where the latter is used in a moral context; Mme Andrews observes of Pamela's scruples, for example: "Je reconnais enfin ces nobles sentiments/ Qu'autrefois t'inspira ton père" (Act III, scene V). Miledi also uses the phrase in Act V, scene III when praising Pamela's desire to resist Milord's love for his own good: "Conservez, Pamela, ces nobles sentiments..." The Marquis in La Force du naturel seems to be employing the word in its new sense when referring, with approval, to Babet's conduct: "... vous lui trouverez de nobles sentiments;/ ... éprouvant qu'elle est aussi sage que belle..." (Act III, scene II).

The word "sentiment" alone and without qualification can also imply a moral sense. In Le Tambour nocturne the Baronne says, when condemning the Marquis:

J'ai trouvé qu'il n'aimoit que mon bien,
qu'il n'avoit point de sentiments, qu'il
étoit libertin, insolent, présomptueux...
(Act V, scene VI).

Conversely, Ariste, in Fagan's La Pupille (1734) comments with approval on Julie's character:

... elle a des sentiments dignes de sa
naissance: elle est douce, modeste, atten-
tive, en un mot, je ne vois rien de plus
aimable ni de plus sage. (Scene II).
The Marquise in Boissy's *Le Médecin par occasion* also shows that "sentiments" is synonymous with virtue, or a spontaneous desire to see others happy: "Quand on a le cœur bon, qu'on a des sentiments,/ Le mal d'autrui nous tue, on ne vit pas long-temps" (Act I, scene V).

The possession of "sentiments" is thus valued highly and considered the most attractive of qualities. In Voltaire's *L'Enfant prodigue* (1736), Euphémon fils's repentance and determination to lead a virtuous life appeal to Lise more than a profession of love. The despair underlying his decision to risk his life in war for his country, for example "est d'un cœur au-dessus de sa faute;/ Ces sentiments me touchent encor plus/ Que vos pleurs même à mes pieds répandus" (Act IV, scene III). In *La Force du naturel* the Marquis states that:

Le mérite est ce qui fait le rang,
Les nobles sentiments, la vertu, la sagesse,
Ce sont là proprement les titres de noblesse ...

(Act III, scene VII).

We can see therefore that maxims encapsulate a scale of values. Qualities such as wealth and rank are of course mentioned in the new comedy, but there is above all an insistence on moral worth in assessment of character.

That moral excellence can be conveyed in the word "sentiment" illustrates the influence on the comedy of the ideas of the time. The term "sensible" is also deliberately linked, although more rarely, to the notion of virtue. In Fagan's *Le Rendez-vous* (1733) there is an association of the two in Crispin's judgement of Lucile: "Elle est belle, sensible et femme de vertu" (Scene XIII). This play hinges on a trick played by the servants on their masters to make them fall in
love: Crispin's words here may not therefore be sincere, but his choice of terms is nevertheless interesting. Euphémon fils in L'Enfant prodigue also uses the word in connection with a moral quality and is moreover unequivocal in his approval of it:

Il m'accompagne, et son âme grossière, Sensible et tendre en sa rusticité, N'a point pour moi perdu l'humanité ... (Act III, scene I).

The only play in which "sensibilité" might be said to have a moral force is Le Glorieux and even here it takes a negative form. Lycandre's words: "Quel bon cœur d'un côté!/De l'autre, quel excès d'insensibilité!" (Act IV, scene III), referring to the Comte's harsh or indifferent response to Lisette's concern for him, indicate in an oblique fashion that "sensibilité" can signify virtue.

If a variation is sought for "vertu" or "probité", it is likely to be "délicatesse", whose usage in this context is not new. In Le Curieux impertinent and La Fausse Antipathie the word is synonymous with "sentiment", being used in the two situations already mentioned to imply moral scruple. In the play by Destouches, for example, Crispin remarks of Damon's hesitation:

Ménager un ami, respecter sa maîtresse, Craindre de la tenter, belle délicatesse! (Act I, scene II).

Similarly, Damon refers to Léonore's moral notions in La Fausse Antipathie as: "Ces frivoles raisons .../Qu'invente contre moi votre délicatesse" (Act II, scene VIII). The same word is applied by the Baron in Boissy's Les Dehors trompeurs to the Marquis's reluctance to harm a friend:
Sur cet article-là votre scrupule est grand!
A son plus haut degré c'est porter la sagesse.
Si vos pareils avoient cette délicatesse

(Act II, scene II).

This term is used to describe Pamela's refusal to be swayed by Milord's gifts in Nivelle de la Chaussée's play. Here and in other instances quoted, the word does not appear to express approval of the moral feeling which it is used to signify: rather it serves, when referring to the conduct of others, to single them out, making a distinction between them and those of less rigorous moral principle. The dramatist's attitude may not necessarily be that of the character who makes the judgement, however; on the contrary, the characters designated "délicats" are invariably ones whose standards are vindicated at the end of the play.

Precise principles are also referred to in the new comedy as worthy of attainment. In Fagan's La Pupille, for example, Julie, in condemning the superficiality of contemporary society, suggests a positive moral quality deserving of recognition:

Je connois quelqu'un à qui on ne saurait reprocher aucun de ces défauts; qui est humble, sensé, poli, bienfaisant, qui sait plaider sans les dehors affectés & les airs étourdis qui font valoir tant d'autres hommes. (Scene VI).

"Bienfaisance" is much praised, as we have seen, in the theoretical works of the first half of the century. On the stage, the term "bienfait", in the sense of a deed of good-will, is common and occurs in all the dramatists of the period, often in a quite neutral form. In L'Ingrat, for example, Damis remarks:

10 Milord remarks of Pamela's determination: "La délicatesse est extrême" (Act II, scene I).
"Des bienfaits de Cléon la mémoire m'est chère" (Act II, scene V). Mondor in Fagan's L'Étourderie (1737) uses the term in a similar way: "Avec ce bienfait que je viens de recevoir de vous, j'ai de quoi m'occuper bien agréablement" (Scene X). In Nivelle de la Chaussée's L'Homme de fortune (1750) Brice père remarks that "je puis garantir/ Qu'ils sont moins mes bienfaits que ceux de la fortune" (Act V, scene II).

There is no doubt, however, that the word is also used in a moral context, particularly in the works of Nivelle de la Chaussée, although this usage can be seen in other playwrights. In L'Obstacle imprévu "bienfait" is the term chosen by Léandre when united to Julie: "... je ne mourrai point ingrât d'un bienfait si précieux" (Act II, scene VIII). The note of appreciation here is seen again, and in a much stronger form, in a statement by Mme Armance in L'École de la jeunesse where moral approval is clear: "Si ma fille est heureuse,/ C'est le rare bienfait d'une ame généreuse ..." (Act IV, scene VII). In Le Préjugé à la mode (1735) the change in Durval's attitude is revealed in his statement that: "On s'attache encor plus par ses propres bienfaits" (Act II, scene I). The word occurs often in the dialogue of the new comedy as the act of beneficence frequently denotes a relationship of sympathy between the characters.

In general, however, "bienfait" is connected with the notion of a reward received through virtue. The idea expressed in La Pupille that: "Les bienfaits n'étant point de lui, il n'en doit point recueillir le salaire" (Scene XVI) is put slightly differently by Léandre in Les Philosophes amoureux in that the "bienfait" is itself a reward: "Et je vous la
cachois pour vous mettre à l'épreuve, / Pour voir si vous pourriez mériter mes bienfaits" (Act V, scene VI). This sentiment is echoed in Ariste's advice to Monrose in L'École des amis: "Les bienfaits sont à ceux qui les ont mérités. / Quoi! vous osez/ Poursuivre des bienfaits comme on poursuit des dettes!" (Act II, scene II).

In Nivelle de la Chaussée's work, the term "bienfaiteur" is used to express a relationship of gratitude. It is in fact a kind of joyful appellation in both L'École de la jeunesse, where the Baron exclaims to the Marquis: "Le Comte de Clairval! O mon cher bienfaiteur " (Act V, scene VI) and L'Homme de fortune, in which the Marquis addresses Brice pere thus: "Généreux bienfaiteur, ami trop secourable" (Act II, scene IV). Both this term and "bienfaisant", which, as we have seen, conveys the same approval of a character, are, however, much rarer than "bienfait" and, with some exceptions, occur late in the period under discussion. In L'École de la jeunesse the Baron continues his speech with: "Illustre protecteur/ Que le ciel bienfaisant procure à ma vieillesse" (Act V, scene VI) and in L'Homme de fortune the Marquis praises Brice pere in this way: "A vos soins bienfaisans puis-je me refuser?/ Tant de bontés, Monsieur, ont de quoi me surprendre" (Act II, scene IV). Brice pere's goodness in fact is specifically referred to as "bienfaissance": "Oui, l'aveu qu'il m'a fait de votre bienfaissance/ L'assure, autant que vous, de ma reconnoissance" (Act II, scene IV). Although there is agreement here between the concepts of the philoso-

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11 Léandre is referring to proof (la preuve) that he was prepared to give his rights as eldest son to Clitandre.
phical works of the first half of the century and the qualities of characters on the stage, the use of the new term "bienfaisance" itself is extremely rare. The only other incidence of the word in the plays under discussion appears to be in L'École de la jeunesse: "C'est donc en ce temps-là que votre bienfaisance/ M'engagea pour jamais à la reconnaissance,/ Par tant de biens versés sur ma fille et sur moi?" (Act I, scene I). As we can see, "bienfaisance" is here a moral quality, as it was for the abbé de Saint-Pierre.

In Voltaire's L'Enfant prodigue Jasmin, a servant, applies the word "bienfaisant" to Euphémon père:

Ah, l'honnête homme! ô ciel! pourrait-on croire
Qu'il soit encore, en ce siècle fâlon,
Un cœur si droit, un mortel aussi bon?
Cet air, ce port, cette âme bienfaisante
Du bon vieux temps est l'image parlante.  

(Act III, scene IV)

While the phrase "âme bienfaisante" refers to Euphémon's kindness, the speech is nonetheless significant in that it shows a change in the concept of "honnêteté". The "honnête homme" now, as personified by Euphémon père, is one who is concerned for the well-being of others. "Honnêteté", in something like its old sense, persists, it is true, in eighteenth-century comedy. Sanspair, in L'Homme singulier, comments, of his decision to return a portrait in person: "La politesse oblige à cette honnêteté" (Act I, scene VI). In L'Ingrat, however,

12 It is interesting to note that Voltaire had originally written: "Ses cheveux blancs, son air, et sa démarche,/ Ont, à mon sens, l'air d'un vrai patriarche;" this was censored by the authorities and the actors substituted: "Ses cheveux blancs, son air et ses manières,/ Retracent bien les vertus de nos pères." It is only in the 1738 text that the final version appears. See Œuvres complètes de Voltaire, Nouvelle Édition ... conforme pour le texte à l'édition de Beuchot (Paris, 1877-85), II, 485.
Pasquin's judgment of his master's decision to repay a friend's former kindness would seem to lend to the notion, in the form "honnête homme," a new sense of moral goodness: "Ce qu'un honnête homme a fait en pareil cas, vous l'avez fait, Monsieur..." (Act II, scene VIII). The same association seems to be present in Boissay's words in Le Francia à Londres (1725), although Boissay's meaning is difficult to determine:

"Qu'est-ce qu'elle vient me chanter avec son honnête qualité? Je m'en moque, moi, d'une noblesse imaginaire, les vrais Gentilshommes ce sont les honnêtes gens, il n'y a que le vice de notourier." (Scene VIII).

Boissay, as his name might imply, is a figure of fun in this play and one could therefore assume that no weight is to be attached to his words. It is possible, however, that in 1725 Boissay is experimenting with a notion that is not yet clear or accented, with no wish to be mocked by a critical public.

In L'Ecole des filles, the old restriction of the word to urbanity and politeness has disappeared from Geronte's general observation about human conduct: "... l'honnête homme à la reconnoissance; sur toute autre vertu, donne la préférence; un bienfait le captive; et des vices du cœur; il voit l'ingratitude avec le plus d'horreur" (Act III, scene V). His speech, in which the term "bienfait" is once more used in a moral context, establishes an indisputable link between the idea of virtue, gratitude and "honnêteté".

In L'Enfant prodigue the association of goodness and "honnêteté" recurs several times. Lise, for example, presents to Euphémon père the image of his son as a reformed character, an "honnête homme":
Si sa raison, par le malheur instruite,
De ses vertus rallumant le flambeau,
Le rassurait avec un cœur nouveau;
C'est que plutôt, honnête homme et fidèle,
Il est reprise sa forme naturelle ...
(Act V, scene V).

Elsewhere in the play the notion of "malhonnêteté" implies a
lack of humanity and brotherly love:

... ce sont tous de malhonnêtes gens,
Vrais ennemis du cœur et du bon sens,
Si dans leur code ils ordonnent qu'un frère
Laisse s'enir son frère de misère ...
(Act I, scene V).

The ideal of "honnêteté" does not therefore disappear,
rather does it lose its narrower meaning and in so doing, re-
reflects a development which takes place in the moral treatises
which we have already examined. A feeling for one's fellows
is also regarded as laudeworthy on the stage. As we have
seen, Cuphémon fils values Jasmin and refers in particular to
his "humanité", a quality much prized by the eighteenth century¹³
In Le Méditant (1715) Lisette remarks with approval: "Le baron,
notre maître, est plein d'humanité ..." (Act I, scene VI).
The term occurs too in Marivaux's L'Ile des esclaves (1725)
where the attempt to awaken Iphicrate and Euphrosine to their
disregard of the rights and dignity of their slaves is called
by Frivelin "votre cours d'humanité" (Scene II). Similarly in
Destouches's Le Glorieux, the word is used to denote sympathy
for one's fellow human-beings in Lycandre's criticism of the
Comte's callous treatment of Lisette: "Voulant tout asservir
à ses injustes droits, De l'humanité même il (son orgueil)
étoffe la voix" (Act IV, scene III).

In Voltaire's Nanine, the Comte argues for the supremacy

¹³See p. 227 above.
of "honnêteté" and "vertu", terms ultimately linked with the notion of "humanité", over the prestige bestowed by rank in an argument with the Baronne:

LA BARONNE
Un vil savant, un obscur honnête homme,
Serais chez vous, pour un peu de vertu,
Comme un seigneur avec honneur reçu?

LE COMTE
Le vertueux aurait la préférence.
(Act I, scene I).

Subsequently, to the Baronne's charge that: "Vous dégradez ainsi la qualité!" he responds: "Non; mais j'honne le l'humanité" and concludes with a refusal, as a rational being, to be guided by custom:

Le singe est né pour être imitateur,
Et l'homme doit agir d'après son cœur.

This belief that the heart is the only source of moral judgment echoes a previous statement to the Baronne:

L'éclat vous plaît; vous mettez la grandeur
Dans les blasons: je la veux dans le cœur.

For the most part the terms we have been discussing refer to specific characters in a particular play. A wider, almost political, statement is made by Euphémon fils in L'Enfant prodigue however: "Né mon égal (puisqu'enfin il est homme) ..." (Act III, scene I). This sentiment is shared by Sanspair in L'Homme singulier, who explains in this way to Pasquin his theory on the treatment of servants:

Cessez de prendre pour façons
Ce que l'humanité prescrit à l'homme sage,
Et ce qui devroit être en tous lieux en usage.
Vous êtes en service; et moi, par mon bon cœur,
Je veux vous faire ici supporter ma malheur.
(Act I, scene III).

This solicitude is based on a view of human nature in
Comment of this kind is rare in the comedy of the first half of the century and even in the statements which we have quoted, Sanspair might be said to display all the vagueness of so many protagonists when assessing human nature. All the descriptions which we have been examining, however, differ from, say, those of Pasquin and Barton mentioned earlier, in that they suggest criteria by which man is to be judged and qualities which point to his true value. Portraits of this kind in the new comedy contain a moral "code", which imparts to them a kind of concision.

If many characters have an exact idea of the qualities they admire in others, they are equally conscious of their own moral standards and equally certain of the values needed in their relations with their fellows. A short statement like that of Don Félix in L'Amirifique: "Je brûle d'être grand, mais c'est par la vertu" (Act I, scene VII) may be sufficient indication of a character's awareness of his own integrity. In a specific situation, however, there can be greater precision than this. In Le Dissipateur, for example, where her loyalty to Cléon is in question, Julie draws

14 See p. 217 above.
attention to her own moral quality, which she sees as stemming from a "cœur délicat," by contrasting her nature with that of Cidalise, a woman of society:

Je n'ai qu'un cœur fidèle, et rien qui le soutienne.  
Pour vous, dont les attraits ont un si grand éclat,  
Vous n'avez pas besoin d'un cœur si délicat.  
(Act IV, scene IV).

Sanspair, in L'Homme singulier is conscious of his attitude towards his fellow human-beings:

Quoiqu'à mes sentiments en tout ils soient contraires,  
Je ne puis les haïr, ils sont toujours mes frères.  
.........................................................  
L'honneur, la probité, la candeur, la sagesse,  
Feront naître en mon cœur la plus vive tendresse ...  
(Act I, scene IV).

These words, which make of Sanspair a man whose moral code originates in the affective side of his being, reveal a close link between the stage and the theoretical writings of the time. So too does the character of Brice père in Nivelle de la Chaussée's L'Homme de fortune. Consistently presented as a man conscious of his own true merit, as opposed to that which an aristocratic name might bring him, he asks at one point: "En allongeant son nom, double-t-on son mérite?" (Act II, scene I). His one aim, expressed in a question to his son of a man seeking to speak to him: "Serois-je assez heureux pour lui rendre service?" (Act II, scene I), is to devote his life to others.

The fact that a character knows himself to possess virtue, however, emerges from several main themes in the new comedy, one of them being a horror of duplicity. Arténice in
Les Philosophes amoureux, opposes falsehood to "délicatesse":

En toute occasion la vérité m'enchante,
Et je l'aime encor mieux fière, désobligeante,
Qu'un mensonge flatteur, dont le miel empesté
 Par un cœur délicat est toujours détesté.
(Act III, scene IV).

we have noted that the term "délicatesse" can be used by a character to imply certain moral scruples in another.

Equally, as we see from this statement and the one made by Julie which we have already quoted, "délicat" can be employed to refer to a moral sense. In the case of Arténice, moreover, dislike of hypocrisy is a standard dictated by the heart; the heart indeed can make a moral judgement.15

In Le Curieux impertinent, where Damon's reluctance to threaten Léandre's love is dismissed by Crispin as a "belle délicatesse," this very reluctance and his sense of outrage at feigning love for Julie are a sign of Damon's principles:

Me crois-tu donc capable d'imposture?
Qui? moi, j'irois, d'un ton faussement langoureux,
Feindre que ta maîtresse est l'objet de mes vœux!
Non. A tous mes discours la vérité préside;
Je ne veux point passer pour un ami perfide.
(Act I, scene VII)

15The words "délicat" and "délicatesse" are in fact often used by characters with reference to themselves, although not necessarily when condemning deception. The Baronne in Le Tambour nocturne says of those wishing to marry her for her money alone: "Ils vouloient me persuader le contraire; et ma délicatesse, qui pénétrait jusqu'au fond de leur cœur, y voyait l'intérêt bien plus vif que l'inclination" (Act II, scene V). In L'Amour usé Damon remarks of his scruples: "... je suis trop délicat. Si tout le monde examinoit le motif de ses actions, ma foi, les meilleures ne seroient pas trop bonnes ..." (Act IV, scene IV). When expressing a reluctance to marry a man who does not love her, thus making herself vulnerable to the pain of his infidelity and allowing him to give her the "affreuse liberté qui produit la licence," the Comtesse in L'Homme singulier states that: "Il (mon cœur) est trop délicat pour vouloir s'exposer/ Aux tourments infinis qu'on pourrait lui causer ..." (Act V, scene VII).
A character in the traditional comedy, particularly at the beginning of the century, would not have hesitated to exploit Léandre's offer, especially if he, like Damon, loved the woman in question. Crispin in this play happily disregards all moral notions; but Destouches has created in Damon a character who, with his idea of the duties imposed by friendship and of Julie's potential suffering, is concerned both for his own dignity, of which he is fully conscious, and the happiness of another.

Similar integrity and moral indignation are the chief characteristics of the Marquis in Doissy's *Les Dehors trompeurs*. He too is in love with a woman betrothed to his friend, but guided by certain scruples, his intention is to sacrifice Lucile to the Baron:

> Le moyen à présent, Monsieur, que je la vois
> Promise à mon Ami dont son Père a fait choix?
> Mon cœur doit renoncer plutôt à ma Maîtresse;
> L'honneur & le devoir y forcent ma tendresse.

*(Act II, scene II)*

His virtue becomes clear when this suggestion is resisted by the Baron, who, unaware that he is himself involved, urges the Marquis to adopt the standards of the majority. The Marquis has no very strong or varied arguments to advance in the face of the Baron's advice, saying merely: "L'amour vous ferait-il manquer à l'amitié?" and "Eh quoi, voulez-vous donc que je trompe en ce jour/ Un homme que j'estime, & qui m'aime à son tour?", but his "Le remords que je sens ..." and the mention of an "affront si sanglant" reveal in him principles not possessed by the Baron, a man belonging firmly in the
salon society of his time. As we see in the following act, these two characters are in fact irreconcilable. The Marquis's familiar "Oui, tromper un ami révolte mon idée,/ Et je sens que je blesse au fond la probité," leads into a long argument on the moral standards of the day, including a bitter and sarcastic attack on polite society from the Marquis:

Guel travers dans les mœurs, & quel affreux délire! ....

Et l'amour tendre & pur devient un nœud frivole,
Où l'on est dispensé de tenir sa parole,
Le joug de l'Amitié n'est pas plus respecté;
On veut qu'ils soient tous deux exempts de probité ...

(Act III, scene I).

It is clear that in concluding: "Nous ne devons jamais rougir de la vertu," the Marquis has moved away from outrage at the notion of betraying a friend to a far more general moral statement.

In Le Procureur arbitre Poisson has created a character who has set himself the task of proving his integrity in a position which normally corrupts those who hold it:

D'ailleurs, j'ai voulu voir si sous ce vêtement
Un homme ne pouvait aller droit un moment ...

(Scene II).

Refusing to act "contre la conscience" for the first part of the play, in the central scenes Ariste is entrusted with a sum of money, which, briefly, it enters his mind to appropriate:

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16 This assertion is reminiscent of Léandre's admonition to Clarice in Les Philosophes amoureux: "On ne doit point du tout rougir d'être jaloux; / Mais rougir de donner matière à jalousie" (Act II, scene IV)
Mais quelle erreur extrême!
Que dis-je, malheureux? Ne suis-je plus le même?
Qui me fait tout-à-coup à ce point m'oublier?
C'est la maudite robe; elle fait son métier:

Allons, il faut s'armer d'une force nouvelle.
(Scene X).

This horror at his own dishonesty, which proves the strength of his moral principles, is moreover associated in his mind with "délicatesse": his conclusion at the close of this self-examination, for example, is that the case be taken up by "quelques gens moins délicats que moi," if his decision is rejected.

In Doissy's Le Médecin par occasion, Montval's rejection of dishonesty is also a product of his "délicatesse" and proof of his probity: "Je ne puis me résoudre à cette indigne feinte,/ Et ma délicatesse ...." (Act II, scene I), while the Marquis's refusal to countenance a scheme based on deception in L'École de la jeunesse supports his claim of possessing new moral values:

C'est toujours un détour;
Je ne puis m'y prêter. Achevons l'aventure.
La meilleure finesse est d'aller en droiture.
Tout moyen détourné dégrade qui s'en sert.
(Scene II, scene V).

There is indignation of a different kind in the Celine of Le Jaloux désabusé: her reaction is caused by the fact that in Eraste's mind all women are classed together as flighty and unfaithful:

Soyez persuadé qu'il est aussi des femmes
Qui des folles ardeurs sçavent garder
leurs ames,
Posseder la vertu telle qu'on doit l'avoir,
Et vivre dans le monde en faisant leur devoir.
(Scene IV, scene VII).
Celine is speaking here of a group of unfashionable women, but in so doing it is her own sense of duty which she is defending. In *Le Glorieux* the haughtiness of Lisette's reply to proposals by Lisimon illustrates her sense both of her own moral worth and of her superiority:

> Apprenez, je vous prie, à connaître vos gens.
> Un cœur tel que le mien méprise les richesses,
> Quand il faut les gagner par de telles bassesses.

*(Act I, scene VI).*

Similarly, in attacking the hypocrisy of her time Léonore, in *La Fausse Antipathie* also makes a distinction between herself and others in this speech to Orphise:

> On se croit vertueuse en voulant le par-\^oitre,
> Tant qu'au fond du cœur, on néglige de l'être;

> L'esprit de charité paroit une foiblesse;
> On échange un défaut contre un autre plus grand;
> Et l'on corrige un vice avec un autre vice.

> Mais je veux vous forcer à me rendre justice.

*(Act II, scene II).*

In the following scene, however, her moral indignation after an insinuation from Orphise makes even clearer her horror of being considered lacking in virtue:

> Et pouvois-je m'attendre à cette indignité,
> Et qu'on m'imputeroit la dernière bassesse?
> Nérine, quelle horreur! On me croit la maîtresse
> D'un homme marié?  (Act II, scene III).

Conscious of her own integrity, even superiority, her guiding principle is always a desire to preserve the image which she has both in her own eyes and in the eyes of others. In a discussion with Damon, for instance, her statement:
"Vous prétendez, Monsieur, me rendre la complice/ D'un coupable abandon fondé sur un caprice" (Act II, scene VIII), bears witness to this preoccupation just as much as to a sympathy for Damon's wife, however strong this may be. Certainly her sense of guilt is overwhelming when she learns that her husband is still alive: "Il vit, & je suis infidelle! Grand Dieu! dans quelle horreur me précipitez-vous?" (Act II, scene IX). The mere idea of love for another man is sufficient for Léonore to regard herself with horror and her reaction here is perhaps a reminiscence of that of Philandre in Racine's play. There can be no doubt that the language she employs in self-condemnation is that of tragedy rather than comedy: "Victime d'un penchant devenu criminel,/ Jallois m'envelopper d'un opprobre éternel ..." (Act III, scene IV). Géronte indeed calls Léonore's principles "sa triste vertu" and the result of this awareness and obsession with virtue for its own sake must be the introduction of a more sombre note into the play.

This is the effect of Constance's sense of duty in Le Préjugé à la mode. Her name alone, of course, is a clear enough indication of her nature, but her own consciousness of herself and her obligations as a wife, lend support to Damon's judgement of her: "Epouse vertueuse autant qu'infortunée!" (Act I, scene I). At the outset she states: "Le devoir d'une épouse est de paraître heureuse" (Act I, scene II), but her knowledge of her own virtue is apparent during the action of the play, in her horror and unhappiness on receiving anonymous gifts:

\[\text{Je laisse dans l'oubli ce qui doit y rester.}\

\[\text{..........................}\

\[\text{Je voudrois ignorer que je suis offensée.}\

(Act I, scene VII)
Dominated by a sense of duty and of her own moral worth, Constance instinctively responds to cynicism where what she conceives of as virtuous conduct is concerned and is not ashamed of expressing her views. It is not surprising, therefore, that Clitandre's story about a mutual friend who has returned to his wife should draw from her this pronouncement, characterised by her belief in the close association of affection and duty in marriage:

C'est un cœur égaré que le devoir ramene,
Que l'amour fait rentrer dans sa première chaîne,
Qui n'a jamais trouvé de vrais plaisirs ailleurs,
Et qui veut être heureux en dépit des râleurs.

(Act II, scene III).

In L'Ecole des amiés, Monrose's scruples give rise to moral torment. His reluctance at the beginning of the play to approach a woman he believes superior to himself, becomes a moral feeling with the deterioration of his position and his apparent ruin:

MONROSE
Ma constance est du moins un secret ignoré.

ARISTE
Qui peut vous imposer ce pénible silence?

MONROSE
La probité l'exige, & l'intérêt d'Hortence:
J'ai craint de l'offenser, j'ai craint de l'attendrir.
La distance à présent est trop grande entre nous;
Il faut que son amant puisse être son époux.

(Act III, scene III).

This probity, on which all his conduct is based, accounts for his horror in Act V, on being accused of appropriating Hortence's inheritance:
Ah! ciel! quelle noirceur! Je deviens furieux.
................................................
L'horreur qui on n'attribue est-elle imaginaire?
................................................
Jacques À ton honneur, quoi! l'on ose attenter!
(Act V, scene I).

Pamela's consciousness of her own virtue is as strong.
Constant reference is made to it by all the protagonists, but she herself speaks of a precise aim:

Leur probité les a dédommagés de tout. Elle est telle en effet que chacun la réclame, qu'elle passe en proverbe, à qu'il est établi, Lorsqu'on en veut citer un modèle accompli, Je dire, vertueux comme Andrews et sa femme. Sa seule ambition est de les imiter.
(Act II, scene I).

In these plays, the principles of the central characters and the suffering caused by them, begin to affect the nature of the plot. Already, in Le Jaloux désabusé Celie's objections to the trick about to be played on Dorante provoke an argument. In Boissy's Les Dehors trompeurs opposition of a more radical kind stemming from a difference in outlook between the Marquis and the Baron, creates a clash with considerable import as far as the structure is concerned, in that several of the main scenes are given over to discussion on the conduct of the day. Le Incrédule arbitre depends on an attempt by Ariste to prove his integrity. Similarly, there is a moral problem at the very heart of La Fausse Antipathie, particularly for Léonore. That Damon possesses moral scruples is evident from his reluctance to confess his love in view of the fact
that he is married: "Mon aven doviendroit un outrage;/ Qui
deshonoreroit l'objet de mon hommage" (Act I, scene VI). It
is Léonore's dilemma which is greater and which, increasing
with every twist in events, is exploited to furnish much of
the action of the play. This inevitably takes the form of
questioning and debate. We have noticed, for example, Léonore's
sense of outrage at the beginning of Act II on learning that
she is believed to be the mistress of a married man; the
theme suggested here reaches a climax, in so far as the play
may be said to have one, with the argument revolving around
what is for Léonore a moral issue, namely Damon's divorce. A
heightening of the tension and the final climax to the play
occur with Léonore's discovery that her husband is living.
The conflict and self-recrimination end only with the revela­
tion of the true identity of Léonore and Damon. The drama­
tic opposition which Nivelle de la Chaussée has chosen on
which to structure his play, built up on a series of confron­
tations with each new aspect of the situation, is, therefore,
a moral one, based as it is on the standards of the central
character.

In Mélanide a significant part of the plot concerns the
Marquis's dilemma when it is revealed to him that Mélanide is
still alive. He is a man of principle, as his words to
Théodon, expressing regret that he has broken a pledge never
to remarry, make clear: "J'ai trahi mes sermens; j'ai vaincu
mes scrupules ..." (Act II, scene I). The situation is not
surprisingly one which has moral implications for him:

Cependant, quelque soit cet amour si funeste,
J'armerai contre lui la vertu qui me reste.
(Act III, scene VI).
The problem on which the play focuses is seen in the same way by all the characters and there is no question of complete separation for the Marquis and Mélanide. Théodon remarks of the former, for instance: "Il reprendra, sans doute, une chaîne si belle./ Il est trop vertueux pour n'être pas fidèle" (Act II, scene V). Mélanide also sees the situation in a moral context and urges an appeal to the Marquis's integrity: "On a tant de pouvoir sur un cœur vertueux./ Le sien est fait pour l'être: il l'était; j'en suis sûre" (Act IV, scene I). Much of the interest in this play thus rests on whether the Marquis will accept what, for all the characters, is his duty. Suspense is created by his seeming inability to forget Rosalie and the problem is only resolved when the Marquis, confronted at the end with Darviano and Mélanide, yields to the strength of family ties. His statement concluding the action: "O Ciel! tu me fais voir, en combiant tous mes vœux,/ Que le devoir n'est fait que pour nous rendre heureux" (Act V, scene III) suggests the advisability and above all the pleasure of performing one's duty.

Moral feelings also influence the plot in the plays where a character has undergone reform: one part at least of the action tends to be exploited by the dramatist to prove the sincerity of such a character's claims. In Le Préjugé à la mode, for example, Durval's affection for Constance is apparent in Act I, but the fact that he has experienced a kind of moral regeneration only emerges in the discussion with Damon at the beginning of Act II and later in Act III. Above all, it is statements of a didactic nature, such as: "On s'enrichit du bien qu'on fait à ce qu'on aime" (Act II, scene I) and the...
context in which he puts his love for Constance, which point to reform: "Quel amour, que celui qu'on ne doit qu'au devoir!" (Act III, scene VIII). This notion that love is closely allied to duty and is indeed enhanced by it, is not new. Damon says of Julie in Le Curieux impertinent for example: "Dans les cœurs vertueux, l'amour naît du devoir" (Act IV, scene IX), while Angélique's statement, almost lesson, to Valère in L'Obstacle imposé expresses a similar idea: "Dans les cœurs tendres et vertueux, il se forme les passions les plus violentes, quand le devoir autorise l'inclination" (Act I, scene II). In a slightly different situation Ariste concludes Le Philosophe marié with: "La solide vertu fait d'heureux mariages" (Act V, scene X). The tendency to see love in a moral perspective continues after Le Préjugé: Hortense's conception of her dilemma is phrased in a way which brings out the resemblance between her and other characters:

... pour m'abandonner au penchant le plus tendre,
Il faudroit que l'ymen m'en eût fait un devoir.

Nous avons des devoirs qui ne sont que pour nous.
Vous pouvez être amans avant que d'être époux,
Mais que pour notre sexe il n'en est pas de même!
(Act II, scene III).

In Le Médecin par occasion Montval says of love: "... il est un agrément, / Et même une vertu quand il est sentiment ..." (Act V, scene XI), which would seem to imply the same attitude. There is not necessarily any originality therefore in Durval's statement; it does, however, reveal his new principles. The plot of this play is not unlike that of Mélanide, in that
attention centres in part on Durval's conduct in a situation which has moral implications. The dramatist creates suspense with Durval's inability to declare his love for his wife, but he always presents Durval as aware of the main problem in his relationship with Constance. At the beginning of Act V, for instance, he asks Damon:

peut-elle désormais prendre aucune assurance,
Comptant sur des serments que j'ai détruits d'avance?
(Act V, scene I).

Moreover, in confessing his love at the end, Durval insists as much on possibilities for atonement as on affection for Constance: to her request that past neglect be forgotten, his reply is: "Je veux m'en souvenir pour le mieux réparer," which echoes his first appeal to her: "Laissez-moi.../ Expier mes excès & venger tous vos charmes" (Act V, scene V). That he is completely reformed and that this change is intended by the playwright to provide an example for others, is emphasised in Durval's closing words to the play:

Que l'on m'approuve ou non, mon bonheur me suffit.
Peut-être mon exemple aura plus de crédit:
On pourra m'imiter. Non, il n'est pas possible
Qu'un préjugé si faux soit toujours invincible.
(Act V, scene VI).

In Voltaire's L'Enfant prodigue a moral theme is established from the outset in the exchange between Euphémon père and Rondon, about Euphémon fils's conduct:

Et son ainé n'aura, pour tout partage,
Que le courroux d'un père qu'il outrage:
Il le mérite, il fut dénaturé.
(Act I, scene I).

The subject is taken up again by Lise, who, while condemning
Euphémon fils, increases the moral nature of the situation by referring to a desire to reform him:

S'il eût aimé, je l'aurais corrigé.
Un amour vrai, sans feinte et sans caprice,
Est en effet le plus grand frein du vice.

(Act I, scene III).

There follow complications of a comic kind with the untimely arrival of a woman to whom Fierenfâat had promised marriage and the less comic news that Euphémon fils is dead, but in what might be termed the central scene of the play, the eventual confrontation between Euphémon and Lise, discussion revolves around the sincerity of his change of heart:

J'ai reconnu (j'en jure par vous-même,
Par la vertu que j'ai sui, mais que j'aime),
J'ai reconnu ma détestable erreur ...

(Act IV, scene III).

This theme, of Euphémon's attempts to convince Lise of his new moral standards, continues into Act V, when first Lise and then Euphémon himself win over Euphémon père. The general movement of the play illustrates that true repentance is possible and that virtue can be reborn, as Euphémon père's last words suggest:

Non, il ne faut (et mon cœur le confesse)
Désespérer jamais de la jeunesse.

(Act V, scene VII).

The aim of Pamela is similar. Nivelle de la Chaussée has created in Milord a character who, like Euphémon fils, has already undergone a change of heart before the opening of the play and he places him in a situation which tests his claims. Milord's remorse and desire to atone for the past are apparent above all in the monologue spoken after Pamela is believed to have killed herself:
Barbare que je suis! Sans mon fatal amour,
Tout ce que l'Angleterre eut jamais de
plus rare
N'eût pas été réduit à se priver du jour!
Elle est morte; & j'ai cessé d'être
couplable!
Du plus affreux malheur la cruelle m'ac-
cable,
Quand je ne le méritois plus!
(Act IV, scene V).

It is only when marriage to Pamela seems impossible and he is
confronted moreover with the innocence of Williams's love,
that the realisation of his former corruption is complete:

Il l'aimoit d'un amour vertueux & sincere;
A de vils attentats il n'avoit point re-
cours,
Et tous ses pas étoient guidés par l'inno-
cence:
Quelle leçon cruelle! & quelle différence!
Le crime seul vers elle avoit pu m'attirer.
Malheureux, je l'aimois pour la deshonorer!
(Act V, scene VI).

One important part of the plot is brought to a close with
these words, but throughout the action the dramatist also
places Pamela in a situation where she is faced with a problem
of a moral nature. Much of the play revolves in fact around
her resistance to the approaches of Milord, whose statements
she mistrusts, with the result that the intrigue is two-fold.
Pamela, like La Fausse Antipathie, is thus constructed on a
central conflict between two characters which has its source
in moral principles and a desire to demonstrate true moral
value. The solution, brought about by Pamela's acceptance of
Milord's sincerity, once again emphasises that virtue,
which can save any man, is an attractive quality worthy of
attainment:

   Ce cœur, que je déteste,
   Étoit, pour vos appas, un présent trop fun-
   neste,
Dans des détours obscurs il s'étoit égaré.
The moral theme of L'École de la jeunesse is foreshadowed in D'Autricourt's words to the Marquis at the beginning of the play: "Sur-tout, attendez-vous à bien des injustices;/ Songez que vous avez beaucoup à réparer" (Act I, scene II). The transformation which has taken place within him is described in a speech by the Marquis himself in response to an unjust accusation. It illustrates furthermore that it is the heart which makes moral judgements:

Ce reproche, tout faux qu'il puisse être,
M'accable.

Autrefois j'aurais pu le dissimuler.
Mon cœur plus indulgent, laissait accumuler
Mes défauts, mes erreurs, mes torts, mes ridicules;

Mais, à présent, mon cœur ne me pardonne rien.

(Act II, scene III).

The action of the play is devoted to the Marquis's attempts to change the accepted view of Clairval and, therefore, of himself under the name which he has assumed. The didactic nature of this theme is suggested at the outset, during the scene in which D'Autricourt warns the Marquis of the difficulty of altering public opinion:

MARQUIS
Ne pourroit-on prouver, à tous tant que nous sommes,
Combien la vanité rappelisse les hommes;
Que leur présomption, leur orgueil, leur fierté,
Ne font que mieux montrer leur médiocrité;
Qu'être riche n'est pas un titre respectable?
Il n'est point, sans les moeurs, de grandeur véritable;
Et la vraie indigence est celle des vertus.
D'AUTRICOURT
Ah! que vous m'enchantez! Ajoûtez, au sur-
plus,
Qu'un prodigieux a toujours perdu tout ce
qu'il donne;
Qu'à la reconnoissance il n'engage per-
sonne;
On'en répandant ses biens sans choix &
sans égard,
On peut s'imaginer les devoir au hazard.
(Act I, scene II).

The conflict of the play, however, that is to say the con-
flict between the Marquis and society, represented here by
the Comtesse, comes into the open at the beginning of Act IV,
in a discussion on the possibility of genuine reform. The
Marquis's proposition that the "égarements d'une aveugle
jeunesse" are neither lasting nor a guide to true character,
is opposed to the Comtesse's assertion that "les premiers pas
sont les plus importants" (Act IV, scene I). The likelihood
of reconciliation between these two seems in this debate to
be remote:

LE MARQUIS
Quelles sont les vertus qui naissent avec
nous?
Eut-on, dès sa naissance, un partage si
doux?
La sagesse précoce est la moins assurée:

C'est celle qu'on acquiert à ses propres
dépens,
Qui se soutient toujours, & nous suit en
tout temps.

LA COMTESSE
Les vertus qu'on acquiert sont si peu na-
turelles,
Que l'on doit, au besoin, fort peu compter
sur elles.
C'est un bien, dont le fonds nous appart-
tient pas,
Dont on ne peut jouir qu'à force de com-
bats;
Au lieu qu'un cœur bien né n'a pas à se
defendre;

Il ignore le mal; l'occasion le fuit;
Son heureux naturel le guide & le conduit.
There is thus a certain tension underlying the action throughout the last two acts, a tension which is increased with the arrival of the letter from Paris which reveals the Marquis's identity. The Comtesse rejects him as a husband for Zélide, but the other characters, moved by his acts of virtue and generosity and his disinterested love for Zélide, come to his support. Mme Armanse, for example, finally reveals that it is he who has been helping her and her daughter for so long:

Ce n'était pas l'Amour qui l'inspirait alors,
Quand il a fait pour nous l'action la plus belle,
La plus digne à jamais d'une gloire immortelle;
Et nous ne la devons qu'à sa seule vertu,

La générosité ne peut être plus pure.
(Act V, scene V).

The play has again proved that virtue alone brings happiness - the Marquis is of course united with Zélide - and provides a warning, contained in the Marquis's words of remorse when his situation appears at its worst, to misguided youth:

Jeunesse déplorable! O source trop féconde
Des erreurs où l'on tombe en entrant dans le monde!

Que le passé devient une charge importune!
Ca'nun début malheureux entraîne d'infortune!
(Act V, scene III).

The Marquis is essentially a man of virtue, as D'Autricourt's assessment of him implies: "Les vices de l'esprit ne sont pas ceux du cœur,/ Les vôtres n'ont été que la faute de l'âge" (Act I, scene II). The corrupt conduct referred to in the play was an aberration and his heart, the source of all moral notions, had never changed. The generosity and consideration, the "bienfaisance" which he demonstrates before and
during the action are not therefore qualities suddenly acquired, but the result of a rediscovery of moral obligations. He and the Comtesse are in fact in agreement, since his is "un cœur bien né." The same is true of all the central characters in this kind of play. The change of heart of which they speak is not in effect a change, merely a rebirth of a certain side of their nature which had been suppressed or neglected. Damon says of Durval, for example: "Si la mode empoisonne un naturel heureux, / A quoi sert le bonheur d'être né vertueux?" (Act II, scene V), thus suggesting that he had always been good at bottom and had been lead astray by the fashionable prejudices and pursuits of his day. Similarly Euphémion fils claims of himself: "Le vice était étranger dans mon cœur: / Ce cœur n'a plus les taches criminelles/ Dont il couvrit ses clartés naturelles ..." (Act IV, scene III). Pamela, who had observed of Milord at the beginning of the play: "La violence de ses feux/ Altéré, pour moi seule, un caractère heureux" (Act I, scene III), makes this judgement of him towards the end: "... ce qui me rassure, / C'est que la probité, la vertu la plus pure, / Dans cette âme si noble a repris le dessus" (Act IV, scene VIII).

The moral regeneration of the main protagonist has an effect on the structure of the play. The didactic tendency already evident in statements made by various characters about themselves and others, is made clear by the direction taken by the action itself, which would appear to prove that virtue is the only true source of contentment and will always be rewarded. The intention of the dramatists, who attribute principles to likeable characters, or who make them appear
likeable by the very possession of these principles, allowing
them to triumph at the end of the play, cannot be mistaken.
Presumably they also hoped to induce a feeling of pleasant
satisfaction in the spectator by this means.

The features which are to be admired in a protagonist are
not necessarily the result of noble birth. Indeed, as we
have seen, the term "vraie noblesse" is often used to design­
ate true merit as opposed to that depending on rank or
wealth; Jasmin, a servant, is capable of feeling "humanité".
A consistent pattern in the relationship between social posi­
tion and moral worth is in fact difficult to discern in the
new comedy. On the one hand, Lisette's statement in Le
Glorieux that: "Mon cœur est au-dessus de ma condition/ J'ai
des principes sûrs contre l'occasion" (Act I, scene IX),
suggests that virtue is the attribute of the upper class only
and Lisette is discovered to belong to that class. In La
Force du naturel Destouches has created in Jabet a character
whose sentiments appear to be above her station; Nathurine
says of her, for instance: "Alle a le cœur si haut que c'est
une piquié" (Act II, scene V), before it is revealed that she
is in reality of noble birth. The Baronne in Voltaire's
Nanine states that: "Le sang fait tout, et la naissance donne/
Des sentiments à Nanine inconnus" (Act II, scene X). This
statement cannot in any sense be called objective, however, in
view of the Baronne's dislike of Nanine; indeed the Comte
replies to it: "Je n'en crois rien" and, as we have seen,
Nanine has strong principles.

The notion that moral standards are synonymous with rank
is also challenged by the servant Guérault in La Force du
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( Act V, scene IV),

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portrayed as a woman with no capacity for moral feeling, good
or bad: "Eh* ces sortes de gens n'ont ni vertus, ni vices,/
L'exemple les dirige; & leur soumission,/ Dans leur coeur mal
instruit, porte l'illusion" (Act V, scene VII),
The picture is thus rather a confused one and the conclu­
sion which seems to suggest itself is that virtue is a quality


of those, in the lower classes, who have received a certain education or who have had some contact with aristocratic or upper middle class families, as Lisette, Pamela and Julie have all done. This is the pattern which would seem to emerge in spite of the fact that for those of noble birth moral scruples are instinctive, inspired so often by spontaneous feelings of the heart. If there is some uncertainty about this question, there can be no doubt that the qualities which receive praise and approval in the new comedy do not belong to the inveterate habitué of fashionable society. "Vertu" and "probité", as we have noted in Les Philosophes amoureux, Le Dissipateur or Les Debors trompeurs, are increasingly opposed to and can hardly exist alongside the cynicism of the libertine or the superficiality and affectedness of the society man or woman.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Didacticism as a relationship between characters

The writers of the new comedy have thus created a kind of elite, who are both aware and proud of possessing a certain moral worth and who, in crude terms, "win out" at the end of the play because of it. It is but a short step from consciousness of superiority in oneself to a desire to reform others; indeed we have already seen that many statements intended as observation have a didactic ring to them. The tirade by Constance in Le tréjuge à la mode (1735), already quoted, might be said to contain a "lesson" for Clitandre just as much as approval of Sainfar; similarly, the argument between the Marquis and the Baron in Joissy's Les Dehors trompeurs (1740) involves the former in strictures to the Baron about his obligations. Although the line between comment and a wish to change others is not easy to draw, the urge to offer advice and to correct indifference or immorality is clearly discernible in the new comedy. It may be said to revolve around two or three dominant themes, the first of them being moral attitudes in the most general sense.

In Destouches's Le Médisant (1715), for example, Damon is condemned by Valère, a man of principle, for his malicious gossip:

Vois jusques à quel point t'aveugle ton penchant,
Et rougis avec moi d'un trait aussi méchant.

1See Chapter Six, p. 243.

2See Act III, scene I, part of which is quoted in Chapter Six, p. 239.
Nul ne peut t'effacer par le talent de plaire;  
Mais tu fais éclater un maudit caractère.  
(Act III, scene VII).

The obvious moralising reproof here is rejected by Damon with the claim that his only purpose is to reveal the hypocrisy of society, that, in short, he too is motivated by a wish to reform others. The difference between these two characters is the tone in which their object is achieved; Damon uses "un tour malin," stating that: "C'est par là qu'on corrige, autrement on ennuie" (Act III, scene VII). At the close of the play, Damon is, however, universally disliked, principally for his disreputable attempts to disrupt a family. It seems more likely, therefore, that the dramatist is choosing as an example the more well-meaning attitude of Valère.

In Les Philosophes amoureux (1729), a number of characters, grouped together in Act III, attack Clarice for her superficial mockery of others:

ARAMINTE
Vous vous croyez plaisante, et votre esprit s'admire;  
Mais vous scandalisez ceux que vous faites rire.

DAMIS
Pour avoir de l'esprit, on n'a qu'à critiquer;  
On l'accorde aisément à qui veut tout risquer.

LEANDRE
Le monde aux médisants prodigue la louange,  
Il est vrai; mais aussi quelquefois il se venge;  
Il les hait, il les craint; et leur esprit pervers  
Tôt ou tard les expose à de tristes revers.

ARTÉNICE
"Croyez-moi, ma cousine, une humeur sérieuse,  
Modeste, sans aigreur ....  
(Act III, scene V).
This scene, at the beginning at least, is in many ways reminiscent of Act II, scene IV of *Le Misanthrope*, but here it is the more serious-minded characters who predominate and who, in a series of well-turned maxims, attempt to reform Clarice. The familiar pattern of opposition between two clearly defined groups of ideas is also used: Léandre and his friends, who have all shown a capacity for feeling, are set against Clarice, the cynical woman of society. Léandre, in singling out the suiteful wits of the salons reinforces the moralising nature of the discussion with the notion that a punishment awaits them. He adopts a similar tone with his brother Clitandre, this time holding out some hope of reward for a change of heart:

Si vous m'aviez fait voir un meilleur caractère;
Si vous étiez pourvu d'un sens, d'une raison,
Propres à soutenir l'honneur d'une maison,
À faire d'un grand bien un salutaire usage,
J'aurais fait vœu de fuir les nœuds du mariage. (Act V, scene VI).

Léandre clearly believes that his own qualities entitle him to reform those around him; it is significant that neither Clarice nor Clitandre try to alter the behaviour of the others, contenting themselves with sarcasm. If they are made happy at the end of the play, it is from good luck rather than merit, the result of Léandre's decision to renounce all claim to Clarice and to make over his fortune after all to Clitandre.

In *Le Dissipateur* (1736) Cléon's recklessness with money is condemned by the Baron in the most vehement fashion:

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3 Léandre intends to give up his inheritance if he does not marry.
Je viens me plaindre à vous de vos folles dépenses.

Il (votre père) avoit bien affaire
De suer, de veiller, d'entasser pour un fils
Qui prodigue des biens si durement acquis!
(Act I, scene VI).

Unperturbed by the mockery of both Cléon and Le Comte, he concludes with an explicit moral lesson:

Le (mon fils) voilà ruiné,
Et par son père même il est abandonné.
L'exemple est fait pour vous, tâchez d'en faire usage.

The warning about the future contained in the Baron's speech here is a feature of Don Félix's words to Don Fernand concerning his political success in *L'Ambitieux et l'indiscrete* (1737):

En vous toute la cour adore la faveur,
Vous croyez être aimé; mais, au moindre malheur,
Cette foule d'amis, que le crédit fait naître,
Vous la verrez, mon fils, tout à coup disparaître ...
(Act I, scene VII).

Don Félix is in fact a character inclined to give advice to everyone⁴ and seems a kind of moral conscience in a court which, if not corrupt, is at least self-seeking and, in the case of Dona Béatrice, foolish and indiscreet.

In Nivelle de la Chaussée's *L'Ecole des amis* (1737), Ariste intends to reform Monrose, or rather to render him

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⁴He gives this warning, for instance, to Dona Béatrice, concerning her attempts to make Clarice a centre of attraction at court: "Vous ferez beaucoup mieux/ De la cacher ici, que d'exercer ses yeux,/ Leur silence sied bien dans un âge si tendre,/ Et peut-être trop tôt ils se feront entendre" (Act I, scene V).
less arrogant. He is a character with a liking for observation about certain sections of society, especially the court, of which he remarks:

La Cour est en tout temps
Une terre inconnue à tous ses habitants.

On y marche toujours sur des pièges nouveaux;

Tel, au gré de ses vœux, s'y maintient aujourd'hui,
Qui demain ne pourra faire tête à l'orage;
Et l'on finit souvent par y faire naufrage.

(Act II, scene I).

When provoked by Monrose's expectations of immediate recognition, Ariste develops his observations in order to correct such an attitude:

Les bienfaits sont à ceux qui les ont mérités.

Les graces ne sont point des biens héritiers;

Vos pères ont laissé leur nom à soutenir,
Leur vertu, leur exemple, & leur carrière à suivre.

Voilà ce qu'après eux il faut faire re-vivre ...

(Act II, scene I).

Ariste's language, and in particular his use of "il faut" and "vous devez" in this scene, makes plain his desire to direct Monrose and we can see that the dramatist is not merely confronting the wise and the unwise, as Molière so often did.

In Mélanide there is the same tendency to advise and even command. She displays firstly a general wish to calm

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5 It is interesting to note how many characters of this kind, like some of the so-called "raisonneurs" in Molière, have the name Ariste, which derives presumably from the Greek "aristos", meaning "the best". In L'Ingrat Géronte's brother, a reasonable man who supports the lovers, is called Ariste; so too are the principal protagonists, both men of feeling, in Le Philosophe marié and Le Procureur arbitre, while Ariste is a moralising character in L'École des amis and Le Méchant.
Darviane's impetuosity:

N'apprendrez-vous jamais
L'art de dissimuler, ou de souffrir en paix
Les contrariétés dont la vie est semée?
(Act I, scene II).

More specifically, however, she orders him to return to the army, concluding with this maxim, which reveals a belief that the heart is the source of moral standards:

Le cœur d'un galant homme est son plus sûr oracle:
Interrogez le vôtre, & suivez son conseil.
(Act I, scene II).

The subject of marriage also creates a didactic relationship between characters. More often than not, the "lesson" involved here is given to a cynical character for whom the union is purely one of convenience; in other words we shall see again the conflict of two distinctly opposed sets of ideas. Damon offers Léandre advice of a kind in Le Curieux impertinent (1710), but his observation forms a simple confrontation of opinion:

Sur le mariage,
Voici tout ce que doit penser un homme sage.
On peut s'en trouver mal, on peut s'en trouver bien:
Mais on doit, en formant ce dangereux lien,
A tout événement s'attendre sans rien craindre,
Et si le malheur vient, le souffrir sans se plaindre.
(Act I, scene VII).

Far more characteristic of the new comedy is the judgement on the behaviour of Valère in L'Obstacle imprévu (1717), firstly by Pasquin, who asks Valère: "Comptez-vous de vivre comme vous faites, quand vous aurez une femme?" (Act I, scene I), and then by Angélique who believes in mutual affection in marriage and who states: "Je veux réformer votre cœur, et
le rendre capable d'une passion aussi délicate que la mienne ...

" (Act I, scene II). The expression "passion délicate" is striking. It could be taken to mean that Angélique's is a gentle and discerning emotion, but it may be possible that there is in this feeling a moral element, particularly in view of the association of the phrase with "cœurs tendres et vertueux." In this case, it is love together with a sense of duty which Angélique is attempting to awaken in Valère - a truly didactic aim.

In Les Philosophes amoureux Léandre, for whom marriage is a union "que forment l'amour et la vertu," reproves Lisidor for his mercenary attitude towards the relationship:

[... un homme d'honneur qui pense, qui raisonne,
A peu d'égard au bien, et songe à la personne,
Parce qu'il veut trouver son plaisir, son bonheur,
Dans celle à qui sa foi doit engager son cœur.
(Act II, scene II).

This notion is didactic in the sense that it appears to contain a desire to shame Lisidor into change. More important are Léandre's words to Clarice in Act II and the tone in which they are delivered. His standards are summed up in one moralising statement which attempts to alter Clarice's views:

On ne doit point du tout rougir d'être jaloux;
Mais rougir de donner matière à la jalousie.
(Act II, scene IV).

Once again the terminology chosen here by Léandre is a sufficient sign of the spirit in which this remark is made.

In Le Préjugé à la mode, despite Durval's new perception
of issues, it is Damon who is the character of greater moral fervour at the beginning of the play; certainly he possesses an appreciation of principles and a liking for generalised statements about a number of different relationships, which is most striking when Durval confesses his love for Constance.

Le Préjugé à la mode is similar to Campistron's Le Jaloux désabusé in that the central male character is a husband who has fallen in love with his own wife after years of estrangement; resemblance between the two plays even extends to the structure, for in both the admission of the husband occurs at the beginning of Act II. The fundamental difference, however, is that in Le Jaloux désabusé Dorante makes his statement to Dubois, a family servant, whereas Durval makes it to his friend. While Dubois is, therefore, a dramatic device, prodding Dorante into a complete account of his feelings, Damon, a character of strong moral feelings, enters into a debate with Durval and gives to the scene of confession in the later play a new dramatic status. This first becomes apparent with Damon's refusal to listen to what he assumes to be a description of yet another love affair:

Quoi! ton volage cœur se livrera toujours
A des feux étrangers, à de folles amours!
Ces ardeurs autrefois si pures & si tendres,
Ne pourront-elles plus renaître de leurs cendres?
Tu perds tous les plaisirs que tu cherches ailleurs;
L'inconstance est souvent un des plus grands malheurs.
(Act II, scene I).

The solid "bourgeois" standards suggested here underlie his joy on learning that it is in fact his wife whom Durval loves: "Ah! Durval,/ A mon ravissement rien ne peut être égal ..."
The real debate, however, revolves around Durval's reluctance to declare his love to Constance, through fear of society's ridicule. This hesitation leads to clear-cut opposition between respect for contemporary prejudice and scorn of the latter, expressed in Damon's words, uttered "froidement":

Tout bien examiné, vous verrez qu'un mari
Ne doit jamais aimer que la femme d'autrui.

To this he adds "ironiquement":

Le serment de s'aimer n'est donc que pour
la forme?
L'intérêt le fait taire; il ne tient qu'un momento

Damon in fact outlines with great sympathy the plight of women, the playwright deliberately inserting the stage direction "tennement" to indicate the tone in which the following reproach to Durval is to be delivered:

Mais une femme n'a pour soutenir ses droits,
que sa fidélité, sa faiblesse & ses larmes;
Un époux ne craint point de si fragiles armes.
Ah! peut-on faire ainsi, sans le moindre remord,
Un abus si cruel de la loi du plus fort?

This speech reveals a desire to change Durval, in particular by awakening his pity for woman's fate. It is thus a reform of the heart and not the mind which Damon advocates and which indeed concerns not only marriage but general principles. This is evident in his objections to Durval's notion that the dictates of fashion must be adhered to:

Oui, lorsqu'il ne s'agit
Que d'un goût passager, d'un meuble ou d'un habit:
Mais la vertu n'est point sujette à ses caprices;
La mode n'a point droit de nous donner des vices,
Ou de légitimer le crime au fond des cœurs.
Il suffit qu'un usage intéresse les mœurs,
Pour qu'on ne doive plus en être la vic-
time;
L'exemple ne peut pas autoriser un crime.
Faisons ce qu'on doit faire, & non pas ce qu'on fait.

The scene of confession here is a long one. Dominated by the
tone which characterises the speech quoted above, by a call
for constancy in moral standards and an individual conscience,
it is markedly different from the similar scene in Le Jaloux
désabusé. A simple comparison between the two scenes, one in
1709, the other in 1735, exemplifies the change which has
taken place in the comedy particularly as Le Jaloux désabusé
is itself a play which is moving away from the traditional
mould. 7

In L'École des mères Doligni fils is shocked by the
Marquis's intention to gain pleasure by merely feigning love
for Marianne and urges on him a different standard, namely
"la probité":

Ah! Marquis, quel projet! quelle malignité!
Si vous réussissez dans cette indignité,
A vos remords, un jour, craignez de rendre compte.
Croyez que, tôt ou tard, ils ne pardonneront rien.
Renoncez à la gloire, ou plutôt à la honte
D'établir votre honneur sur les débris du sien.

(Act I, scene V).

This evocation of the future is the culmination of constant
questioning and admonition throughout the scene, although the
Marquis himself remains quite unmoved.

6 The "caprices" referred to here are those of "l'usage".

7 In this play, the "confession" scene is based on Dorante's
account of his former life and motivation in neglecting Celie,
his abhorrence of the attention paid to his wife by other men
and his hesitation about declaring his love to her. There is
no moral debate, although Dorante does show remorse for his
previous conduct.
In the same play, La Fleur, like Pasquin in _L'Obstacle imprévu_ also tries to change his master:

_Mais, encore une fois, sçachez vous limiter:
Si vous ne changez pas tout-à-fait de conduite,
Empêchez que du moins on n'en parle en
tous lieux._

_(Act I, scene VI)_

This advice is clearly founded to a certain extent on prudence, but a kind of integrity also prompts La Fleur to make these statements. The notion that La Fleur might in fact possess some moral feeling is supported by his exclamation: "Ah! pauvre malheureuse!" (Act IV, scene I), on learning that the Marquis has not the slightest intention of reforming in order to please his future wife.

The question of family ties is also discussed with a didactic relationship between the speakers. In _L'Obstacle imprévu_, for example, Angélique reproves Lisimon for his attitude towards Valère:

_Ah! quel emportement! quelle fureur! En vérité, cela ne vous sied point. Un père de famille doit mesurer ses discours, et conserver toujours son caractère._

_(Act II, scene V)_

There is no mistaking the tone here, either in Angélique's words themselves or in Lisimon's reply, which accuses her "de me prêcher si mal à propos." Whereas Angélique is only an observer of the relationship, however, Ariste in _Le Philosophe marié_ is involved in a family which is not totally united and his "lesson" to Géronte on the subject brings us close to some of the notions analysed in the moral treatises of the time. Ariste's affection for Lisimon, his father, becomes reproof of Géronte when he witnesses the latter's rudeness:
Pouvez-vous à ce point mortifier un frère?
Vous me percez le cœur. Songez qu'il est
mon père;
Que, bien qu'il m'ait trouvé bon fils jus-
qu'aujourd'hui,
Je ne pourrai jamais m'acquitter envers
lui.

.........................
Non oncle, à son égard soyez plus circon-
spect...

(Act III, scene XIII).

In these words there is a suggestion that the very nature
of the bonds which unite the members of a family ought to
dictate that the relationship be one of mutual love and
respect.

Family ties and attitudes are among the topics on which
Ariste offers advice in Le Procureur arbitre, making an
attempt to convince Agénor and Isabelle that their parents
have their interests at heart in forbidding their marriage:

Et quand à votre hymen ils se montrent
contraires,
Quand ils veulent encor attendre la sai-
son,
Qui fait nourrir l'esprit, & meurir la
raison,
Ils travaillent pour vous, & font par-là
connoître
Que vous êtes aînez autant qu'on le peut
être.
Concevez leurs raisons. (Scene XVII).

In this play Ariste takes back his words on discovering the
maturity and sense of responsibility of the lovers; in general,
however, the character giving a "lesson" is proved to be right
and the character lacking in feeling or moral principle wrong.
The issue is cut-and-dried, with no subtle difficulties to be
debated. This is the case, for example, in Piron's L'Ecole
des pères (1728), where Géronte's sons are placed in an unen-
viable position in being asked to marry a girl they have never
met in order to repay their father's debt to her father.
There is no question of their dilemma being presented in a favourable light, however, or of their hesitation being understood by anyone except themselves. Indeed in the original version of the play, Angélique utters a castigation of these characters which is extremely forceful, containing the accusation that they have "foulé sans pitie, / Et les devoirs du sang, & ceux de l'amitié" (Act IV, scene IX). Her speech is a long one and continues with the suggestion that:

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... il pouvait être doux
D'acquitter sa famille en s'offrant pour époux.
Plaisir, honneur, devoir, pitié de sa jeunesse,
............................
Les prières d'un père, & les bienfaits du sien,
Que de motifs puissans qui sur vous n'ont pu rien!
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This is a part of the play which Piron chose to omit when revising it, but we can see that, in the first instance, he had intended Angélique's admonition to include observations about general standards of a fairly far-reaching kind.\(^8\)

The subject of friendship also reveals in characters a didactic tendency. In Le Curieux impertinent Julie makes a reference to the duties imposed by the relationship when Damon announces his wish to ask for her hand in marriage:

"Damon, c'est trop manquer aux droits de l'amitié" (Act IV, scene XI), but the theme is developed to a significant extent by Nivelle de la Chaussée in two plays, Le Préjugé à la mode and L'École des amis. In the former, there is a definition

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\(^8\)For Piron's account of the changes made in this play, see his Préface, Œuvres complètes d'Alexis Piron, ed. R. de Juvigny (Paris, 1776), I, 10. The handling of the sons' attitude remains the same in the revised version, as does the overall direction of the action. The passage quoted above is taken from the first edition of the play, published in Paris in 1729.
of friendship by Damon in Act II scene I, before the debate about marriage which we have already analysed. Having dismissed false friends as tyrants, whose only wish is to enslave the object of their affection, he continues:

Mais la vraie amitié n'est point impériale;
C'est une liaison libre & délicieuse,
Donc le cœur & l'esprit, la raison & le temps,
Ont ensemble formé les nœuds toujours charmants;
Et sa chaîne, au besoin, plus souple & plus liante,
Doit prêter de concert, sans qu'on la violente.
(Act II, scene I).

For Damon the relationship is based on a rapport of both the feelings and the mind, and we see once more the liking for abstract statement in a man who is sure of his own principles.

In L'Ecole des amis, Ariste, interrupting a discussion between Aramont and Dornane in Act I, scene VI, remarks:

L'amitié qui se vante est souvent indiscrete.
.................................
L'amitié n'admet point de basses jalousies:
C'est à l'amour qu'il faut laisser ces fréquences.

Subsequently there is a "lesson", or rather a warning to Monrose in Act III, scene III, which opens with an attack on a common form of friendship:

Quand j'y pense, entre nous, je vois présentement
Que l'amitié se donne & se prend aisément;
Elle est, comme l'amour, hazzardeuse & légère.
Une conformité, frivole & passagere,
D'âge, d'état, d'humeur, & sur-tout de plaisir,
Sans nul autre examen, suffit pour nous saisir.

To this somewhat negative statement he adds a positive
description of the relationship:

Mais l'amitié, du moins comme je l'envi-
sage,

De part & d'autre exige un long apprenti-
sage;

Et vous devez savoir, à vos propres dé-
pens,

Qu'un ami véritable est l'ouvrage du temps.

This in fact brings us no nearer an understanding of its

nature; it does little more than link up with Ariste's former

remark in Act I, scene VI that Dornane's account of the rela-
tionship, in which he states that it is characterised by com-
plete similarity in taste and a desire to please, is better

applied to love. Ariste's advice shows us above all that any-
thing can be the subject for comment by a man of wisdom and

moral principles with a belief in his own integrity.

Here and elsewhere the effect on the play is more signi-

ficant than the ideas about the relationship itself and it is

in fact by the outcome that a dramatist may seek to influence

the spectator. The advice offered by characters such as

Ariste is often ignored, indeed ridiculed. In Le Médisant,

Damon replies to Valère's criticism, for example: "Qu'à ton

âge il sied mal de faire le Caton!" (Act III, scene VII). Both

Lisimon in L'Obstacle imprévu and Cléon in Le Dissipateur,

despise the intention to "prêcher". Damis, in Le Préjugé à

la mode, states, when distributing parts for a play: "Damon

aura tout juste un rôle de Caton" (Act II, scene IV), and

Dona Béatrice in L'Ambitieux says of Don Félix: "Un Caton à

la cour est un triste animal" (Act I, scene V). The Baron, in

Boissy's Les Dehors trompeurs, advises the Marquis against a

moral stance in society with: "Vous allez ... /.../ d'un Caton

précocé acquérir le surnom ..." (Act III, scene I). It would
seem that the playwrights themselves, however, support a comment made by Valère in Le Médisant: "Il est beau de vouloir corriger son prochain" (Act III, scene VII), for moral "lessons" and the desire to reform others begin to determine, directly or indirectly, the very nature of the plot of the comedy. Increasingly, the opposition which invariably exists between a cynical man of the world and one of strong moral notions is exploited to provide part of the dramatic action. At the very least, the close of the play may often justify the didactic statements of one or more characters. In Destouches's L'Ambitieux, for instance, it cannot be said that the difference in outlook of Don Félix and Don Fernand provides the substance of the play—the moral pronouncements and discussions are too limited for that. Don Félix's warnings to his son in Act II and again in Act V before Don Fernand's final downfall, prove true, however. The overall direction of the play and its eventual solution would therefore seem to suggest that in the conflict of views here expressed, Don Fernand was wrong and Don Félix right.

Similarly in Le Curieux impertinent, Damon reminds Léandre of the duties imposed by friendship, and its limits, in a reproving fashion:

Poursuis, si tu le veux, sans moi ton entreprise;
Mais ne présume pas que j'en sois de moitié,
Quelques droits que sur moi te donne l'amitié.

9See p. 261 above.

10In Act V, scene II he states: "Ciel! quel aveuglement produit l'ambition!/.../ Ouvrez, ouvrez les yeux, et vous verrez vous-même/ Que votre esprit séduit mettoit un trop haut prix/ A des biens qu'un grand cœur regarde avec mépris;/ Que vous idolâtrez une vague chimère."
Ces droits, mon cher Léandre, ont des bornes prescrites; Vouloir ce que tu veux, c'est passer les limites. (Act I, scene VII).

Even when he has been won over to carry out Léandre's plan, he repeats his warning with: "Cela tournera mal" (Act I, scene VII). In the subsequent action, when at certain crucial moments Damon confronts Léandre with Julie's reactions, his account is always accompanied by an admonition. In Act III, for example, we find this exchange:

LÉANDRE
Julie à t'écouter a moins de répugnance,
Tu crains de triompher.

DAMON
Non, mais, en vérité,
Si la chose arrivait, tu l'as bien mérité;
Et je trouve, entre nous, qu'elle t'est trop fidèle ...
(Act III, scene VII).

Events prove Damon right; Léandre, moreover, realises both this and the moral implications of the outcome, stating at the close: "Je perds tout ce que j'aime, et le mérite bien" (Act V, scene VI). In a sense, therefore, Damon's lesson or advice to Léandre is acted out on the stage, even though Damon does not set out with the specific intention of reforming Léandre. A moral is pointed at the end to underline the message, firstly by Léandre himself, as we have seen, but more forcibly by Crispin:

Pour réfléchir, Messieurs, la matière est fort ample.
Amants, maris jaloux, profitez de l'exemple;
Soyez de bonne foi, croyez qu'on l'est aussi;
Et pour prendre leçon, venez souvent ici.
(Act V, scene VI).

Such an invitation to the audience can leave no doubt here as
to the dramatist's purpose and his assumption that the spectator accepts it.

There is a lesson of a kind for both Mme Argant and the audience implied at the end of Nivelle de la Chaussée's _L'École des meres_, in M. Argante's final words:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{En aimant ses enfans, c'est soi-même qu'on aime;} \\
&\text{Mais, pour jouir d'un sort parfaitement heureux,} \\
&\text{Il faut s'en faire aimer de même,} \\
&\text{Comptez qu'on ne parvient à ce bonheur suprême,} \\
&\text{Qu'en partageant son âme également entre eux.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Act V, scene X).

Certainly the aim of the play would seem to be to show the dangers of preference for one child over another; it is through the action and its outcome alone, however, that this lesson becomes clear, Mme Argante dismissing any attempts to reason with her. At several points in this play there are prolonged discussions between the Marquis and characters who disapprove of his conduct: here, and with the conversion of Mme Argante and her affection for Marianne, previously spurned, the position of the dramatist is made quite plain. He approves of those he allows to triumph at the close.

The moral purpose may thus be said to emerge indirectly from the course of the action. In many plays, however, the plot is clearly directed towards teaching certain characters a "lesson", if not indeed of reforming them. Such characters are always male and a substantial part of the action derives from the intrigues of one or more of the other characters to defeat the one who is thought to be morally unacceptable.

This trend can be discerned at the end of the seventeenth century and at first takes the form of plans devised by a
servant to dupe his master, with or without the help of others.

The first comedy in which this type of plot is used is Baron's *L'Homme à bonne fortune* (1686). Here Lucinde has fallen in love with a man her friends and household believe to be unsuitable; much of Act I is in fact taken up with a series of attempts by the servants to make both her and Moncade adopt more reasonable courses of behaviour. This begins with Marton's words to Lucinde:

... dès qu'il a vu que vous le vouliez toujours fidèle & toujours amoureux, a-t-il seulement pu se résoudre à conserver les moindres égards pour vous? Que n'avez-vous pas fait pour lui? Songez enfin, Madame, que vous vous devez quelque chose à vous-même. (Act I, scene IV).

This is followed by reproaches of a more explicit moral nature from Pasquin to Moncade, when told that his master has fallen in love with Lucinde's friend:

Leonor, amie de Lucinde, à sa vue vous n'y songez pas, ou vous voulez vous perdre absolument. !É! Monsieur, où est la probité, l'honneur: songez-vous, vous dis-je .... (Act I, scene X).

Finally we see Marton, too, trying to reform Moncade:

Que ne donnerois-je pas pour vous voir faire de sérieuses réflexions sur votre humeur; pour moi, je vous crois trop honnête homme pour ne vous pas reprocher quelquefois votre conduite avec Lucinde. (Act I, scene XI).

Moncade's only reply is the mockery of such statements as: "J'aime les moralités, elles endorment" (Act I, scene X). We have therefore an unprincipled and superficial libertine set against a group of characters of pronounced moral persuasions. It is of course not unusual in the comedy for a servant to remonstrate with his master; no more obvious example of this
comes to mind perhaps than Sganarelle and his constant
haranguing of Don Juan in Molière's play. One could mention
too Dorine's attempts to reason with her master in Le Tartuffe
and those of Toinette in Le Malade imaginaire. These charac-
ters have an affection for the family but are concerned about
the inadvisability of certain kinds of behaviour, whereas
Pasquin and Marton in L'Homme à bonne fortune, while they
feel real sympathy for one character, namely Lucinde, also
experience a sense of shock at Moncade's lack of integrity.
The servants have thus become mentor figures. Faced, however,
with flippancy or deafness in the master, they resort to
trickery, not to show him the folly of his actions, but to
gain revenge on behalf of another and to chasten. Most of the
events after the initial moral lesson stem from Leonor's
question in Act I: "Ne saurions-nous trouver le moyen de faire
donner Moncade dans quelque panneau?" (Act I, scene II), an
idea put into action by Marton and then by Pasquin. Moncade
is unmasked at the end of the play and although he shows no
sign of repentance, he is nevertheless abandoned by Leonor
and Lucinde, who gives her hand to Eraste. At the close,
Pasquin implies the moral of what has happened with the words:
"Si cela pouvait le rendre sage! ..." (Act V, scene IX).

In Destouches's L'Ingrat, where Damis is interested only
in the fortune of the woman he is to marry, Pasquin attempts
to arouse in his master a sense of what he owes to Géronte:

PASQUIN
Que dirat-on de vous?

DAMIS, en riant.
Tout ce que l'on voudra.

PASQUIN
C'est une ingratitude; on vous en blâmera.
These recriminations, which recur in Act II, with asides from Pasquin to Damis on the perfidy of his behaviour to Isabelle, are clearly seen by Pasquin for what they are, moral lessons aimed at reforming Damis, for he says: "Je me tue à prêcher, vous allez votre train" (Act I, scene VI). They are remonstrations based both on notions of what is right, on qualities such as "vertu" and "reconnaissance" and on a concern for Damis born of long service. This affection, however, turns to disgust when confronted with cynicism and Pasquin seeks revenge by exploiting the reappearance of a woman to whom Damis had promised marriage and he finally succeeds in discrediting his master. Damis, unrepentant, is not reformed, but neither does he win Isabelle or Orphise. As Pasquin makes clear in his last speech: "(au parterre) Vous avez vu punir le plus grand des ingrats:/ Profitez de l'exemple et ne l'imitez pas" (Act V, scene VII), the entire action, bringing about Damis's downfall, presents a warning to the audience.

Pasquin in L'École des pères is a servant of a similar kind and he is moreover well aware that he is somewhat unusual for his time, distinguishing himself from "ces fripons qu'on voit, sur la Scène, à Paris,/ Toujours prêts à tromper les Pères pour les Fils" (Act I, scene IV). Although Pasquin himself does not attack Géronte's sons directly, certain themes
are established from the first scenes of the play and in fact the exposition takes the form almost entirely of moral discussion. Géronte, for example, makes plain that he is aware of what he owes to an old friend, now dead, and that he sees it as his duty to provide for Angélique, his friend's daughter. Angélique in her turn reciprocates the gratitude felt by Géronte for her father:

\[
\text{Plus ce Père est trahi, plus son sort m'intéresse.}
\]
\[
\text{Je sens même, oui, je sens qu'envers lui ma tendresse}
\]
\[
\text{Me charge des devoirs que l'on ne lui rend pas.}
\]

(Act I, scene IV).

Subsequently, Géronte presents the situation to his sons, asking that they fulfill the obligation he can no longer discharge:

\[
\text{[je] suis dans l'impuissance}
\]
\[
\text{De payer des bienfaits que jadis j'ai reçu;}
\]
\[
\text{A des Fils vertueux j'ai recours là-dessus.}
\]

(Act III, scene VII).

The plot is founded on the revenge taken against Géronte's sons by Pasquin and the rest of the characters and when all the tricks and false rumours of the play have revealed to Géronte his sons' true character, there can be no doubt of the moral intention of the play. Géronte's exclamation:

"Enfants dénaturés, que tout le monde abhorrer, qu'attendez-vous d'Angélique & de moi?" (Act V, scene VII) is reinforced by Chrisalde's: "Angélique & mon Frère ont des

\[1\]
The original title of the play, Les Fils ingratis indicated that a moral judgment had indeed already been made by the dramatist. Piron altered it, however, believing that "l'ancien titre annonçait un vice horrible ..." (Préface, Œuvres complètes, I, 3). The play is still intended to have a kind of moral purpose in presenting a father's infatuation with his sons, however, and Piron would wish to "joindre l'utile à l'agréable" (I, 3).
vertus sans prix./ Ils sont récompensés, & vous êtes punis" (Act V, scene VIII). In this didactic relationship between the characters, the reproaches are taken to the point of open hostility.

The theme of a character wishing to correct another or to take a kind of revenge is also to be seen in Gresset's Le Méchant (1747). The title of the play is an indication of the dramatist's position and those who see through Cléon, namely Lisette and Ariste, desire to reveal him for what he is, not a ridiculous figure full of illusions, but a man who is morally reprehensible. At the end of the play Ariste underlines what has been achieved through the tricks devised by Lisette and shows that the dramatist has a moral aim:

Tôt ou tard la vertu, les graces, les talents,
Sont vainqueurs des jaloux, et vengés des méchants.
(Act V, scene IV).

However plain the position of the playwright may be in the plays which we have examined, the character who is to be reformed remains unrepentant and does not participate in the spirit of harmony at the close. In Marivaux's L'Ile des esclaves (1725), however, the administration of a "lesson" takes a different form. Iphicrate and Euphrosine have become the slaves of Arlequin and Cléanthis for the purpose outlined by Trivelin at the start:

Nous ne nous vengeons plus de vous, nous vous corrigeons; ce n'est plus votre vie que nous poursuivons, c'est la barbarie de vos cœurs que nous voulons détruire; nous vous jetons dans l'esclavage pour vous rendre sensibles aux maux qu'on y éprouve ...
(Scene II).
The reform envisaged, therefore, by Trivelin is clearly one which takes place as a result of an appeal to the heart. Admittedly, mockery, totally supplanting the moralising usually employed in a play with this kind of theme, is used by the servants, but it is designed to reawaken the "sensibilité" of their superiors and thus achieve a new understanding between master and servant. In need of pity themselves and willing eventually to give compassion in their turn, Iphicrate and Euphrosine experience feelings previously unknown to them and admit the extent to which they have destroyed the dignity of those who are, supposedly, their inferiors. Indeed Iphicrate comments to Euphrosine of the servants' greater readiness to repent: "... quel exemple pour nous, Madame, vous m'en voyez pénétré" (Scene X). A splendid tirade from Cléanthis in this very scene completes her mistress's transformation and the four characters are brought together in complete reconciliation at the end of the play.

In Destouches's Le Glorieux (1732) the notion of "correction" is introduced as an important one at the end of Act I, by Lycandre's words of the Comte: "J'imagine un moyen qui le corrigera" (Act I, scene IX). This is followed by a direct attack from Lycandre on his son in Act II:

See, for instance, Euphrosine's words to Arlequin in Scene VIII: "Tu peux ici m'outrager autant que tu le voudras; je suis sans asile et sans défense ... j'ai besoin de la compassion de tout le monde, de la tienne même, Arlequin ..." His reply: "J'ai perdu la parole" is indicative of the way in which his feelings have been touched; this exchange illustrates precisely how an appeal to and a response of the feelings brings about the dénouement.
Vous ne manquez pas de mérite; 
Mais, bien loin de vous croire un prodige étonnant,
Apprenez que chacun s'irrite
De votre orgueil impertinent.
L'ami de qui vous vient cette utile leçon,
Emprunte une main étrangère;
Et lui-même, ce soir, il viendra sans façon,
Vous demander si votre humeur ali-
Aura baissé de quelque ton.

As we can see from this, there is no trick or plot devised in this play to destroy or unmask the Comte, merely a degree of mystery in the "leçons", since Lycandre does not immediately reveal his identity. Attempts to change the Comte's behaviour take the form of discussion rather than action, but are nevertheless a significant part of the play, mainly because they involve a number of characters. In Act III, for example, Isabelle, who is to marry the Comte, continues the attack on him in one of the central scenes of the act, clearly believing that her superiority, implied in the words: "Écoutez, profitez, et méritez mon cœur," justifies her in so doing:

Les gens nés d'un sang respectable
Doivent se distinguer par un esprit affable,
Liant, doux, prévenant; au lieu que la fierté
Est l'ordinaire effet d'un éclat emprunté.
La hauteur est partout odieuse, importune.
(Act III, scene IV).

13 This statement is made in a letter from Lycandre read out, with interjections, by the Comte in Act II, scenes XII and XIII. For the sake of clarity the major part of the letter has been quoted here as one continuous speech.
Lisette also gives him what must be regarded as a moral "lesson", summing up her advice with: "Voilà mon sentiment. Profitez-en, ou non ..."

Le discours d'Isabelle étoit votre portrait,
Et son discernement vous a peint trait pour trait.

Je ne vous dirai pas: changez de caractère;
Mais du moins je vous dis, songez à vous contraindre ...

(Act III, scene V).

Lycandre is most closely concerned with this theme in the play, however, as we see when he reappears in Act IV and declares to Lisette:

Votre cœur le prévient, et l'ingrat vous méprise!
Ah! je veux profiter de cette occasion,
Pour jouir devant vous de sa confusion,
Quand le temps permettra de vous faire connoître.

... et sa présomption
Mérite qu'avec lui prenant le ton de père,
Je fasse à ses hauteurs une leçon sévère.

(Act IV, scene III).

The confrontation between father and son takes place in scene VII of this act, when an attempt is made to chasten and shame the Comte with reproaches; the latter is not reformed at this stage, however, and his ultimate punishment comes only in the final scene, where Lycandre reveals his identity before the entire household and leaves no doubt as to his purpose:

L'état où je parois, et sa confusion,
D'un excessif orgueil sont la punition.

(Act V, scene VI).

The culmination of a series of didactic scenes in this play takes the form therefore of a clash between Lycandre and the Comte, in which the latter, overcome by his father's "Redoute mon courroux,/ Ma malédiction, ou tombe à mes genoux"
(Act V, scene VI), is, one might say, forcibly reformed. He certainly admits the error of his ways and, most significant of all, himself points the moral of the play at the end:

Il faut se faire aimer; on vient de m'en convaincre;
Et je sens que la gloire et la présomption
N'attirent que la haine et l'indignation.
(Act V, scene VI).

We have already noted that in Le Dissipateur the Baron tries to change Cléon, but Julie had also suggested a desire to reform him when saying to Finette:

Tu sais que Cléon m'aime, et que j'aime Cléon;
Mais à le corriger en vain je me fatigue;
Je ne puis mettre un frein à son humeur prodigue.
(Act I, scene II).

It rapidly becomes apparent in fact that Julie and Finette are exploiting Cléon, that Julie indeed has initiated a whole series of stories and events destined to ruin Cléon financially and to prove to him the folly of his behaviour and misguided attachment to certain society figures. It is these inventions which we gradually witness taking effect during the course of the action. Ultimately in Act V, his fortune gone, Cléon is disillusioned and realises the error of his judgements:

Inutile remords,
Pourquoi me tourmenter? O raison trop tardive!
Que ne prévenois-tu le malheur qui m'arrive!
Je suis abandonné, trahi, déshérité,
Et, pour comble de maux, je l'ai bien mérité.
Compter sur des amis; quelle était ma folie!
(Act V, scene XV).

This play takes the form of an acting out of the moral lesson given to Cléon by the Baron at the outset, the tricks and lies told by Julie and all the members of the household proving
that he was right. Cléon, in realising and accepting this, draws the moral of the play himself:

Pour combien de bienfaits, vous m'avez rendu sage;  
Et je vais éprouver dans les plus doux liens, 
Qu'une femme prudente est la source des biens.  
(Act V, scene XV).

A plot of the same kind forms the basis of Fagan's short one-act play Les Originaux (1737). Indeed the Chevalier's very opening speech makes clear that the action of this comedy consists in the administration of a lesson:

... assurément le Marquis verra ici des originaux de toutes les especes; & s'il est vrai que, pour bien sentir le ridicule de nos défaits, il soit nécessaire de les considérer dans les autres, je vous réponde qu'il pourra prendre aujourd'hui une leçon des plus complètes.  (Scene I).

The intrigue has been instigated by the Marquis's mother, who, believing that: "Du ridicule au vice la pente est bien facile ..." (Scene I), has decided to bring before her son a series of cynical, flippant characters in order to destroy in him a growing irresponsibility. It is these confrontations which are to bring about the change in the Marquis, for as the Chevalier observes: "Les exemples seront plus forts que toutes les leçons que l'on pourrait lui donner" (Scene I). During the course of the action, these encounters gradually influence the Marquis, inducing a realisation of his own short-comings and of his callous treatment of the woman he was to marry. Finally shocked by the behaviour of Gélaste, "un homme de plaisir," he concludes that man's inhumanity to woman is far greater than the latter's alleged flightiness:

Ahi si nous nous plaignons quelquefois de la légèreté des femmes, combien plus
souvent ce sexe aimable a-t-il d'inhumanités & de mépris à essuyer de notre part?
(Scene XVI).

The action of the play is intended therefore, not, as it might have been in the traditional comedy, to illustrate the ridiculous nature of Marquis's behaviour, although this is suggested, but to reform him.

We have seen the didactic element of early eighteenth-century comedy take different forms: there is comment of a purely objective kind on people and conduct; there is the visible intention to establish those qualities which illustrate true moral value, in others as well as in oneself, together with the effect produced by this intention on the intrigue, and finally there are plots which consist of moral "lessons". Whatever form this feature of the new comedy takes, a climate of opinion is created on the stage and certain attitudes are portrayed by the dramatist as acceptable. This does not necessarily mean that there are no comic elements in the plays, that, as Voltaire states in his Dictionnaire philosophique, when talking of Le Préjugé à la mode, "le comique fut banni de la comédie" or that protagonists comic in themselves disappear. Voltaire had indeed written two comedies of the new kind, and L'Enfant prodigue contains in Fièrenfat an obviously comic character who provokes Marthe to say, for instance: "Je ris déjà de sa grave colère" (Act

IV, scene III). "Comédie de mœurs" still exists, particularly in those plays where one of the characters is a "petit-maître". Roles such as that of Moncade in _L'Homme à bonne fortune_, of Damis in _L'Ingrat_, or the Marquis in _L'École des mères_, continue in the new plays mockery of the cynical libertine, so strong in the comedy after Molière. This is especially true where, as in _L'Homme à bonne fortune_, a servant apes the manners of the master, thus increasing their comic impact.

There is satire of other social types. Julie's description, for example, in _Le Dissipateur_, of the group assembled by Cléon in her house, is intended to poke fun at a wide range of characters, from gamblers to ageing coquettes and malicious wits.\(^{15}\) In the Preface to _L'Ambitieux_ Destouches condemns "le trop facile et le punissable talent de la satire,"\(^{16}\) but it seems hard not to consider the play, in part at least, as a satire of court life with all its hypocrisy and superficiality.

In addition, the titles of many of the plays we have looked at would appear to suggest that they are "comédies de caractère". There are indeed characters who retain some of the features of Molière's great comic protagonists, who have, for example, the same illusions about themselves and who persist in a course of action in spite of reality - which they cannot or will not see - and in spite of all evidence that it is the height of folly. Moncade in _L'Homme à bonne fortune_, for instance, is convinced of his own charm and his ability to carry on several love affairs at once, believing that he

\(^{15}\) See Act II, scene I.

\(^{16}\) _Oeuvres dramatiques_ (Paris, 1820), III, 225.
can extricate himself from every difficult situation. In *Le Curieux impertinent*, Léandre has no grounds for supposing Julie unfaithful, yet he devises a dishonest scheme to test her and insists on taking it to the limit, even in the face of Damon's assurances and his confession that he is himself in love with Julie. In *L'École des pères* there is the same comic blindness in Géronte, whose inflexibility and persistence in holding his sons to be good despite their behaviour, and warnings from everyone else, is in fact referred to by Lasquin as "votre tendre manie."\(^{17}\) Dona Béatrice in *L'Ambitieux*, convinced that she is at the centre of all the court intrigues, in a position of power, is clearly intended as a comic figure.\(^{18}\)

The existence of characters such as these often means that there is a vein of irony running through the plays. This is so with *Le Curieux impertinent* where Léandre chooses, to feign love for Julie, a man whom the audience suspects of actually loving her. The irony is even stronger in Boissy's *Les Dehors trompeurs*, where both the Marquis and the Baron love Lucile and where the Baron, persuaded of his own value and attraction, remains totally unaware until the final scene of the play that Lucile detests him. The comedy lies in the

\(^{17}\) "Pour trois enfans gâtés, votre tendre manie;/ Tout jeune, vous servra des douceurs de la vie ..." (Act II, scene V).

Géronte's infatuation is indeed referred to by Piron as one of the "ridicules" which comedy should be offering (Préface, Ouvres complètes, I, 3).

\(^{18}\) See Destouches's justification of the character and the creative process here: "Résolu de me servir de ce personnage, qui me fournissait la plus grande partie du comique de mon ouvrage, je m'attachai avec soin à le rendre essentiellement nécessaire ..." (*L'Ambitieux*, Préface, Ouvres, III, 233).
fact that the Baron, ignorant of the true situation, urges the Marquis to attempt to win the woman he loves, even if it means betraying a friend. Throughout the play, therefore, he is unwittingly bringing about his own downfall.

We have also noted in many plays one of the stock situations of traditional comedy, which involves a character, oblivious of all but his own concerns, being tricked by others. Marton's claim of Moncade that "il donnera dans tous les panneaux que vous lui tendrez" (Act III, scene II), reminds one that in his vanity and stupidity, he comes close to the traditional dupe of farce. The play never descends of course to that level, but it does revolve around the scheming of Marton and the rest. Similarly, Géronte in L'Ecole des pères is easily fooled because of his intractability, just as his sons, because of their greed and conceit, are themselves immediately taken in by Nérine's lies. In addition Julie, in Le Dissipateur, has no difficulty in completely fleecing Cléon.

Traditional comic situations and character studies therefore remain, but the moral dilemmas which the characters experience and the debates with others inevitably introduce a certain seriousness into the new comedy. Moreover, as Lanson has said, the intrigues which we have examined are not those of a Scapin, who revels in manipulating others and who delights in creating complicated situations in order to prove his ingenuity in unravelling them. Nor are the plots

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19 See also Pasquin's words in L'Ingrat, referring to Damis: "Ah, fogrbe! je te tiens, et tu seras ma dupe" (Act IV, scene VII).

motivated solely by a desire for revenge in a lover who has been spurned or a family which has been disgraced. Marton and Pasquin in L'Homme à bonne fortune wish to reveal Moncade for what he is, admittedly, but they devise their plans just as much out of concern for Lucinde and a desire that she shall be caused no further suffering. This is why Léonor and Eraste support the servants in their scheme. Indeed even Marton's words of advice to Moncade himself, her moral "lesson" to him, stem in the first place from an affection which leads her to want his well-being:

Croyez moi, Monsieur, & vous croirez une Fille toute affectionnée à vos intérêts ...

(Act I, scene XI).

Similarly, if we see Pasquin preaching, as he himself puts it, in L'Ingrat, it is because he loves his master and is concerned for his future:

DAMIS
Sais-tu mieux que moi-même Ce qui me convient?

PASQUIN
Oui; parce que je vous aime. Je voudrois ....

(Act I, scene VI).

Statements such as these are not merely the result of long and dedicated service to one master. Damon, for instance, in Le Curieux impertinent, argues with Léandre about his treatment of Julie, but it is precisely because he feels affection for him and a desire to avoid what he sees as inevitable betrayal of their friendship. In the opening scene of the play he had already said to Crispin:

... je perdrois plutôt cent fois la vie, Que de faire à Léandre aucune perfidie.

The very fact that he at first refuses to co-operate with Léandre is an indication both of his capacity for feeling and
his moral scruples; however ridiculous he may be, Léandre is not therefore the butt of Damon's mockery, so much as a cause for concern. In Act I, scene VII he says, for instance: "De ce que tu médites, Ami, pour toi, pour moi, j'appréhende les suites."

The same pattern emerges from Piron's L'École des pères. Both Géronte's sense of obligation to Argante and the demands which he makes on his sons originate in his love for Argante, as his words in Act III reveal:

Dans mon cœur attendri, son père vit encore.
Pour elle, par ma voix, cet ami vous implore:
Je lui devois mes biens, & vous me les devez!

Que l'un de vous m'acquitte, en s'acquit­tant lui-même ...
(Act III, scene VII).

Angélique, in her reaction to Pasquin's description of Géronte's sons, illustrates how closely moral notions and spontaneous feeling are allied in this play:

...tous gens de bien doivent être saisis
De pitié pour le père, & d'horreur pour les fils,
(Act I, scene IV).

In Le Dissipateur, every character is gradually drawn into Julie's plan for ruining Cléon financially, but as she reveals at the end of the play, it is a plan based not on a selfish desire for wealth and revenge, but on love and on genuine concern for Cléon's survival:

J'ai tâché de vous perdre, afin de vous sauver,
Et vous ai tout ravi pour vous le conser­ver:
A votre aveuglement c'était le seul remède.
Vous êtes maître encore de ce que je pos­sède:
Mon cœur, mon tendre cœur vous l'offre
avec transport ... (Act V, scene XV).
One of the oldest comic techniques therefore survives into the new plays of the early eighteenth century, but in a radically altered form. The characters who are to be reformed, either by argument or through the action of the play are subjects for concern or the cause of sympathy for others. They can rarely if ever be figures of ridicule for those who wish to change them, therefore, because the latter are not sufficiently detached from the situation. This has implications in its turn for the stages in which the new comedy developed. Lanson suggests that the dramatists of the early eighteenth century, in particular Destouches, fearing that constant moralising on the stage would ultimately become tedious and unacceptible, added to their plays "de l'émotion et du pathétique," in other words, it would seem, that the didactic tendency precedes the creation of characters with a capacity for feeling. It is of course not easy to determine in what order the elements discernible in the new comedy come into it. The moral purpose which we know Destouches to have had appears to have been shared by a number of other dramatists in the first half of the century, but the didactic traits in their protagonists are very closely allied to "sensibilité" and indeed, one might say, dependent on it. Characters who do not possess a capacity for feeling do not moralise. Nor are they reformed at the end of the play. Moncade shows not the slightest concern for anyone except himself throughout the whole of L'Homme à bonne fortune and he probably remains unrepentant at the close; his only utterance when realising that his hypocrisy has been proven is: "Juste

21 See Les Origines du drame contemporain, p. 42.
Ciel" (Act V, scene IX), which gives a little indication of any change of heart. Damis in L'Ingrat in spite of the angry outbursts of those who have suffered at his hands, is flip­rant to the end, saying as he leaves the stage:

Tu peux dire partout que, quoiqu'on me méprise,
J'espère trouver mieux qu'Isabelle et qu'Orphise.

(Act V, scene VII).

Significantly enough Isabelle had said of him earlier in the play: "Il ne se pique pas d'avoir des sentiments ..." (Act I, scene IV), a statement in which the notions of feeling and moral scruple are closely linked.

The same pattern is to be seen in L'École des pères, where once again there is nothing to show that Damis, Eraste or Valère experience remorse at the end of the play. Angélique speaks of them as possessing "des cœurs si peu sensibles " (Act IV, scene X), which would seem to suggest that where the feelings cannot be touched there are no moral principles. In Gesset's Le Méchant, Cléon departs unmoved by the way in which he has deliberately wounded several characters, throwing out a challenge to them; Ariste offers hope for the future, however, again associating a capacity for feeling, which Cléon had not seemed to possess, with the ability to repent:

Malgré l'air satisfait qu'il affecte au­jourd'hui,
Du moindre sentiment si son âme est capa­ble,
Il est assez puni quand l'opprobre l'acca­ble.

(Act V, scene X).

In those characters who are reformed, on the other hand, there is a certain "sensibilité", which had in fact always existed, although it had been for a time repressed. Not only
has Durval fallen in love with his wife, his affection marks a rebirth of his first feelings for Constance and his remorse, together with his anxiety that his love might not be reciprocated, are an indication of his capacity for feeling. In L’Enfant prodigue, Euphémon fils's reaction to the news that Lise is to marry and the terms in which he speaks of his own fate: "Le ciel, ce ciel qui doit nous désunir, je laisse un cœur, et c'est pour me punir" (Act III, scene V), bear witness to the fact that the most important of Euphémon's responses originate in the affective side of his being. Similarly Milord in Pamela (1743) is capable of repentance, particularly in Act II, after an attempt to trick Williams and Pamela, and when he is confronted with the innocence of Williams's love. In addition, Mme Andrews's words: "Vous vous attendrissiez" (Act IV, scene VII), reveal in him a response of the emotions to her appeal for Pamela's freedom.

The same nature is again seen in the Marquis of L'École de la jeunesse both in his self-reproach, dictated by the heart, and his love for Jélide, of which Rosette remarks: "Qu'on me trouve des cœurs toujours plus tendrement épris d'une Beauté que l'infortune accable" (Act V, scene V).

In the same way characters who admire virtue, who have themselves high moral standards and dictate principles to others, also possess "sensibilité". Lisette's "lesson" to the Comte in Le Glorieux, for example, has its origins in affection for him:

... votre erreur extrême
Me force à vous prouver à quel point je vous aime.

Vous vous perdez, Monsieur.

(Act III, scene V).
Her final statement: "Mon cœur seul m’a dicté cette utile leçon," underlines the connection between the didactic tendency and a capacity for feeling. Mélanide says of her advice to Darviane that "tels sont les avis que l’amitié m’inspire" (Act I, scene II), friendship here being in reality a maternal preoccupation with his well-being. Ariste’s advice to Valère in Le Déch trust also stems from some feeling for him: "Si la raison ici vous a plu dans ma bouche, / Je le dois à mon cœur, que votre intérêt touche" (Act IV, scene IV). In L’École des amis, Ariste’s kindness is evident in his words to Hortence: "A quelque chose enfin l’on peut vous être bon" (Act II, scene III), and Sanspaffair in L’Homme singulier (1745) talks of his "cœur trop facile et trop tendre ..." (Act I, scene I).

If one is to speak, therefore, of a concept on which the new comedy is based, it may be possible to suggest that the notion of a capacity for feeling – manifested in whatever way – precedes the possession of moral principles and a desire to reform others. We would have to conclude at least that the latter cannot exist without the former. In some plays, as we have seen, feelings and scruples are in fact inseparable. There can be no mistaking the scale of values established by the new comedy. If a capacity for feeling is praiseworthy, so too are the qualities deriving from it. Uncaring and therefore immoral characters still remain, but are rare, especially towards the end of the period under discussion; the comedy is dominated by a group of virtuous characters whose standards are approved by the dramatist. The action of the play makes them triumphant, virtue is rewarded and the purpose
of the action is moreover often underlined with a comment at the close. That the writers under discussion had a moral purpose seems undeniable, but the moralising tendency in their protagonists may arise quite naturally out of a new conception of man and his relations with his fellows.

It is the emphasis on virtue in the new comedy which distinguishes it of course from the traditional comedy of the seventeenth century. L'École de la jeunesse is a long way from L'École des femmes. The aim of comedy, in the first half of the eighteenth century, is to be fulfilled by example and not by ridicule, even supposing the latter to be possible. Not all contemporary critics favour this change in the comedy; J.-B. Rousseau, for instance, attacks it openly:

L'art n'est point fait pour tracer des modèles,
Mais pour fournir des exemples fidèles
Du ridicule & des abus divers
Où tombe l'homme en proie à ses travers,
Quand tel qu'il est on me l'a fait paroitre,
Je me figure assez quel je dois être
Sans qu'il me faille affliger en public
D'un froid Sermon passé par l'alembic.

Riccoboni on the other hand approves those characters who act "par le seul mouvement de la vertu" and believes that comedy can and should influence an audience in the most direct fashion:

... quand nous la (vertu) voyons briller
dans des personnes qui ne sont au-dessus
de nous que d'un seul degré, nous sentons
combien il seroit aisé à tout le monde de
se rendre la vertu propre & familière, si
nous nous disposons à la suivre ...


23 L. Riccoboni, "Lettre de Monsieur Louis Riccoboni à M. le docteur Muratori," Œuvres de Monsieur Nivelle de La Chaussée, ed. Ch. Sablier, (Paris 1762), V, 212. Riccoboni is arguing that it is "bien plus aisé de parvenir à la correction des moeurs par des Pieces de ce caractère, que par la Tragédie ..." (V, 212).
Others such as Fagan, du Sauzet and Yart also hold the view that virtue should be made appealing. Fagan is one of the first to suggest that comedy must strike out in a new direction, mainly because of the taste of the theatre-going public. Molière's admirers he says:

... veulent que l'argument d'une Pièce soit une épigrame & non un sentiment, ou pour mieux dire, ils veulent que l'objet principal des Auteurs soit de peindre des défauts & non des vertus.

Mais n'est-ce pas un devoir indissociable aux Auteurs d'étudier le goût de leur siècle, & depuis quelque temps cette nouvelle espèce de Comédie n'a-t-elle pas été un peu mise en crédit?

This argument is most striking, not only because it links the notions of "sentiment" and "vertu", suggesting that a play might be based on them, but also for the awareness it indicates of the trend in the comedy. Fagan goes further, however; in creating a "genre nouveau" contemporary dramatists, unlike Terence or Molière, should attempt to

... peindre ce que la nature a d'aimable & de parfait.

Il est vrai qu'en suivant ce dernier genre, le fond sera toujours plus sérieux; jusqu'ê-tê même qu'il pourra être larmoyant.

(I, 210).

Du Sauzet, when writing on L'École des amis, believes that it is entirely within the province of comedy to present an ideal code of conduct and he sees, moreover, the same kind of development as Fagan had done:

Qu'on n'aille pas s'imaginer, que nous voudrions interdire à Thalie le badinage & la gayeté. Nous aimons à la voir rire lors qu'elle veut nous faire sentir le ridicule du Vice; mais nous croyons qu'il

lui est permis de prendre un ton un peu plus grave et plus sérieux, lorsqu'elle veut nous faire aimer la Vertu."

Furthermore, in discussing Mélanide and the aim of modern playwrights who "se sont attachés à y étaler les charmes de la Vertu," he says of them:

... ils ont instruit en attendrissant. ...
Mais de nos jours la question est décidée; le public a prononcé en faveur du Comique attendrissant & moral, par les applaudissements inépuisables qu'il a donnés au Préjugé à la mode, à L'Ecole des Amis, à Mélanide.

Yart, in his "Observations sur la Comédie," makes a deliberate connection between the attitude of his time and the comedy and reaches a similar conclusion:

C'est au poète vertueux à exciter en faveur de nos parens, de nos amis, de nos semblables, la nature, la raison, l'humanité, quand même ils seroient indignes de notre secours par leur ingratitude: c'est à lui à exprimer ces sentiments avec le langage touchant de L'Ecole à la Cour, des Fils ingrats, de L'Ecole des Amis, de l'Enfant prodigue &c.

We have suggested here some of the reasons why the comedy becomes more serious. These eighteenth-century critics, writing at the time of the most significant development in the genre, propose that it must inevitably become "larmoyant" or "attendrissant".

25 Du Sauzet, Bibliothèque Françoise, ou Histoire Littéraire de la France (Amsterdam, 1741), XXXIII, Premiere Partie, Article X, 158-59.
26 Bibliothèque Françoise, XXXIII, Seconde Partie, Article IX, 354-55.
CHAPTER EIGHT

The tearful character and situation

Nothing aroused a stronger reaction in those opposed to the new comedy in the first half of the eighteenth century than the lachrymose element in the plays. Among the most virulent critics of the genre was Desfontaines, who, a rigid classicist and of the belief therefore that tragedy and comedy should be kept entirely separate, attacked almost all the new comedies and those of Nivelle de la Chaussée in particular.

In his Observations sur les écrits modernes he writes:

... M.R. se met à rabaisser la Tragédie par de mauvaises raisons, pour élever sur ses ruines ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui le Comique Larmoyant, genre absurde, selon moi, puisqu'il est contre la raison de vouloir dans un même Ouvrage Dramatique faire rire & pleurer; ce qui est traiter des Spectateurs raisonnables, comme des enfants.

Desfontaines continually condemns the suggestion that drama should attempt to reflect the mixture of laughter and tears normal in life, by arguing that any movement between two extremes is not in fact natural and that, furthermore, the new plays are not in any case at all comic:

Dans le fond je défie qu'on me cite une Comédie attendrissante, une de ces Tragédies Bourgeoises ... où les plaisanteries aient causé le moindre plaisir. Souvenez-vous de l'Ecole des Amis, de l'Ambitieux, du Prêjugé à la mode. Les exemples sont donc jusqu'ici contraires au système du Comique attendrissant.

1 P.-F. G. Desfontaines, Observations sur les écrits modernes (Paris, 1737), XI, Lettre CLI, 22. Desfontaines is commenting on Luigi Riccoboni's "Lettre de Monsieur Louis Riccoboni à M. le docteur Muratori."

2 Observations, XI, Lettre CLXIII, 303.
J.-B. Rousseau is no less inflexible in his conception of dramatic art:

Songez-y donc, chers Enfans d'une Muse
Qui cherche à rire & que la joie amuse:
Depuis cent ans deux Théâtres chéris
Sont consacrés, l'un aux Pleurs, l'autre aux Ris;
Sans les confondre il faut tâcher d'y plaire...

Collé also disapproves of the new comedy, describing it in his account of Cénie (1750) as "cette espèce monstrueuse de poème dramatique," while his review of Nivelle de la Chaussée's L'École de la jeunesse (1749) makes clear his resistance to any radical alteration in dramatic convention:

Le comique larmoyant du Glorieux, du Philosophe marié, de l'Enfant prodigue, et celui de toutes les pièces de La Chaussée, ne sera et ne peut jamais être goûté des amateurs de la bonne comédie. La comédie doit faire rire; la tragédie doit émouvoir et arracher des larmes; il ne peut y avoir un troisième genre dramatique qui participe de ces deux. (I, 34).

However violently these critics may object to a character weeping on stage, tears can raise a smile in the new genre. In Destouches's La Fausse Agnès (1736) Angélique deliberately simulates despair in order to bemuse and ultimately to antagonise M. des Mazures:

ANGÉLIQUE, feignant de pleurer
Que je suis malheureuse! Vous me méprizez, vous me désespérez; mais vous serez mon mari, ou .... vous direz pourquoi.

(Act II, scene VI).

In Le Tambour nocturne (1736), Mme Catau feigns alarm at the...
Marquis's intentions towards the Baronne in *Le Dissipateur* (1736) makes a pretence of crying in sympathy with Cléon, although she is in league with Julie, and as the stage direction at the end of her speech of commiseration indicates, enjoying herself at Cléon's expense:

C'est son bonheur outré qui vous rend miserable,
Et qui vient d'accomplir votre sort déplorable.
Adieu; j'ai trop de peine à retenir mes pleurs,
Et Madime (Cidalise) aura soin d'adoucir vos malheurs.

(Elle s'éloigne, les contemple quelque temps, et sort en riant sous son éventail).

(Act V, scene VII).

Crispin, in Fagan's *Le Rendez-Vous* (1733), refers in Scene III to tears shed by Lucile: "Elle se plaint, s'agite, & verse quelques larmes;" the spectator, knowing that Valère is being duped by his servant into believing that Lucile is in love with him, will inevitably laugh at this observation.

In all these incidents the characters and the situations in which they find themselves are calculated to amuse the audience and are therefore entirely in keeping with the spirit of the classical genre. In Baron's *L'Homme à bonne fortune* (1686), however, Marton's reference to her tears for Moncade contain a different element:

Mais, par ma foi, Madame, n’étoit que je lui ai déjà vu jouer mille fois le même

5"Mme Catau, pleurant: Il m'a montré la chambre dans laquelle il veut, dit-il consommer le mariage" (Act II, scene VI). Mme Catau is endeavouring to set the Baronne against the Marquis by emphasising his effrontery in a number of respects. The Baronne is herself leading Mme Catau on and has no intention of marrying either the Marquis or Léandre, Mme Catau's choice for her.

6Finette is referring to Julie in the first line of this speech.
rôle, je ne saurois qu'en dire. Il m'a fait pleurer, moi, dans les commencemens; mais à présent je suis aguerrie.

(Act III, scene II).

If Marton were an impertinent confidante of the traditional kind, it would be possible to dismiss this emotion on the grounds that it is superficial, but unlike the majority of servants, she possesses a genuine solicitude for others. It is apparent that the tears mentioned here are linked to a concern for Moncade:

... vous savez si je suis dans vos intérêts, cela me fait peine de voir que vous ne vouliez pas devenir heureux.

(Act I, scene XI).

In view of this anxiety, it would seem that Baron is making a first tentative move towards creating a character with a capacity for feeling who is not afraid to express it in the most direct way, that is, in tears.

More intriguing are the tears of Nérine in Regnard's *Le Joueur* (1696). They are caused by compassion for Dorante, whose love for Angélique is unrequited:

**DORANTE**

Dis-moi donc, si tu veux, le sujet de tes pleurs.

**NÉRINE**

Il faut aller, monsieur, chercher fortune ailleurs.

**DORANTE**

Chercher fortune ailleurs! As-tu fait que pièce Qui t'aurait fait sitôt chasser de ta maîtresse?

**NÉRINE,** pleurant plus fort

Non: c'est de votre sort dont j'ai compassion ...

(Act III, scene I).

The characters who shed tears in Regnard's plays usually have
a comic function, but there is no evidence here to suggest that he is mocking Nérine. She shows sympathy for Angélique and Dorante and her distress does not produce the same effect as that of Hector earlier in the play.

If we cannot be sure of Regnard's intentions, it is clear that in L'Andrienne (1703) Baron has created in Glicerie a tearful character whose distress is genuine. She is described by Simon as:

La plus belle du monde;
Mais, dont la modestie égaloit la beauté,
Et tant de graces, jointes à tant d'honnêteté,
La mettoient au-dessus de tout ce qu'on admire.
(Act I, scene I).

Simon draws attention immediately, therefore, not only to Glicerie's beauty, as we might expect, but, more important, to a certain moral quality. This, together with a capacity for feeling, evident in her grief at her sister's funeral, establish Glicerie's superiority in Simon's mind. She is presented from the start as a character to be admired: her complete loyalty to Pamphile, in spite of his apparent infidelity, suggests her virtue, for example. Allied to this, and to be explained no doubt by a constant tendency to underestimate herself - she alludes, for instance, to "le peu que je vaux", "mes foibles appas" and "mon peu de mérite" (Act IV, scene V) - is the absence of any desire for revenge. Her outburst at the height of her misfortune reveals this:

Au milieu de mes maux j'ai souffert sans colère
La trahison du Fils & l'injure du Père;
J'ai demeuré muette à toutes mes douleurs

(Act IV, scene X).

7See for example, Hector's tears in Act II, scene XIV of this play.
Her disinclination to punish Pamphile by no means signifies indifference; rather does it point to a certain nobility in the midst of suffering. On the other hand, however, its counterpart is an inability to take action, even though she is faced with potential catastrophe. In Act I, scene V, Misèr had described Glicerie as "languissante, abattue" and these terms are used again by Criton when Glicerie first appears on stage in Act IV:

Quel pitoyable état! Les yeux baignés de pleurs,
Languissante, abattue.
(Act IV, scene IV).

Glicerie's own definition of herself supports this notion of a character totally incapable of exertion:

C'est cette infortunée,
Aux rigueurs des destins toujours abandonnée.
(Act IV, scene IV).

Bowed down by events, by self-pity and by her sense of fate, Glicerie's instinct in trouble is to flee:

GLICERIE
Je ne puis plus long-temps supporter mon ennui.

DAVE
Mais, Madame, en un mot, que prétez-vous faire?

GLICERIE
Fuir, pleurer, & cacher ma honte & ma misère.
(Act IV, scene V).

Her unhappiness and her feelings of shame have thus forced Glicerie to yield to her situation and robbed her of her will to improve it.

There is a parallel to Glicerie, as far as both character and presentation of that character are concerned, in Pamphile.
He is also introduced by Simon in the first scene of the play, with an emphasis on the seriousness of his nature and his concern for others:

... il passoit cet âge difficile,
Ne préférant jamais l'agréable à l'utile.
A servir ses amis, il s'offroit de grand cœur,
Pourvu qu'il crût pouvoir le faire avec honneur:
Il avoit à leur plaire une douce habitude.
(Act I, scene I).

Simon subsequently sums up the essence of Pamphile's character in the account of his distress at Chrysis's funeral:

Je prenois tout cela pour la marque infaillible.
De la bonté d'un cœur délicat & sensible.

(Act I, scene I).

Particularly striking here are the words "un cœur délicat et sensible." The Latin for this part of Simon's speech is: "Haec ego putabam esse omnia humani ingenii/ Mansuetique animi officia" (Act I, scene I). While retaining Terence's overall meaning, Baron would appear to have linked Pamphile's disposition to a changing attitude of his own time and to have created a man whose predominant trait is his capacity for delicate feeling. Moreover, there is already a suggestion, in the association made between "bonté" and "cœur délicat et sensible" of the desirability of such a capacity. He, like Glicerie, is deemed a superior character. In addition, his despair and his inability to assert himself are akin to Glicerie's, and he shares her impression that they are pursued by a cruel destiny:

Ah! Quelle main,
Sort cruel, choisis-tu pour me percer le sein?

(Act I, scene VII).

8Pamphile is referring to the fact that his father is arranging a match for him.
Possibilities for a new kind of protagonist, both male and female, are therefore apparent in this play. Célimène in L'Irrésolu (1713) also has the qualities of "délicatesse" and "sensibilité"; indeed the similarity in the terminology used to depict her and Glicerieu is striking, particularly in these words from Dorante to Frontin:

Tu nommes indolence un gracieux maintien,
Une douce langueur, un modeste entretien

(Act I, scene VII).

He can thus be seen to highlight almost the same aspects in Célimène as those which Simon had mentioned with reference to Glicerieu in L'Andrienne. From the first Célimène is portrayed as a woman of serious disposition and strong moral principles:

Le sérieux de l'une, et sa langueur tou-

chantée,
Lui disent qu'elle est tendre, et fidèle,
et constante ...

(Act I, scene II).

Uppermost in Célimène's nature, therefore, are loyalty and a sense of duty, which, as the association of the terms "tendre" and "fidèle" indicates, have their origins in the affective side of her being. The capacity for feeling suggested here becomes evident in her distress on learning of her rejection by Dorante. Her moral notions and her "langueur touchante" ensure, however, that for much of the play Dorante's somewhat heartless conduct provokes in Célimène no desire for revenge:

... Il me siéroit mal d'affécter de la

haine,

Et vous connaissez trop le cœur de Célimène.

(Act IV, scene II).

Célimène has slightly more spirit than Baron's character, as her decision to accept the Chevalier merely to spite Dorante proves, but her being is defined in reality by a gentleness
and delicacy which preclude any unscrupulous actions. 9

A deliberate contrast is drawn in this play between Célimène and Julie, Frontin giving the following assessment of the latter:

Mais l'enjoûment de l'autre, et sa viva-
cité,
Ont un attrait piquant dont il est en-
chanté.

(Act I, scene II).

Julie's own awareness of the difference between herself and her sister underlies her rather dismissive "ma sœur est dou-
ceureuse ..." (Act IV, scene IV). The dramatist's preference may be for a character like Célimène, however, if we are to judge from the comments of Nérine, who, setting one against the other, seems to imply, in her condemnation of Julie, the superiority of Célimène:

CÉLIMÈNE
Quoi donc! pour m'effacer a-t-elle tant d'appas?

NÉRINE
Non. Elle a l'air coquet, et vous ne l'avez pas.
La beauté bien souvent plaît moins que les manières.
Les belles autrefois étoient prudes et fières,
Et ne pouvoient charmer nos sévères aïeux,
Qu'en affectant un air modeste et vertueux.
Mais dans ce siècle-ci, c'est une autre méthode;
Tout ce qui paraît libre est le plus à la mode.

(Act V, scene I).

In the Julie of L'Obstacle imprévu (1717) affection throughout the play for Licandre and joy in the discovery that

9 Destouches also attributes to her a liking for study: "Tu sais que naturellement/ Je me plais à rester dans mon appartement,/ Que j'évite le monde, et que, toujours tranquille,/ Je nourris mon esprit d'une lecture utile." These are Célimène's own words to Nérine in Act II, scene II.
he is her father, are proof of a capacity for feeling. Furthermore, her fidelity to Léandre during a long absence might be said to imply the possession of virtue; this quality is fully in evidence when she rejects Valère:

\[\text{Et mon cœur vous répond sur-le-champ, qu'il est trop équitable et trop délicat, pour accepter les vœux d'un infidèle, quand je ne vous connoîtrois point d'autre défaut que l'inconstance, c'en serait assez pour me faire mépriser vos offres.} \]

(Act V, scene VIII).

Loyal herself, Julie demands the same standards in a future husband and there is even a slightly didactic ring to her words here. As we see from her mention of a "cœur délicat" it is the heart which makes the moral judgment.  

Possessing the gentleness of Glicerie and several of the heroines who succeed her, Mélite, in Destouches's \textit{Le Philosophe marié} (1727), is also depicted as a woman of firm moral standards. The virtue commented on by Ariste at the outset is emphasised by her resistance to the Marquis and his assessment of her:

\[\text{Une femme constante est un monstre nouveau, Que le ciel a produit pour être mon bour-reau ...} \]

(Act III, scene V).

This judgment, which tends to set Mélite apart, might indicate by implication her superiority. Mélite is undoubtedly a character to whom most of the others, including Géronte, are drawn, this conveying perhaps the dramatist's approval. Her "sensibilité" is apparent both in her affection for Ariste, even in the face of unreasonable demands, and her distress at

\[10\] Julie's statement establishes a similarity between herself and Angélique in this play. The latter, although not a tearful character, speaks to Valère of "une passion aussi délicate que la mienne" (Act I, scene II).
the dilemma caused by Géronte's inopportune arrival. It is
at this point indeed, from Ariste's exhortation: "Remettez-
vous, de grâce; et retenez vos pleurs" (Act III, scene IX),
that we see she may be called a lachrymose character.

Ariste also has a facility for expressing emotion in
tears. As a "philosophe", he has a predilection for solitude,
reading and quiet reflection and may thus recall Célimène in
L'Irrésolu. In addition, although our impression of him is
often of an insensitive character, the playwright gradually
allows his desire for harmonious relationships with others to
become one of his most characteristic features. Finette de-
scribes his reconciliation with Mélite at the end of Act I in
the following way:

Leur querelle a produit un raccommodement
Si tendre, si touchant et si rempli de
charmes,
Que notre Philosophe en a versé des larmes.
(Act II, scene I).

It is interesting to note that Ariste is fully aware of
the essence of his nature; when reproached by Mélite, for
example, he observes: "Ne voilà désarmé pour être trop sensi-
ble" (Act I, scene VI). If he can make an objective analysis
of his principal impulses, it is nevertheless from the heart
that these spring. His attitude to Mélite and his filial duty
to Lisimon are both based on genuine affection. His solicitude
for Lisimon means that he is "un bon cœur" and it thus estab-
lishes him as a character of superior moral value. 11

Similarly, in Le Glorieux (1732) Lisette's appreciation
of Lycandre's thoughtfulness, her instinctive regard for a
father she has never seen and her concern for the Comte de

11 See Lisimon's words of praise to Ariste in Act IV, scene
II.
Tufièrè, are all proof of a capacity for feeling. Furthermore, her reluctance to marry Valère, founded on a belief that she is his inferior in rank, would seem to point to a certain delicacy. This spirit of self-sacrifice stresses the discrepancy between the nobility of Lisette's nature and her situation; indeed her own comment on the need for her to become a confidante shows an awareness of the injustice of things:

Ce ne fut pas pourtant sans verser bien
des pleurs;
Mais mon sort le voulut; et voilà mes
malheurs.
(Act I, scene IX).

Considering herself to be guided by a fate outside her control, Lisette therefore shares the tendency of, say, Glicerio, to succumb to misfortune.

In Nivelle de la Chaussée's La Fausse Antipathie (1733) Léonore, introduced by Frontin as possessing "une mélancolie" (Act I, scene I), herself evokes several years of suffering when alluding to "de foibles attraits flétris par les douleurs" and eyes "accoutumés à pleurer mes malheurs" (Act I, scene III). The rigidity of her principles, her refusal to permit Damon to divorce his wife and her adherence to the idea of her own fidelity, although she feels no love for her husband, all establish her virtue. We see therefore an association of langour, melancholy and moral rectitude in Léonore as in other tearful characters. There can be no doubt of the increased weight attached to this last trait by the dramatist, as it is stressed constantly throughout the play. Nevertheless, Léonore's inflexibility where her standards are

12Lisette's desire to be of service to the Comte is seen by Lycandre as evidence of a "bon cœur" (Act IV, scene III).
concerned cannot be said to betoken indifference to Damon. Indeed, paradoxically, her "sensibilité" is manifest in her distress at being unable to escape from the very notions which determine her conduct and which thus prevent marriage to him.

In this play, Nivelle de La Chaussée follows the pattern we have already observed of drawing a parallel between the central male and female characters. Although Damon has a greater ability than Léonore to take action, he possesses a temperament not unlike hers, for he has an inclination to despair and to feel himself trapped. Of his marriage, for example, he says: "Je gémis dans les fers d'un cruel hymenée" (Act I, scene VI). Moreover, it is his reaction to the fact that he is married which provides an indication of his moral worth; this is evident not, as with Léonore, in a refusal to divorce his partner, but in his unwillingness to make a declaration of love to Léonore herself. This abstract concept of duty, together with his decision to leave Orphise's house where his presence causes Léonore to be harshly treated—her interests therefore taking precedence over his own—show that virtue and self-sacrifice govern his behaviour.

It would appear to be a deliberate intention on Nivelle de La Chaussée's part to create this similarity between hero and heroine, since he adopts the same procedure in most of his subsequent works. Despite initial impressions, there is a striking affinity, for example, between Constance and Durval in Le Préjugé à la mode (1755). As far as Constance is concerned, Damon's aside: "Épouse vertueuse autant qu'infortunée!" (Act I, scene I) immediately conjures up the notion of a virtuous and unhappy woman. This impression is reinforced by
Constance's subsequent conduct and by Sophie's assessment which gives an insight into Constance's nature:

J'ai vu ... j'ai reconnu les traces de vos pleurs;
Au fond de votre cœur j'ai surpris vos douleurs.
Mais que dis-je? J'y vois, malgré sa violence,
Le désespoir réduit à garder le silence.
(Act I, scene IV).

One of Constance's most characteristic traits, together with an integrity which takes the form of absolute loyalty to Durval and outrage on receiving anonymous presents, is her reluctance, in the face of even the most incontrovertible proof, to accuse Durval of infidelity. Her appeal to Sophie: "Eh! n'empoisonnez pas encore mes douleurs" (Act I, scene VIII), reveals her suffering, but this is accompanied at every point in the play by a refusal to challenge Durval. In Act IV, scene III for example, she states: "Je ne veux point aigrir son cœur & son esprit ..." This is evidence, of course, of a desire in Constance that her relationship with Durval be one of sympathy, but it is a sign of an inability to take action where she would appear to be justified in so doing.

Her resignation, which as with other heroines, in no way stems from lack of feeling, is a kind of "délicatesse", that is to say a wish to avoid trenchant attitudes and a determination to conceal her own pain, both of which in turn adumbrate her capacity for self-sacrifice.

The nobility in Constance's character in fact depends at one and the same time on a moral ideal and on a tendency to despair. That she has a fatalistic streak in her nature is plain from her declaration that "la fortune ennemie/ S'obstine..."
à traverser ma déplorable vie!" (Act IV, scene II). Her language is stronger than that which we have previously noted, however, and different in kind. Damon, in La Fausse Antipathie claimed that "le plus grand malheur est celui d'être joint/ Au déplorable objet d'une haine invincible" (Act I, scene VIII), thus showing how closely the comedy, in its terminology, might approach tragedy, as it is understood in France. In Le Préjugé à la mode, we could almost believe Constance's lines to be delivered by a tragic heroine.

Many features of Durval's make-up bear witness to a capacity for feeling. Firstly, his reaction to Damon's charge of unfaithfulness and the bitterness of his "l'on m'accuse encore d'insensibilité" (Act V, scene I), confirm the sincerity of his claim to have reformed and of his attempts to convince the others of his affection for Constance. His "sensibilité" is indeed evident in his efforts to recreate the former understanding between himself and his wife, in his need for a demonstration of her love and in his remorse when reflecting on his treatment of her:

Que fait-elle à présent? ... Que faut-il que j'espère?
Dis-moi qu'est devenue une épouse si chère?
Ahl je suis son bourreau plutôt que son époux.
(Act V, scene I).

In addition, the rebirth of love brings with it a moralising tendency, in the shape of an inclination to comment on and draw useful conclusions from experience.
A clear pattern has therefore established itself. The character disposed to shed tears has a seriousness and an integrity which distinguish him from his fellows, together with a tendency to resignation in the face of disaster. Furthermore, dramatists create, more often than not, two protagonists of the new kind within one work and all but obliterate any difference between them. Voltaire adopts this procedure in L’Enfant prodigue (1736). Lise speaks unashamedly, for example, with reference to Euphémon, of "mes yeux, qui, noyés dans les larmes,/ Pleuraient encor ses vices et ses charmes" (Act I, scene III). Described by Euphémon père as "un cœur aussi noble que tendre" (Act I, scene II), she has both a sense of outrage at the way in which Euphémon fils has been corrupted by his friends and a genuine solicitude for Euphémon père. Her response to his suffering is proof of the magnanimity of her nature:

Ah! oui, monsieur, j’approuve vos douleurs;
Il m’est plus doux de partager vos pleurs
Que de former les nœuds du mariage.
(Act II, scene VI).

Euphémon fils himself also possesses concern for others. Jasmin’s remark that he was "volé ... Par bonté d’âme" (Act III, scene II), would tend to imply his ruin was the result of goodness of heart and not profligacy. Certainly the remorse which tortures him denotes a capacity for feeling:

13 In Poisson’s one-act comedy Le Mariage fait par lettre de change (1735), although characterisation is necessarily limited, two protagonists seem to have some of the qualities we have mentioned. Cléon, represented by the dramatist as suffering because, having pledged his word to one woman, he has fallen in love with another, is described as: "L’aimable caractère! ...
Tojours d’égale humeur, d’une douceur extrême" (Scene VIII). Philinte is alluded to as "plein de délicatesses" and "scrupuleux" (Scene V). His most striking trait is indeed his determination to remain faithful to a former love and to a vow of celibacy: "... je me suis lié par serment, de façon/ Que je me vois forcé de demeurer garçon" (Scene V).
Euphémion has the melancholy and the sense of inescapable destiny of other tearful characters; in this case, however, his guilt is such that he considers fate to be justified:

Quel coup du sort, ou quel ordre des cieux
A pu guider ma misère en ces lieux?
Hélas!

...................................................

(en pleurant)

Je suis ... je suis un malheureux mortel,
Je suis un fou, je suis un criminel,
Qu'on doit haïr, que le ciel doit poursuivre,
Et qui devrait être mort.

(Act III, scene I).

It is significant that in this particular outburst and elsewhere in this scene, the "points de suspension" have been deliberately inserted by Voltaire to show that, paradoxically, the force of Euphémion's emotion is to be intensified by an inability adequately to express it. The sincerity of his feelings is thus continually reinforced by the dramatist, who makes of him, despite a brief explosion of anger at the end of Act III, a character of sorrow and resignation.

Both central protagonists in L'École des amis (1737) are portrayed as characters with a facility for shedding tears. Furthermore, there is a likeness in their dispositions and a similarity between them and others who have already appeared in the new comedy. The moral strain inherent in Hortence's nature, for example, is made plain in her attempt to suppress her love for Monrose because marriage seems impossible. That she is not indifferent to him, however, and possesses moreover a certain nobility, emerges from her decision to assist him, in spite of a conviction that he is unfaithful:
Je lui pardonne tout, pourvu qu'il soit heureux.
Son bonheur me suffit; c'est tout ce que je veux ...
(Act IV, scene II).

In addition to this self-denial, she shares with other heroines the notion that she is doomed by fate; her declaration that: "Le sort qui me poursuit est toujours invincible" (Act IV, scene XI), and the fact that she terms herself "un objet si funeste," illustrate once again the affinity between a character such as this and a central protagonist in tragedy.

The resemblance is even more striking in the case of Monrose. A man of virtue, whose "délicatesse" is manifest in his refusal to marry Hortence because of the loss of his own rank and wealth, his tendency to despair emerges from Clorine's account of his reaction when he learns of the disappearance of Hortence's inheritance:

On dirait que lui-même il s'en croit responsable.
Dans son accablement il est méconnaissable.
Toute sa fermeté se change en désespoir.
Sans détourner les yeux, il n'a pas pu me voir;
Il m'a caché des pleurs, que sans doute il dévore ...
(Act III, scene XI).

Monrose is moreover presented from the start of the play as a character who is persuaded that disasters descend upon him "Par un inévitable & triste enchaînement" (Act II, scene IX) and the dramatist causes the fatalistic streak in his make-up and his self-pity to increase with each new calamity. His despondency reaches its height at the beginning of Act V, with the discovery that he is thought guilty of appropriating both his uncle's and Hortence's property:
Je vais me perdre & me plonger
Dans une obscurité la plus impénétrable,
Férissent ma mémoire, & le sang déplorable
Qui m'a fait naître! (Act V, scene I).

The closeness of tragedy and the new comedy is further exemplified in the tone in which he alludes to the love between himself and Hortence:

Hortence, hélas! pourquoi nous avez-vous connus!
Un bonheur assuré, des plaisirs continus.
Auroient rempli le cours de votre destinée.
Que le Ciel en courroux mit entre nos maisons!
(Act IV, scene XI).

In Pamela (1743) the heroine's dominant trait quickly establishes itself as a fierce moral integrity, but such a quality is scarcely heeded by the rest; whereas other characters share an impression that they are victims of an unjust fate, Pamela possesses rather the knowledge that she is misunderstood by those around her. The language in which she expresses her sense of hopelessness, however, is strikingly similar to that of other characters. In a scene with Milord, for example, Pamela twice utters the phrase "mon sort déplorable" with a short space of time, thus illustrating that in the notions which govern her life and the terminology used to formulate them, she is akin both to previous characters in the new comedy and to the tragic heroine.

In L'Enoux par supercherie (1744) by Boissy, where a match has been arranged by his father for the Marquis, La Fleur

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14 Her first statement is: "La pitié se refuse à mon sort déplorable" and her second: "Daignez prendre pitié de mon sort déplorable" (Act V, scene III). Earlier in the play, in reply to a suggestion from Milord that she loves Williams, Pamela says: "(à part). Mon sort seroit moins déplorable" (Act II, scene VIII).
alludes to the tears occasioned by his master's predicament. In the first place, his capacity for feeling is manifest in his reaction to loving Emilie:

La cruelle langueur dont j'ai pensé mourir,  
L'Amour en était seule l'origine secrète  
(Act I, scene I).

The dramatist appears to be creating the impression, particularly with the words "la cruelle langueur," of a character prone to despair. In addition the Marquis is a man of scruple. His reluctance to confess the true state of affairs has two sources, for example. As his comment: "Cette contrainte pour toi me retient davantage" (Act I, scene II) indicates, he is held back initially by an inability to cause Belfort embarrassment. He is motivated secondly by a desire to be certain of Emilie's love:

Il faut donc me résoudre à rompre le silence.  
Mais par délicatesse encore je balance;  
Et je voudrois avant de la tirer d'erreur,  
Je voudrois par degrés m'assurer de son cœur ...  
(Act I, scene II).

His expression "par délicatesse" is proof of a need for his love to be reciprocated and of a hesitation, perhaps, to force Emilie's feelings; it is a further sign, therefore, of his "sensibilité".

Boissy's Le Médecin par occasion (1745) contains several protagonists who might be termed tearful. The first of them, the Marquise, reveals genuine affection for her family: "J'aime beaucoup mon frère, & ma nièce encore plus" (Act II, scene III).

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15 He remarks to Belfort in Act I, scene VIII: "Il se leve, il s'assied, il se calme, il s'agite, ... Et puis on voit des pleurs qui coulent de ses yeux."
Her account of Lucile's unhappiness, moreover, is at once further proof of her love for her niece and of her own capacity for feeling:

Le chagrin de ma Niece est plus attendrissant.
S'il éclate à nos yeux, ce n'est qu'en gémissant.
(Act II, scene III).

The melancholy suggested in these lines and the fact that the Marquise goes on to speak of Lucile's "abattement", establish both protagonists indeed in the new tradition.

Lucile herself, when addressing a portrait of Montval, says:

Voyez le triste état où vous m'avez réduite:
Sur mon front abattu ma tendresse est écrite ...
(Act III, scene V).

Even Montval, despite a certain facetiousness, has some of the traits of the lachrymose character. In particular his reaction to Lucile's sadness attests his "sensibilité":

Je ne puis, à ces mots, retenir mes transports.
Le bruit de mon trépas est payé de ses larmes.
Que ce discours, Champagne, est pour moi plein de charmes!
Regretté de Lucile, honoré de ses pleurs,
Ah! j'oublie, ou plutôt je bénis mes malheurs ... 
(Act II, scene I).

A similar effect is produced, and something of a lachrymose scene develops, with his response to the Marquise's observation: "Dans son abbattement elle a même ses charmes. On se sent jusqu'au cœur pénétré de ses larmes" (Act II, scene III). Montval reacts thus:

Le seul récit sur moi produit le même effet.
J'ai peine à retenir les miennes en secret.
J'ai, quoique Médecin, l'ame infiniment tendre.
(Act II, scene III).
There is no denying an element of flippancy here, together with an underlying comic force, due to the fact that the Marquise is being fooled. It may be the case, however, that Boissy wishes to avoid sentimentality and that the apparent frivolity in Montval is a result of the fact that he is not supposed to be evincing any involvement in Lucile's unhappiness. It is the playwright's intention, one might conclude, to create in his central protagonist a man of feeling, whose "sensibilité" must inevitably be at least partly concealed.

In Voltaire's play of 1749, Nanine, who is studious, like Célimène or Ariste, and whose character "est fait pour plaire au sage ..." (Act I, scene IX), has moral scruples and a capacity for self-denial, which are both clearly visible in her rejection of the Comte's offer of marriage:

Non, monsieur, non, je ne souffrirai pas
Qu'ainsi pour moi vous descendiez si bas:

Oui, je vous dois des refus. Oui, mon âme
Doit s'immolerc. (Act II, scene III).

Nanine is thus governed by real generosity and has risen, moreover, above the sense of victimisation which we have witnessed in other characters to a noble silence in the face of adversity and unjustified cruelty:

**LE COMTE**

Elle était abattue?

**GERNON**

Elle faisait bien mieux,
Ses pleurs coulaient à peine de ses yeux;
Elle voulait ne pas pleurer.

(Act III, scene II).

16 Nanine's virtue is inherited, it would seem, from her father, also a tearful character. In a short appearance at the end of the play, he reveals himself as a man of strict moral principles, horrified to receive money from Nanine which he believes her to have stolen. See his speech in Act III, scene VI.
The striking feature of the protagonists we have analysed is their similarity, the lack of complexity in one individual extending to the portrayal of the type as a whole. There are, of course, many characters in the new genre who are not lachrymose, but who, because of their solicitude for others, or their desire for relationships of sympathy, are quite different from the majority of traditional characters in the classical French comedy. The shedding of tears in a significant number of eighteenth-century plays reinforces the distinction between old and new protagonists. Above all, this tendency establishes the superiority of those in whom it exists. Several playwrights appear to insist on this supremacy by creating characters who are often outside the polite society to which, nominally, they belong. Such characters, deploring the empty values of their own time, its code of conduct and its artificiality - a sign in itself of their delicacy of feeling - adopt rather the standards of a past century, "du bon vieux temps," as it is termed. As we have seen, Célimène in L'Irrésolu recalls a previous age and Rosette says of Marianne in L'École des mores:

Malgré le train qui regne en ce siècle commode,
Marianne suivra celui du bon vieux temps,
Et ne prendra jamais ces travers éclatans
Qu'il faut avoir pour être une femme à la mode.

(Act I, scene IV).

Whether or not the excellence of the lachrymose character is explicitly mentioned, it is clear that the dramatists of the first fifty years of the century introduce into their plays, and build them around, a kind of élite. Tears, proof of a capacity for feeling, are to be valued and admired as a sign of good nature and refinement. They are never an indication
of weakness; on the contrary, far from being unacceptable, in some situations they are indeed indispensable.

In Le Curieux impertinent (1710), for instance, tears would seem to be expected from Léandre to betoken at least some remorse for his apparent infidelity:

![French text](attachment:attachment.png)

It is true that at this point in the play, Julie's attitude is difficult to determine: she is testing Léandre and pushing him to the limit in order to punish him by rejection. Some feeling for him may remain, however, and Julie's attack might in part be sincere. Even supposing that this is not the case, the incident is of interest in that Julie considers her reproof to be appropriate, despite the hypocrisy of her motives.

A similar problem of interpretation arises in L'Irrésolu. Dorante's wish that Julie show her suffering in tears is mocked both by Frontin and by Julie herself:

![French text](attachment:attachment.png)

Tears have a comic effect here and Dorante's behaviour, in proposing to one sister and then the other, provokes laughter. Dorante's capacity for feeling, however, is not ridiculed by the dramatist; one might argue therefore that Dorante's reply to Julie: "Vous m'insultez, Madame,/ Ce procédé cruel vient d'étouffer ma flamme," implies at the very least that
the expression of emotion is not a game and, furthermore,
that the ability to shed tears is commendable, even essential.

Durval, whose distress in Le ‘Préjugé à la mode’ is sincere,
demands tears as a proof of feeling in Constance:

Non, de si grands chagrins ne sont point
si secrets;
Ils s'exhalent en pleurs, en soupirs, en
regrets.
N'a-t-elle seulement honoré de ses larmes?
(Act III, scene VIII).

Tears are therefore expected and, moreover, seem to distinguish
or enhance the worth of the person for whom they are shed.
Conversely, failure to weep where suffering is involved must
inevitably denote a lack of concern.

If, in some situations, tears are desirable, in others
they provide the only consolation. Glicerie in L'Andrienne,
for example, unable to withstand a further series of misfortunes,
decides to leave with Criton:

Il faut loin de ces lieux chercher une re-
traite,
Et pleurer, à loisir, la faute que j'ai
faite.
(Act IV, scene V).

Constance in Le Préjugé à la mode, overwhelmed by fate and
unable to take action which would occasion embarrassment,
turns to tears, which are, ironically enough, the only means
of reducing her misery, as a speech to Sophie indicates:

Profitez du plaisir que l'on offre à vos
charmes,
Je n'ai plus que celui de répandre des
larmes.
(Act I, scene VIII).

Monrose, finding himself in a moral dilemma which appears ins-
soluble again chooses flight in L'École des amis:

Ainsi je dois cesser une vaine poursuite,
Je n'ai plus que les pleurs, le silence,
& la fuite.
(Act III, scene III).
For the lachrymose character desirous of avoiding any problem, tears offer the possibility of expiation and, above all, oblivion. Thus they become, as Constance reveals, a pleasure for the protagonist who indulges in them. Moreover, if the spirit of Durval's question: "M'a-t-elle seulement honoré de ses larmes?" holds good in any sense for the characters under discussion here, in crying for themselves, they are emphasising their own worth. They belong, in short, to an élite.

These are two of the features of the new comedy associated with the lachrymose character. There are in addition a number of situations which provoke tears and which are significant in that they often furnish a substantial part of the plot. Firstly, incidents involving minor characters illustrate the way in which episodes of genuine distress, simply and directly expressed, are introduced into the genre. In Le Curieux impertinent, Lolive’s report of the words of Léandre’s father causes Géronte to shed tears on stage:

LOLIVE
Je ne te verrai plus, disoit-il d’un air tendre,
Je ne puis l'espérer dans l'état où je suis.

GÉRONTE, pleurant
Ah!

LOLIVE
Daignez m'écouter.

GÉRONTE
Hélas! je ne le puis;
La douleur me saisit.

LOLIVE
Suspendez-la, de grâce;
Car vous venez, Monsieur, de faire une grimace
Qui m'a presque fait rire, et j'en serois fâché.
GÉRONTÉ
Je suis de ton récit si vivement touché ....
(Act I, scene IX).

The illness has been invented by Lolive to explain the postponement of Julie's wedding and his amusement at Géronte's expense is plain. The real problem here is the interpretation of Géronte's emotion, as the attitude of the dramatist is not easy to define. It might well be that of Lolive, but in view of Géronte's sincerity, we might perhaps suggest that Destouches is experimenting with the notion that more serious scenes have a place in comedy and that the feeling on which they are based, together with the expression of it in tears, are designed to arouse not laughter, but a sympathetic response in the audience.

In L'Ingrat (1712) a traditional comic figure, Pasquin, sheds tears on recalling a former mistress:

PASQUIN
... je reverrai Nérine,
qui, depuis notre absence, est, je crois,
bien chagrine.
Hélas! la pauvre enfant! elle m'aimait si fort,
Que, lorsque je partis ....

DAMIS
Tu pleures?

PASQUIN
Ai-je tort?
J'ai quitté pour vous suivre une aimable
maîtresse ....
(Act II, scene III).

It is naturally possible that this emotion is a pretence to persuade Damis to return home. The latter is insensitive and selfish, however, and Pasquin is a character with an affection for his master and moral standards. It is difficult not to conclude, therefore, that in this episode tears are to be admired and not ridiculed by the spectator, who
finds himself involved in Pasquin's distress.

Nérine, in L'Obstacle imprévu, possessed of a sharp tongue, a strong character, and no compunction in tricking her husband Pasquin, is quite unlike the lachrymose heroine and yet in Act III, scenes VI and IX, the unhappiness attendant upon seeing Crispin again is expressed in tears. In each of these scenes, and in the second especially, the contrast between Crispin's confidence and the reality of the situation can be exploited to provide laughter, but Nérine's response would seem to introduce a different element:

CRISPIN
Est-ce que tu ne me reconnais pas? Je n'ai pourtant point changé, si ce n'est que je me trouve embelli depuis notre départ.

NÉRINE, pleurant
Adieu, Crispin; tu me fends le cœur.
(Act III, scene IX).

There seems no reason to consider Nérine's despondency as an object of ridicule. Neither is it easy to envisage Crispin and Nérine as a comic reflection of their masters - as they might have been in the Commedia dell'arte or the works of Marivaux, for example - since their fate is in no way similar to that of their superiors. The two scenes in Act III appear oddly superfluous unless they are meant to be taken seriously and to add to the effect created in the plot revolving around Julie and Léandre.

It is indeed with the dilemma confronting the central lovers that we come to one of the main tearful situations in the new comedy. In Baron's L'Andrienne, both Pamphile at the end of Act I, and Glicerie, in Act IV, are overcome by tears when realising the implications of Simon's decision to marry
off his son. In both cases, the scenes in which tears are shed are carefully prepared by the playwright. In Act I, for instance, he gives to Dave and Misis speeches insisting on imminent catastrophe. The theme and tone of this part of Dave's monologue in Act I, scene IV:

Glicerie est malade, & je n'y songe pas;
Et si mal, que je crains que la fin de sa vie
Ne soit le dénouement de cette Tragédie.

are taken up by Misis in the following scene:

Malade comme elle est, languissante, abattue,
Bien plus que tout son mal, cette crainte la tue. 17
(Act I, scene V).

Furthermore, the tension in these speeches is increased by the opening line of Misis's own soliloquy: "A quel nouveau malheur faut-il nous préparer?" (Act I, scene VI).

A premonition of disaster thus introduces the major scene of the act, a scene which is based on Pamphile's communication of despair to Misis. A number of features, intended to heighten the dramatic impact of the episode, are deliberately incorporated into it by Baron. There is some insistence, for example, on the fate hanging over, even directing, the lives of the characters. Pamphile asks, for example:

Ne pourrai-je éviter dans mon malheureux sort
Un hymen mille fois plus cruel que la mort?
(Act I, scene VII).

Subsequently Misis, when describing Glicerie's state, claims that:

Du plus cruel destin, elle ressent les coups.

17Glicerie's fear is that her marriage will be annulled by Pamphile's father.
Moreover, this notion is clearly uppermost in both their minds, for it is the first aspect of the situation to present itself. It is tempting perhaps to explain this by the fact that the play is taken from a classical source, but Terence does not cause any character in this part of his comedy to blame the dilemma on ill-fortune. There are no corresponding speeches to Pamphile's outbursts in Act I, scene VII of L'Andrienne, for instance, and while Glicerie's fear of separation is touched on in the original, there is no allusion to a sense of destiny.

This is therefore a theme of Baron's invention and it is linked, where Pamphile is concerned, to thoughts of suicide, which might again be said to belong more properly to the tragedy:

... S'il n'est aucun secours,  
Ce jour fatal sera le dernier de mes jours.  
(ACT I, scene VII).

In addition, misery is emphasised in the contrast, perceived by both Pamphile and Misis, between the dictates of fate and Glicerie's essential goodness; Misis's statement:

Elle craint en un mot que ce funeste jour,  
À son fidèle cœur, n'arrache votre amour.

finds an echo in Pamphile's one attempt at self-assertion:

J'exposerais ses mœurs, sa vertu non commune,  
Aux bizarres rigueurs d'une injuste fortune?  
Cela ne sera point.

It would appear that throughout this scene Baron wishes to accentuate the unhappiness and helplessness of his characters and that he departs from Terence in so doing. The dramatic
quality of the episode is intensified by the seemingly insoluble dilemma with which Pamphile is confronted:

La pitié, le respect m'entraîne tour-à-tour.
Tantôt j'écoute un Père, & tantôt mon amour.
Ce Père me chérit, l'abuserai-je encore?
Faut-il abandonner la Beauté que j'adore?

This theme of moral obligation re-emerges with Pamphile's evocation of the scene around Chrysis's death-bed when he promised to care for Glicerie:

Ce que me dit Chrysis, parlant de Glicerie,
Occupe incessamment mon esprit & mon cœur.
...................................................
Je l'ai promis, Misis, je tiendrai mon serment.
Je ne frasilai point la foi la plus sincere,
Je te le jure encor. (Act I, scene VII).

A comparison of Terence's Andria and L'Andrienne reveals that Baron makes some significant changes in the whole of the end of Act I and that the tone of the two dramatists differs considerably. It is true that Dave is given a monologue in Terence, but the concern for Glicerie and the suggestion of impending doom, which we have observed as features of his speech in Baron's version, are absent in the original. Furthermore, there is no equivalent in Terence of the exchange between Dave and Misis in Act I, scene V of L'Andrienne; nor does Misis have a soliloquy in the Latin comedy allowing her to intimate her own fears. If we consider the tone of the two plays, we see that the opening speech to the culminating scene of Act I in Baron is:

Juste Ciel! Quel objet se présente à ma vue?
Pamphile hors de lui! Que mon ame est émue?
Que vois-je? Il leve au Ciel & les mains & les yeux,
Notre malheur, hélas! peut il s'expliquer mieux?
(Act I, scene VII).
In Terence we have only: "Quid illud est?" in response to an exclamation from Pamphilus, followed by "Miseram me! quod verbum audio?" (Act I, scene V). Baron also lays particular emphasis on the tears occasioned by Chrysis's dying words, which Terence does not do. When recounting Chrysis's final entreaty to him, for example, Pamphil begins:

»Elle me dit, (Misis, j'en verse encor des pleurs).
»Elle est jeune, elle est belle, elle est sage, & je meurs.

Furthermore, he goes on to recall the tears of Chrysis herself:

Je vous conjure donc par sa main que je tiens,
Par la foi, par l'honneur, par mes pleurs,
Par les siens,
Par ce dernier moment qui va finir ma vie,
De ne vous séparer jamais de Glicerie.

It is therefore hard to avoid the conclusion that, although he adheres to the basic outline of the original, in introducing the notions of fate and suicide, in stressing the misery and injustice of the situation, Baron has a different purpose from Terence. The alterations he makes suggest that he is creating an episode whose function is a direct appeal to the emotions of the audience.  

The nature of the language in Act I, scene VII lends support to this notion. Particularly striking is the frequent use of "Hélas!" to reinforce a character's despair. It occurs in Misis's opening speech to Act I, scene VII and again in the words which close both the scene and the act: "Hélas! Que je le plains." It comes naturally to Pamphil, whose long monologue debating the moral issue confronting him, ends with: "Hélas! Que faire, hélás! De quel côté tourner?" Nothing illustrates better perhaps the contrast between Terence and Baron than Misis's greeting when recognised by Pamphil; in Terence it is: "O salve, Pamphil" (Act I, scene V); in Baron, in reply to Pamphil's "Qu'entends-je? c'est Misis!"; it is: "Hélas! c'est elle-même." Of interest too is the use of phrases such as "un hymen mille fois plus cruel que la mort", "un fatal hyméne", "ce jour fatal" and "ce funeste jour." This is the language of tragedy, employed, it would seem to reinforce the sense of loss or error.
In Act IV there is an episode involving Glicerie where unhappiness in love and enforced separation are once more a source of tears. The situation as far as Glicerie is concerned reaches a climax in Act IV, scene X, when, after Dave's apparent betrayal, she yields completely to misfortune:

De tous les malheureux, non, le plus misérable
N'a jamais éprouvé d'infortune semblable.  
(Act IV, scene X).

The opening lines of this speech recall Pamphile's statement in Act I, scene VII: "Hélas! des malheureux, je suis le plus à plaindre" and thus establish a similarity in tone between these two parts of the play. Moreover, Baron deliberately builds up to the final point of despair over a series of scenes, each designed to emphasise Glicerie's pitiable state. Criton's compassion, Glicerie's own reply to it: "Ah, Criton, je me meurs," her total submission to Pamphile's will and her appeal to the gods before ultimate humiliation by Dave, all tend to intensify the seriousness of the situation and increase its dramatic impact.

This technique for devising an extended lachrymose episode is exactly that used by Baron in Act I. Further, all the scenes on which the incident is founded are Baron's creation. The most obvious question to be answered here is why he chose a dilemma of this kind to replace what had to be omitted in a French adaptation. The interest in most of the play, as in Terence, lies in the intricacies of the plot and Dave's attempts to save his master. Significant episodes are either changed or introduced by Baron and the action is

19 They are a substitute for the intrigue in the original revolving around the birth of Glicerie's baby.
exploited at two crucial points, in Acts I and IV, to appeal to the emotions and not provoke laughter. It is possible to suggest that we are witnessing in L'Andrienne an effect on the comedy of the dramatist's desire firstly to create characters with a capacity for feeling and subsequently to give the spectator the pleasure of participating in that feeling.

L'Andrienne stands alone at the beginning of the century and a lachrymose situation based on unhappiness in love does not recur until Destouches's L'Ingrat. In Act I Géronte's ultimatum is followed by tears in both Isabelle and Lisette:

**ISABELLE,** pleurant
Ah! ma pauvre Lisette!

**LISETTE,** sur le même ton
Ah! ma chère maîtresse!

**ISABELLE**
Je ne puis respirer, tant la douleur m'opprime.
Cher Cléon, pourrez-vous soutenir ce malheur?

**LISETTE,** d'une voix entrecoupée
Hélas! le pauvre enfant! il mourra de douleur.
(Act I, scene IV)

A stage direction indicates that Isabelle also sheds tears in Act V, when, about to triumph, she and Cléon are threatened once again by separation. Neither here nor in Act I is disaster insisted upon, as it had been in L'Andrienne; indeed in Act I, Isabelle recalls Lisette to earth, demanding a practical solution to the problem. The tone of the two scenes mentioned is not as consistently calculated to reveal the feelings of the characters and touch those of the audience. There

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20"Cléon, à Isabelle: Je vous dois le retour de monsieur votre père,/ Sans doute? Aidez-moi donc à le remercier./ Isabelle, en pleurant: Ah, Cléon! Cléon: Juste ciel!" (Act V, scene VI).
seems no reason to mock Isabelle's tears, however, and we may be justified in concluding that here, as with the scene involving Pasquin discussed earlier, Destouches is experimenting with the introduction of a more serious element into the comedy.

In L'Irrésolu, although Célimène's distress on losing Dorante is consciously suppressed, Frontin's words: "Elle est au désespoir,/ Je crois qu'elle pleuroit; sa douleur est touchante ..." (Act III, scene VII) make plain that unhappiness had been expressed in tears. Furthermore, both Frontin's response to Célimène's distress and Dorante's sympathy and admiration for her allow us to call this short episode lachrymose.

That Dorante is drawn to Célimène is clear:

Je suis désespéré du mépris de Julie.  
Par les pleurs de sa sœur, mon âme est attendrie.

Si l'une par ses pleurs a su gagner mon cœur,  
L'autre par ses mépris irrite mon ardeur.  
(Act III, scene VII).

Destouches appears once again to be incorporating into the comedy an element formerly alien to it, an element calculated to touch the spectator and to be regarded seriously.

21 It seems unlikely that Destouches approved of the comedy becoming completely lachrymose. Of his play L'Amour usé (1741), he says, for example: "Le sujet ... n'a point d'autre objet que celui de faire rire les spectateurs, et n'est soutenu ni par la versification ... ni par ce fond touchant, intéressant, pathétique, qu'on dérobe quelquefois à Melpomène, pour transporter à Thalie le don des larmes; heureux don que le bon goût ne lui refuse pas toujours, mais qu'il ne lui prodigue jamais, et que les partisans de ce bon goût ne peuvent lui voir usurper trop long-temps, et avec trop d'emprise, sans protester hautement contre cette usurpation" ("Lettre de M. Néricault Destouches, A M. le Comte de L'...", Sur la comédie intitulée: L'Amour Usé," Œuvres dramatiques (Paris, 1820), V, 284-85). This statement does not rule out the notion that some mixture of laughter and tears was permissible.
A situation arising out of unhappiness is central to Mélanide and it belongs both to the past and to the present. That the past forms a fundamental background to the action of the play is clear from the importance accorded to Mélanide's account in Act II scene III of the way in which she was forced to leave her partner seventeen years previously. This narrative may itself be termed tearful. Furthermore, the dramatist builds up to it slowly, preparing for it with Théodon's announcement that Mélanide's parents have died without forgiving her, with the sorrow experienced by Mélanide because of this and with her reluctance to reveal the truth about her past: "Je vais donc ... Le pourrai-je? ... Ah! quelle extrémité!/ Je vais mettre le comble à ma calamité." Finally, a further statement of shame accompanies the opening of her story: "C'est l'aveu d'une erreur qui m'a coûté ma gloire." Moreover, there is an insistence throughout Mélanide's speech on the danger faced by the lovers, on the injustice of parental antagonism and the fear engendered by it. This emphasis on the hopelessness of the situation, together with the language in which it is conveyed, serve to underline the affinity, in Mélanide's mind, between her position and that of a tragic heroine and point to the fact that she is, in short, a victim. In this description, events past and present are a source of tears; Mélanide's portrayal of the beginning of love:

A peine eus-je cédé
Que notre amour naissant, si doux, si plein
de charmes,
En s'augmentant toujours, me coûta bien des larmes.

Mélanide, seeing Théodon "frémir" on hearing her confession, says: "A ce funeste effet je devois bien m'attendre./ Nous étions trop heureux; notre amour nous trahit;/ Ce funeste secret enfin se découvrit." She later adds: "A peine mon opprobre eut été prononcé,/Par un père en fureur il me fut annoncé ..."
is echoed in her depiction of constant and continuing despair:

Dans le fond d'un désert je me vis transportée,
Oh depuis dix-sept ans livrée à mes douleurs,
Aucun soulagement n'a suspendu mes pleurs.

It is significant that Mélanide has Théodon's support at every point in this scene, as we see from the exclamation: "Que votre sort est digne de pitié!" Théodon's compassion is presumably a reflection of the dramatist's sympathy for Mélanide and thus has the effect of involving the audience too in her dilemma.

This episode is followed by one revolving around Mélanide's return to the stage after seeing the Marquis in Dorisée's house. Even in joy there is reference to tears, as Mélanide asserts, for instance: "Tous mes pleurs sont payés" (Act II, scene V) and adds to this: "Je retrouve l'époux que j'avais tant pleuré ..." This discovery is in fact exploited to provide new dramatic interest, for Mélanide's happiness is misplaced and the sense of relief a delusion; with the revelation that the Marquis is in fact the man chosen by Dorisée for her daughter, comes renewed and greater distress; on this occasion, Mélanide, having uttered only "Oh ciel! quel coup de foudre!" and "Que vais-je devenir?", goes beyond tears and faints:

MÉLANIDE, en se laissant aller dans les bras de Théodon.
Hélas! je n'en puis plus.
(Act II, scene VI).

This is the climax to Act II, which in effect revolves entirely around Mélanide. The opening scenes, admittedly, concern the Marquis and his love for Rosalie, but his wish to marry her, while central naturally to his own life, is equally crucial for Mélanide and an existence which is presented as
one of almost unmitigated misery. It is Mélanide, therefore, whose fate may truly be said to be at the heart of the act, which is based on a prolonged tearful situation, taking place on three levels. Mélanide's account of her youth is such as to arouse sympathy and so, as a result, is her position in the present, which her story of the past explains; her unhappiness is then intensified in the final scene with the realisation that the Marquis, unlike herself, is unfaithful. The despair of the heroine is thus deliberately increased at every point by the dramatist and exploited to provide the main interest and culmination of the whole of Act II.

In Nanine the first of the situations which might be called tearful arises out of the Baronne's insistence that Nanine leave the Comte's household. The theme for most of Act I is established by Nanine's state, conveyed in the Comte's words:

Quoi! vos beaux yeux semblent mouillés de larmes!
Ah! je le vois, jalouse de vos charmes,
Notre baronne aura, par ses aigreurs,
Par son courroux, fait répandre vos pleurs.

(Act I, scene VII).

The torment which underlies this part of the action is further evident at the end of Act I scene VIII:

LE COMTE
Elle (la baronne) n'en garde aucun (pouvoir),
je vous assure.
Vous gémissiez... Quoi! votre cœur murmure?
Qu'avez-vous donc?

NANINE
Je vous quitte à regret;
Mais il le faut... O ciel! c'en est donc fait!

Voltaire emphasises the despair of his central characters and, moreover, deliberately heightens the impact of the dilemma, thereby increasing the sympathetic involvement of the
spectator, by leaving the Comte in ignorance of Nanine's and the Baronne's plans.

A new episode, following Nanine's return, provides the substance of Act II, the action now resting on the Comte's mistaken belief that Nanine has a lover and on his decision to banish her from his house. In this situation Nanine endeavours to repress her tears, but the rest openly confess to their dismay or sense of injustice, as Germon's words reveal:

Elle a pris cette injure
Tranquillement, lorsque nous pleurons tous.

(Act II, scene XIII).

Voltaire subsequently makes the Comte too express his distress, a reaction to which the Marquise readily responds:

LE COMTE
Dans le chagrin où mon cœur s'abandonne,
Suis-je en état de parler à personne?

LA MARQUISE
Ahl vous avez du chagrin, je le crois;
Vous m'en donnez aussi beaucoup à moi.

This scene provides the climax to the act, but it is accorded additional importance in that it is continued into Act III, where both the unhappiness of the entire household and Nanine's nobility are insisted upon:

GERMON
Nous pleurons tous en vous voyant sortir,

NANINE
J'ai tardé trop; il est temps de partir.

GERMON
Quoi! pour jamais, et dans cet équipage?

NANINE
L'obscurité fut mon premier partage.

(Act III, scene I).

It is plain that before clarifying the mystery surrounding Philippe Hombert's identity and his relationship with Nanine,

24 Nanine is "vêtie en paysanne" in this scene.
Voltaire's purpose is to exploit the potential of a situation bringing distress to several minor characters.

In *L'Andrienne* Simon refers to the danger inherent in tears used as a means of persuasion:

N'exposons plus mon Fils aux charmes séducteurs
Aux larmes, aux transports, à ces feintes douceurs,
Dont se sert avec fruit une Coquette habile;
Prévenons ce malheur, en mariant l'Amphile.
(Act III, scene IV).

This suggests a second theme or situation in the new comedy. Nisis urges Glicerie to exploit her helplessness in order to gain Chremés's compassion.

... De votre cœur, qu'il voye les allarmes,
Jettez-vous à ses pieds, baignez-les de vos larmes.
(Act IV, scene VIII).

It is true that Dave interrupts the scene in which Glicerie and Chremés meet to cast doubts on Glicerie's story, but neither her appeal to Chremés nor his response to her suffering is mocked and a potential relationship of sympathy is created through tears. If this episode, which again is not in Terence, is considered in conjunction with the other tearful scenes in Act IV, it becomes clear that the dramatist's intention is to accumulate incidents designed to stir the feelings of the audience.

In *Le Philosophe marié* the change which we have observed in Géronte is brought about, in part at least, by tears. The heroine herself is instinctively aware that they can be employed as a weapon to sway Géronte:
Pour vous fléchir, Monsieur, je n'ai point d'autres armes
Que ma soumission, mes soupirs et mes larmes.
(Act V, scene IX).

We are witnessing at this point in the play a process by which Géronte is touched by capacity for feeling in another; indeed his very temperament seems to undergo a transformation and the stage direction "attendri" is presumably intended to emphasise that Mélite's appeal has awoken the affective side of his being.

In Nivelle de la Chaussée's Le tréjugé à la mode Damon also conceives of tears as a resource and in endeavouring to arouse Durval's compassion for Constance's position, states:

Mais une femme n'a pour soutenir ses droits,
Que sa fidélité, sa foiblessé & ses larmes

(Act II, scene I).

It is significant, however, that Durval, already remorseful, is aware of the attitude which will be necessary to reassure Constance:

Que de soins, de soupirs, de regrets & de larmes,
Faudra-t-il que j'oppose à ses justes allarmes!

(Act II, scene I).

Moreover, Durval's intention to exploit his own tears in order to bring about a renewed relationship of harmony between himself and Constance, is reflected by that of his wife, who, wishing to reach an understanding with Durval, rejects anger in favour of tears:

FINETTE
Moi, je déposerois, s'il en étoit besoin.

CONSTANCE
Je ne veux employer que mes uniques armes.
FINETTE

Eh! qui sont-elles donc?

CONSTANCE

Les soupirs & les larmes.

(Act IV, scene III).

The beginning of Act IV in *Mélanide* revolves around the use of tears as a weapon, the whole episode carefully prepared by the dramatist. We see Mélanide's despair when Darviane's marriage to Rosalie proves impossible and also, in this reference to herself and Darviane, the belief in an adverse fate of many lachrymose characters:

>Voyez la cruauté du sort qui me poursuit.

.................................

Mais enfin croyez-vous qu'on soit assez barbare

Pour nous livrer tous deux aux pleurs qu'on nous prépare?

(Act IV, scene I).

The mention of tears in this speech decides the tone for the scene, which, with Théodon's response to Mélanide's distress: "Mais, hélas! je ne puis que partager vos larmes ..." quickly becomes tearful. At one moment tears are perceived by Mélanide almost as a means of blackmailing the Marquis:

>Faites-lui bien sentir que, s'il me sacrifie,

Mes pleurs seront autant de taches sur sa vie;

Que le bien qu'il reprend est un vol qu'il me fait.

Des plus vives couleurs peignez-lui ses forfaits ...

(Act IV, scene I).

Subsequently, however, Mélanide becomes convinced of the power of tears to persuade and unite:

>Mais non. Ne vous servez que des plus douces armes;

Jusqu'au fond de son cœur faites couler mes larmes:

Hélas! ne lui portez que des gémissements,

Que de tendres douleurs & des embrassements.

(Act IV, scene I).
This episode is built up around the injustices done to Mélanide, the continual evocation of the past and allusions to what is most likely to touch the Marquis, namely the fact that he has a son. To this is added Théodon's advice to Mélanide to approach the Marquis in person on her own behalf and the debate which this occasions contains frequent reference to tears. Mélanide in her hesitation remarks:

Et sur quoi fondez-vous mon espoir & le vôtre?
Sur de foibles appas, que le tems & les pleurs!

Théodon on the other hand consistently underlines the positive force of tears, with a reassurance such as: "Vous n'imaginez pas quelle puissance extrême/ Ont les pleurs d'un objet qu'on a trouvé charmant."

In the last scene of the play, Mélanide does indeed attempt to win over the Marquis:

On veut, avant ma mort, que je vous importune;
Et je viens, à vos pieds, pleurer notre infortune.
(Act V, scene III).

This statement is sufficient to arouse the Marquis's compassion and stir the feeling latent within him. Tears have again, therefore, produced a relationship of sympathy between characters. In addition to this, the lachrymose situation is a major one, for not only are tears a fundamental theme in discussion about Mélanide's dilemma, the whole incident involving tears as a method of persuasion is carried over two acts and is used to provide the "dénouement".

Tears are also an expression of affection which already exists and clear proof of a capacity for feeling. In L'Irrésolu, for example, we have an account of tears shed by
Dorante at the idea of hurting Pyrante:

... mon fils, tout à coup, vint s'offrir
à ma vue,
Les yeux baignés de pleurs, embrassant mes
genoux,
Avouant qu'il avoit mérité mon courroux ...
(Act I, scene I).

These are tears which derive from love between father and son and a desire not to harm the understanding they share.

In addition to tears shed by Ariste in *Le Philosophe marié* on the reconciliation between himself and Mélite, we have those suggested in Lisimon's words:

Vous dévorez des pleurs qui coulent malgré vous!
Vous pâlissez! Pourquoi vous mettre à mes genoux?
(Act IV, scene II).

Ariste's emotion in this scene originates in the knowledge that his action in marrying Mélite without his father's consent may distress him. A previous statement to Damon in Act I, scene II: "Mais je crains sa douleur bien plus que son courroux," had implied a fear of destroying the harmony in his relationship with Lisimon and of causing him unnecessary suffering. The tears in Act IV are therefore a sign both of genuine alarm and solicitude for another and of a desire that relationships be based on love.

Despite her scorn on being told of the reconciliation between Ariste and Mélite, Céliante herself sheds tears when re-establishing an understanding with Damon:

CÉLIANTE, s'attendrissant
Damon, Damon!

DAMON, la regardant tendrement
O trop funestes charmes!

CÉLIANTE
Le traître m'attendrit, et m'arrache des larmes.
(Act II, scene II).

\[25\text{See p. 309 above.}\]
Such an incident is worthy of note, because Céliante, spirited, wilful and outspoken, is in no sense a lachrymose heroine and as we see here, prefers to suppress what she regards as a weakness. Her reaction, mocked neither by Damon nor the dramatist, is nevertheless sincere and one is tempted to conclude that Destouches is using a technique we have already observed, namely that he is introducing into his play several tearful episodes in order to increase its appeal to the feelings. It is difficult otherwise to account for tears in such a scene, which begins and ends with an argument.

That tears can reflect two attitudes, both belonging to the same inherent quality, seems to be suggested again in Le Glorieux. Lisette's mention of the tears associated with her father is a sign of concern for him and, paradoxically of joy at the mere notion of meeting him:

Tout baigné de mes pleurs, avant la fin du jour
Il sera possesseur du peu que je possède.
(Act IV, scene III).

Lycandre, who is Lisette's father, is moved by this:

Arrêtez. Laissez-moi respirer, je vous prie.
Donnez quelque relâche à mon âme attendrie.

If it is not certain that Lycandre yields to his feeling here, this scene is nevertheless one in which feelings are communicated in the most direct fashion and in which tears, or the mention of them, create a relationship of sympathy.

Elsewhere in this scene Lisette's tears convey distress because her regard for the Comte is not returned:

Il n'a payé mes soins que par des duretés.
Je ne puis y penser sans répandre des larmes.

They are as much evidence therefore of her "sensibilité" as
those linked to the "idea" of her father and originate in the same side of her being. In this single episode, therefore, tears are at once an expression of sadness that affection is unreciprocated and, in a different context, proof that it already exists.

We see something of this same duality in the cause of tears in Nivelle de la Chaussée's *L’École des mères*, since they express both sadness at the absence of love and also a need for relationships of sympathy. The tears of Marianne, who, in common with other characters, has a gentleness, a certain nobility of nature and a capacity for self-sacrifice, are explained by M. Argant in this way:

\[
\begin{align*}
J'espérais que ses soins, sa tendresse & \\
Ses charmes, \\
Sur le cœur de ma femme auraient plus de pouvoir: \\
Elle n'a recueilli que des sujets de larmes. \\
\text{(Act III, scene I).}
\end{align*}
\]

Marianne's distress is due in the first place to Mme Argant's indifference. It was indeed a feeling of desolation which had motivated her appeal to M. Argant at the end of Act II to be allowed to return to the convent, since she believed herself the source of discord between M. Argant and his wife. Her suffering is also born, however, of a reluctance to leave him and is a sign that tears can be produced by the fear of hurting another human being or destroying a relationship based on instinctive regard. It is made explicit by the dramatist and is seen on stage:

\[
\begin{align*}
Accordez cette grace à mes pleurs. \\
En vous la demandant mon ame est déchirée. \\
\text{(Act II, scene IX).}
\end{align*}
\]

There is thus an important tearful situation at the centre
of the play. Furthermore, an episode arising out of Mme Argant's despair at the betrayal of her son is exploited by the dramatist to provide much of the substance for Act V and to build up to the dénouement. Rosette's first indication of her mistress's sorrow:

M'est-il permis d'entrer dans vos douleurs secrètes?
D'où viennent donc ces pleurs qui coulent malgré vous?

(Act V, scene IV).

is followed by Mme Argant's own description of her state:

Juge de mon état, de la douleur amère,
De la confusion que j'ai dû ressentir.
Je suis désespérée. ... 0 déplorable mère!

M. Argant subsequently participates in his wife's unhappiness:

"Je gémis du sujet qui fait couler vos larmes ..." while at the same time endeavouring to persuade her to forgive the Marquis:

Je l'ai laissé confus, honteux, mortifié.
Je vois que son état est digne de pitié.

(Act V, scene V).

Moreover, Mme Argant's anguish is presented as releasing another complaint, also a source of tears, and that is M. Argant's apparent infidelity:

Eh! quel moyen, hélas! de n'être pas séduit
Par l'exemple effréné des faiblesses d'un père?

Ah! c'est, de plus en plus, ce qui me désespère.
Qui recevra mes pleurs? Qui fermera mes yeux?

(Act V, scene V).

Fear of isolation and the possible severing of family bonds account for Mme Argant's tears. In view of this, Mme Argant's joyful acceptance of Marianne in the final scene of the play is entirely understandable, although their new relationship
is not accompanied by the shedding of tears. Mme Argant, however, may clearly be called a tearful character, despite our initial impression of her; she is in fact a woman of feeling and the dramatist's suggestion appears to be that, blinded by her love for her son, she is oblivious of all else and not deliberately or essentially cruel. In Act III, scene III indeed she states: "L'éloignement, l'oubli, le temps, ont étouffé/ La tendresse que j'aurois eue,/ Si vous aviez laissé cet enfant sous mes yeux ...," which gives us a premonition of the dénouement.

We have seen the assertions of several eighteenth-century critics that didactic drama is bound to become serious.\(^{26}\) The tears which accompany moral feelings can be an expression of either pleasure or pain. In Destouches's *L'Ingrat*, for example, Pasquin congratulates his master in the following way:

\[\text{PASQUIN} \]
\[\text{Je suis content de vous, Monsieur, pour cette fois.} \]
\[\text{Oui, j'en pleure de joie, et vous demande en grâce} \]
\[\text{De vouloir bien souffrir ...} \]

\[\text{DAMIS} \]
\[\text{Quoi?} \]
\[\text{PASQUIN} \]
\[\text{Que je vous embrasse.} \]
\[\text{(Act II, scene III).} \]

Similarly, the stand-point of Don Philippe in *L'Ambitieux et l'indiscrète* (1737) calls forth tears of delight in Don Félix: "O nobles sentiments, qui m'arrachent des larmes!" (Act I, scene IV).

\(^{26}\) See Chapter 7, pp. 297-98.
In a slightly different context, Mme Armance, in Nivelle de la Chaussée's *L'École de la jeunesse*, having been unjustly accused by Astérie, weeps on stage after proving her innocence:

**LA CONTEUSE:**

Eh! quoi! vous triomphez; d'où viennent donc ces pleurs?

**MAD. ARMANCE:**

L'innocence accusée, en recouvrant sa gloire, Peut-elle s'empêcher de pleurer sa victoire?

(Act IV, scene VI).

Tears usually originate, however, in a sense of guilt or in recognition of a moral failing and in this instance are often an indication of a character's desire to reform. In Boursault's *Esce à la cour* (1701), in the episode revolving around Rhodope and her reconciliation with Léonide, Esope's fable in Act III, scene IX is intended to move Rhodope:

**RHOODOPE:**

Est-ce à tort; je suis au désespoir:
J'ai trahi la nature; oublié mon devoir;

.............................

Par orgueil ... j'ai méconnu ma Mère.

**ESOPE:**

Vous Rhodope?

**RHOODOPE:**

Nou-même. Est-il rien de si bas?

(Act III, scene IX).

Rhodope's distress thus stems from her perception that she is lacking in moral worth, but her tears are also a sign that
her standards, never indeed completely dead, are reborn. This episode has considerable dramatic importance since Esope deliberately disbelieves Rhodope's change of heart in order to test her sincerity. Moreover Esope himself sheds tears on the reconciliation of Rhodope and Léonide in the following scene: "Je vous ai fait pleurer, & je pleure à mon tour" (Act III, scene X). The three principal characters in this episode are united and tears are once again proof of a relationship of sympathy, which they indeed consolidate.

In Marivaux's _L'Ile des esclaves_ (1725) the greater awareness of masters and servants for each other may be said to come into being with Arlequin's response to an accusation from Iphicrate that his affection has died:

ARLEQUIN, pleurant

_Eh! qui est-ce qui te dit que je ne t'aime plus?_

(Scene IX).

This, together with Arlequin's reproaches, brings about a transformation in Iphicrate:

_Va, mon cher enfant, oublie que tu fus mon esclave, et je me ressouviendrai toujours que je ne méritais pas d'être ton maître._

Iphicrate has thus learnt the "lesson" proposed by Trivelin at the outset and his moral regeneration is expressed in tears:

ARLEQUIN

_Mon pauvre patron, qu'il y a de plaisir à bien faire! (Après quoi, il déshabille son maître.)_

IPHICRATE

_Que fais-tu, mon cher ami?_

ARLEQUIN

_Rendez-moi mon habit, et reprenez le vôtre; je ne suis pas digne de le porter._

IPHICRATE

_Je ne saurais retenir mes larmes. Fais ce que tu voudras._
Throughout this scene and the later one in which Euphrosine and Cléanthis are reconciled, there is considerable ironic comment, by Arlequin particularly, on the relationship between master and servant. In reuniting the two women, for instance, Arlequin remarks of Iphicrate and Euphrosine: "Ils sont contrits d'avoir été méchants, cela fait qu'ils nous valent bien; car quand on se repent on est bon; et quand on est bon, on est aussi avancé que nous" (Scene X). Such a statement undoubtedly denotes the close association of a capacity for feeling and recognition of guilt, but it brings to the last stages of the play, with its unexpected rearrangement of the normal hierarchy of moral worth, a humour absent from tearful scenes of this kind in the new comedy.

In Nivelle de la Chaussée's Le Préjugé à la mode, for example, Constance's tears, caused by what she considers to be an offence to her virtue in being sent anonymous presents, are entirely serious. Durval's totally unfounded accusations of infidelity produce a similar, although more powerful, effect; indeed such is the intensity of her suffering that no method of communication is adequate to convey it:

**CONSTANCE**

_Hélas! dois-je mourir sans me justifier!_
Que je sçache du moins ce qui m'ôte la vie ...

_J'y succombe ... Je meurs ..._

**DAMON**

_Elle est évanouie._

(Act IV, scene XI).

There is an interesting comparison to be made between this scene and Act III scene V of Campistron's _Le Jaloux désabusé_ (1709). In the latter, Celie's fainting when charged with unfaithfulness by Dorante is merely a pretence: she is deliberately tricking her husband and remains entirely in control.
of the situation. In Le Prétendant à la mode, however, the confrontation between Constance and Durval is of moment for both and the sincerity of Constance's anguish arouses the sympathy of an audience aware of the truth.

The most striking association between tears and moral concepts occurs, however, in Act V, where Durval, "attendri et les larmes aux yeux," is tortured by remorse for his wrongful condemnation of Constance:

Pourra-t-elle survivre à de si rudes coups?  
Sa blessure est mortelle, & j'en mourrai moi-même.  
(Act V, scene I).

The effect created in these words to Damon is intensified at the start of the lost scene when it is quite clear that Constance is shedding tears:

Damon, permettez-moi de répandre des larmes  
Dans le sein d'un ami sensible à mes allarmes;  
Aux yeux de tout le monde elles m'alloient trahir.  
C'est encor un motif qui m'a contrainte à fuir.  
(Elle essuie ses yeux).  
(Act V, scene V). 27

Moreover, an allusion by Constance when reading a letter from him, to Durval's own suffering further increases the tension underlying this situation:

De la main de Durval ces lignes sont tracées.  
Mais que vois-je? Des pleurs les ont presque effacées.

The dramatist slowly and deliberately builds up to the climax of this scene which depends on Durval's revelation of his identity and his appeal for forgiveness. Honesty in confessing

27 Durval has borrowed Damon's cloak so that Constance will more readily confess her feelings to him.
his guilt and a desire to atone for and wipe out previous immoral conduct are automatically linked in his mind with tears. In reply to Constance's demand to be told where Durval is, he says:

Il est à vos genoux...
C'est où je dois mourir...
Laissez-moi
Dans les larmes,
Expier mes excès & venger tous vos charmes.

Tears, caused in the first instance by a recognition of heartlessness, have become proof of real remorse and of a genuine wish to change. They provide the play with a dénouement from which comic elements are entirely absent.

While in L'Enfant prodigue Euphémon's moral regeneration is again expressed in tears,28 in Pamela it is hardly possible to speak of single lachrymose situations, since tears are shed or alluded to on so many different occasions. The cause of these tears, moreover, is not always easy to determine. In Act III, scene V, for example, Pamela draws attention to the emotion of Mme Andrews:

Quel changement subit s'est fait dans votre voix?
Pourquoi répandez-vous des larmes?
Seroit-ce... Ah! ciel! ma mère, est-ce vous que je vois?

It is unclear whether these tears are due to the reunion with Pamela after so long a separation or to a mother's dismay at Pamela's dilemma. Certainly, Mme Andrews' speeches in this scene centre on the threat to Pamela's virtue; it would thus seem possible to assume that her distress stems in part at least from this moral issue.

A similar problem arises at the beginning of Act V. The tears of Pamela, summoned to see Milord, doubtless arise from

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28 See his appeal to Lise in Act IV, scene III, for example.
a reluctance to leave him and from an apprehension that there
will be a renewed struggle within her. Her speeches in Act V,
scene III, however, while supporting these two explanations
of her unhappiness, suggest also that her tears may be linked
to the fact that she feels her integrity to be threatened.
Paméla refers to herself, for instance, as 'l'innocence opprimée'
and outlines her misgivings, which are increased by a recogni-
tion, "à travers de mes larmes," of Milord's good qualities,
in this way:

Mais je crains bien plus ma faiblesse,
Lorsqu'il m'annonce sa tendresse
Sous le voile de la vertu.

Niledi, je craignois le péril trop certain,
Où nous conduit toujours un hymen clandestin.

Many of her statements in this scene thus lead us to believe
that tears are a result of lack of strength and of a fear
that virtue will be lost. They are also an attempt to con-
vince Niledi of the sincerity of this virtue.

Finally in this play it would seem that Milord weeps on
stage when coming to a full realisation of his callousness.
At the end of Act IV, scene VI, for example, he promises that
his death will provide revenge and satisfaction for all:

Je fus votre fléau;
Vous serez tous vengés au gré de votre en-
vie.
Paméla m'a laissé son désespoir affreux.
Je sens la même horreur qu'elle avait pour
la vie:
La mort va terminer des jours trop malheu-
reux.

There is no stage direction here to indicate the shedding of
tears. In the following scene, however, there is, in Milord's
question to Paméla on her return: "Quel miracle vous rend à
mes pleurs?" the implication that his remorse is accompanied
The lachrymose situation has a dual aim. It causes a character to shed tears either on or off stage and thereby prove beyond doubt the possession of a capacity for feeling. Beyond this, it invites the participation of the spectator in a protagonist's dilemma, affording him the pleasure of indulging in tears. All the features of the new plays which we have observed so far are to some extent associated with the shedding of tears. Not all the characters in the genre can be called lachrymose, but there are many tearful situations, providing very often considerable variety within one play. A dramatist such as Destouches, while introducing into his works tearful episodes of different kinds, would seem to maintain that comic scenes remain an essential part of his chosen genre; a mixture of the touching and the amusing is permissible. Nivelle de la Chaussée on the other hand, gradually abandons all comic situations and concentrates instead either on one or two lachrymose episodes, or, increasingly at the end of his career, on a significant number of brief incidents containing an allusion to or accompanied by tears. Whatever technique he may prefer, the playwright insists on the most disastrous aspects of his situation - is indeed obliged to do so if the tears of his characters are to appear credible - and is forced to furnish an explanation of the suffering witnessed by the audience. This second point in particular suggests that the tearful situation, in common with the elements in the comedy which we have previously analysed, will bring about a change in the structure of plays in this genre.
CHAPTER NINE

Sentiment and Structure

Although most of our discussion hitherto has concerned the changing tone of the comedy in the first half of the eighteenth century, we have seen that in devising characters with a capacity for feeling, who share relationships of sympathy, playwrights are breaking what might be called the traditional rules of dramatic structure. Several writers and critics of the time seem to have been aware that the comedy is undergoing a transformation of this kind. Desfontaines, for example, believes that Mélanide (1741) might most aptly be called a "Drame Romanesque" while Voltaire uses the same adjective in his defence of the new genre:

Cet académicien judicieux blâme surtout les intrigues romanesques et forcées dans ce genre de comédie ... Mais dans quel genre les intrigues romanesques et forcées peuvent-elles être admises? Ne sont-elles pas toujours un vice essentiel dans quel que ouvrage que ce puisse être?

In later years "romanesque" becomes for Voltaire a convenient term of abuse. Indeed it is clear that the word is often employed indiscriminately as a means of attack by those opposed to the new plays. Collé, for instance, writing about a production of Nivelle de la Chaussée's L'Homme de fortune

1 See P.-F. G. Desfontaines, Observations sur les écrits modernes (Paris, 1741), XXV, Lettre CCCLXI, 28.


3 See, for example, "Art dramatique," Dictionnaire philosophique, Œuvres complètes, XVII, 419.
(1750) in January 1751, says:

Cette pièce est purement romanesque. Suivant le détail qu'on m'en a fait, tous les personnages sont généreux, justes, raisonables, sans défauts, sans ridicules.

Here the word condemns a lack of realism in a genre whose aim had always been to represent the ordinary existence of recognisable people. The remainder of Collé's attack on L'Homme de fortune and his reviews of both La Force du naturel (1750) by Destouches and Mme de Graffigny's Cénie (1750), which is referred to as "un petit roman en action" (I, 189), all demonstrate that the association between the novel and the comedy is made largely to discredit the latter. Indeed, when discussing La Force du naturel, Collé moves away from criticism of that work in particular to demolish the new plays in general:

Ce ne sont plus des pièces de théâtre, ce sont des romans, où pour vouloir peindre les hommes en beau on ne les peint plus au naturel. (I, 133).

Nevertheless, if the terms "roman" and "romanesque", with their old connotations of "merveilleux", "fantastique" and thus "invraisemblable", are employed as an easy way of dismissing the new comedy, on occasion Collé makes plain that a comparison between this genre and the novel is valid. When commenting on Nivelle de la Chaussée's L'École de la jeunesse

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When recording La Chaussée's death, Collé makes much the same judgment of his plays: "En formant ses caractères sur des romans, il n'a peint que des chimères ..." (I, 408).

5 P. Clément is close to Collé in his review of Cénie: "... Cénie ... n'est pourtant qu'un de ces petits romans qu'on appelle Comédies ..." (Les Cinq années littéraires (La Haye, 1754), II, Lettre LXII, 153).
(1749), he places the eighteenth-century plays in the context of a broad comic tradition:

Il est bien étonnant qu'un auteur de la médiocrité incurable dont est La Chaussée ait donné, pour ainsi dire, le ton à son siècle, et qu'il ait eu le crédit de ramener un mauvais genre de comédie qui était proscrit et qui n'est nullement nouveau. On peut voir, par l'histoire du théâtre français, récemment imprimée, que les pièces de roman, et celles mêlées de tragique et de comique, avaient été à la mode jusqu'à ce que Molière eut donné le modèle de la vraie comédie: nous avions pris ce mauvais goût-là des Italiens, qui n'est nullement celui des anciens ni celui de la nature. (I, 53-54).

Collé is clearly recalling here the old comedies of plot, closer in form to a story than anything else. His review of Cénie also suggests that he has observed a change in dramatic technique:

Un autre défaut, qui est encore inhérent à ce genre, c'est l'obligation de cacher le dénouement et d'empêcher qu'on ne le devine; ce qui est cause presque toujours que l'exposition dure jusque dans les derniers actes, et que l'on a encore des faits même au cinquième acte dont il faut instruire le spectateur; et rien au monde n'est plus froid que le récit de ces faits qui coupent presque toujours indiscernablement l'action, et justement dans le temps où tout est davantage en mouvement...

(I, 190).

It is in these two passages that Collé comes closest to an explanation of why the term "romanesque" might be apt when applied to the new plays. Writing at the end of the first half of the century, he is in a position to assess the main features of a genre which he has seen emerging, but an analysis of the way in which the transformation in the structure of the comedy comes about is absent from his reviews, as it is from those of Desfontaines or Clément. Nor can it really be
said to exist in the works of more modern critics. Lénient, for example, has, as one of the categories into which eighteenth-century comedy can be divided, the "comédie larmoyante et romanesque, genre hybride tenant le milieu entre le tragique et le comique ..." and Mélanide is referred to as an "espèce de mélodrame romanesque" (I, 164). Brunetière gives as the reason for La Chaussée's downfall: "C'est qu'il a mêlé trop de romanesque, aussi, lui, dans l'intrigue de ses pièces," while Gaiffe holds that in plays such as Mélanide and La Gouvernante (1747), precursors of the drame proper, "on ... trouve déjà le romanesque dans la conception de l'intrigue." These judgments are strikingly similar, but rarely is there an investigation into the reasons for the change in comic structure.  

A superficial reading is sufficient to indicate the difference between the new genre and those plays considered to belong to the classical French theatre. Whereas in Molière or many of the "comédies de mœurs" at the turn of the century, we have a play which is an entity in itself, developing out of an initial situation through a series of confrontations to the inevitable dénouement, in the case of the new genre, we have an immediate sense of a complex plot, relying heavily on discussion, on the unexpected or on events which have occurred

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9 Petit de Julleville might be said to be an exception to the pattern outlined here. See Histoire de la littérature française, publiée sous la direction de L. Petit de Julleville (Paris, 1898), VI, 589-91.
some time before the opening of the play. The term "romanesque" is no more than a label, however, and it is perhaps to do justice to the comedy in the first half of the eighteenth century to seek the causes of a transformation which is so apparent.

We have established that many dramatists endeavour to arouse the spectator's sympathy for and approval of certain notions and attitudes and that they may do so in a number of ways. The existence of a relationship of affection, for example, can be conveyed by an explicit statement or, more commonly, by the interaction of characters on the stage. Several playwrights, however, deem it necessary to advocate the desirability of relations founded on spontaneous regard through the medium of a sometimes lengthy debate. Thus in Act I, scene I of Destouches's L'Irrésolu (1713), we see Pyrante and Lisimon setting out their respective views on the treatment of children, in L'École des amis (1737), we have Ariste's explanation of the nature of true friendship and in many plays, including Le Préjugé à la mode (1735), L'Homme singulier (1745) and La Gouvernante, an argument about or comments upon love and marriage. In all instances the opinion of the dramatist is clear. Furthermore, where these debates take place between the characters involved in the relationship, they may constitute one of the crucial scenes of the play. In L'Irrésolu, much of the action tends towards the central scene of Act IV, in which Dorante and Julie, in their first real encounter on stage, examine the subject of marriage in general and their own roles within it. Similarly, in Le Philosophe marié (1727), the culmination to Act I is the scene
in which Ariste and Mélite reaffirm their commitment to their relationship, while in *Les Philosophes amoureux* (1729), the plot seems to move towards the confrontation between Léandre and Clarice in Act II, scene IV and subsequently towards that of Damis and Arténice. Reflection on or analysis of particular relationships are a significant element of the new comedy and can often complete part of the preceding action.

A number of other themes provide a basis for discussion. The nature of the "philosophe" and his way of life is, as one might expect, an important topic in the two plays mentioned above, while fashionable Parisian manners are commented upon in such plays as Boissy's *Les Dehors trompeurs* (1740), Nivelle de la Chaussée's *L'Ecole des meres* (1744) and Gresset's *Le Méchant* (1747).

Scenes of debate, whether they be devoted to the examination of one subject or several, must by virtue of their very frequency, affect the nature of the comedy. In the first place, they inevitably slow down the action. Furthermore, they produce a change in structure, since the play is no longer a straightforward resolution of conflict. Scenes of discussion, stemming from a clash in outlook, are of course a feature of the traditional comedy, but whereas in Molière, for instance, they are used mainly as exposition or as a kind of interlude, a reminder of the issues at stake, in the new plays they are calculated to explore certain notions and prove a point of view. They thus make of the comedy a discursive genre.

10 This takes place in Act III, scene III, where Damis and Arténice examine, among other subjects, the nature of their relationship and where Damis attempts to resist the idea of love.
On occasion the element of real debate may disappear completely. In Act II, scene I of Voltaire's *L'Enfant prodigieux* (1736), for example, where Lise discusses with Marthe her vision of married life, the presence of the suivante is almost dispensable and Lise's replies have, to all intents and purposes, become a monologue. As her remark "plus mon cœur s'étudie et s'essaie" reveals, an attempt by one protagonist to persuade another of an attitude can be transformed into self-analysis. We have already witnessed this to some extent in Act II, scene II of *Le Philosophe marié* and Act I, scene IV of *Mélanide*, where a lovers' dispute affords Céliante in the former, and Darviane, in the latter, an opportunity for reflection on their nature and conduct. The soliloquy proper, however, is a striking characteristic of the new comedy and appears to serve a number of functions.

Soliloquies here, as in any genre, allow feelings to be openly and freely expressed. In Campistron's *Le Jaloux désabusé* (1709) monologues enable Dorante to speak of the pain and confusion inherent in his relationship with Célia. Act IV, scene I, coming after Dorante has accused his wife of infidelity, sees an avowal of his "peine secrete;" the soliloquy here makes possible the admission of what, because of the shame attached to loving his own wife, Dorante is obliged to repress with others. The device employed to present a character "De ... tristes soupçons sans relâche agité ..." is exploited again at the end of Act IV and the beginning of Act V to convey Dorante's continuing anguish. Torn in Act IV, scene IX between a desire for revenge and repugnance at the thought of creating a scene in public, we find him in Act V, scene I, totally bemused:
Je marche, & je ne sçai où s'adressent mes pas; 
Dans ma propre maison je ne me connois pas.
Mes sens à leurs erreurs asservissent mon ame.
Ciel, as-tu de fléau plus cruel qu'une femme!
Insensé que je suis de m'être marié!

The more intense Dorante's reactions, the longer and more disjointed his monologues become. They provide an occasion for self-analysis and reflection in solitude, essential, as far as the audience is concerned, for an understanding of Dorante's development. They are a preparation for his change of heart at the end of the play and thus a crucial ingredient in the plot.

In Le Philosophe marié the very opening of the play takes the form of a long monologue, revolving around Ariste's meditation on the enjoyment to be derived from study and a comparison between that and the demands of his household. This speech contains some introduction to events and therefore has a dramatic function, but an important element in the situation is Ariste's confusion and the glimpse we have of it is fundamental to our involvement in his gradual transformation as the play progresses. A further, extremely short, monologue at the end of Act II, revealing his uneasiness when told by Finette that the Marquis du Laurent is with his wife, is followed by a final longer one after Géronte's ultimatum, more indicative of the conflicting emotions within him:

Dans mes sombres chagrins, quel parti dois-je prendre?
J'ai mille mouvements. Auquel faut-il me rendre?
Si je forme un projet, un autre le détruit.
La raison m'abandonne, et le trouble me suit.

(Act IV, scene I).
In Fagan's one-act play *La Pupille* (1734), Ariste is twice given a soliloquy in which he considers the possibility that he might be loved by Julie, his ward. The second in particular allows an insight into Ariste's hesitation and modesty:

Quoi! Julie, il seroit possible qu'Ariste eût obtenu quelqu'empire sur vous! Ah! Julie, Julie, si ma raison ne m'eût pas soutenu contre l'effet de vos charmes, pensez-vous que je n'eusse pas été le premier à me déclarer pour vous? ... Ciel! quelle est ma foiblesse! Osé-je croire qu'elle pense à moi? Allons, rendons-nous justice une bonne fois, & convenons que pour quelques apparences, il y a cent raisons qui détruisent une idée aussi ridicule. (Scene XVII).

Since it is the purpose of this play to trace the development of love between Julie and Ariste and thus to analyse Ariste's feelings, which cannot be discussed with any character on stage, the soliloquy is clearly once again a device enabling confession and self-examination.

In Boissy's *L'Époux par supercherie* (1744) disquiet and confusion lie at the heart of the monologues. We find Emilie, for example, troubled by guilt on learning that she, believed to be the wife of Belfort, is loved by the Marquis:

Et de ce feu fatal, c'est moi qui suis l'objet!
Voilà ce que j'ai craint, & ce qui me déchire.

Ma raison en frémit; mon cœur en est ému.
Je ne puis surmonter, ni démêler mon trouble.
(Act II, scene I).

The device is used at two further points in the same act, to permit the Marquis to express his despair, firstly in scene III, when he is incapable of speaking to Emilie of his love for her, and secondly in scene IX, when considering all
Belfort's advantages:

J'ai toutes les rigueurs, il a toutes les graces;
On l'adore, on me hait; on le cherche, on me fuit;

En cet instant où je suis à la gêne,
Ou je gémis tout seul & dévore ma peine,
Il la conduit chez elle, il lui donne la main,
Et l'on a des secrets à lui dire en chemin?

The frequency of the monologue would seem to suggest that one of the primary concerns of the dramatist is an analysis of the feelings of characters confronted with an apparently insoluble dilemma.

For several protagonists in the new comedy, a particular source of anxiety is a battle between love and reason and the soliloquy is an ideal form for the presentation of this struggle. Léandre, for example, in Les Philosophes amoureux, is well aware that there are two sides to his nature and that each makes a different judgment of Clarice:

Si j'en crois ma raison, je saurai l'éviter;
Si j'écoute mon cœur, ma chute est infaillible.

(Act II, scene I).

The theme of this monologue, together with that in Act III, scene VII, is the futility of any attempt to repress the feelings, his first troubled conclusion:

... mais la philosophie Saura m'en préserver. Malheur à qui s'y fie!
En vain contre les sens elle élève sa voix...

(Act II, scene I).

finding something of an echo in the later scene: "Pour me

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11 The "le" in the first of these two lines is "le bord du précipice," that is to say, falling in love with Clarice.
vaincre, il est vrai, je fais ce que je puis;/ Mais, plus
j'y fais d'efforts, plus mon amour augmente ..." (Act III,
scene VII). The soliloquy thus permits a character knowledge
of his own state of mind and the audience an awareness of his
conflicting inclinations. That the dramatist accords consi­
derable importance to the feelings of his protagonists is
implied by the fact that he allows Arténice a long monologue
in Act III, scene I and by the fact that Damis, no less than
Léandre, is given a soliloquy in which the opposition of emo­
tion and reason again predominates:

Indigne que je suis! Il est trop vrai que
j'aime,
Puisque je suis jaloux. J'ai honte de moi­
même.

Dès que je l'ai (Arténice) revue,
La force m'a manqué, mon âme s'est émue,
Et ma fière raison m'a laissé retomber.
(Act IV, scene V).

In Destouches's L'Ambitieux et l'indiscrète (1737), Don
Fernand endeavours to force a victory of reason, in the shape
of ambition, over love for Clarice:

Et l'amour . . .
Veut sur l'ambition remporter la victoire;
Il le veut. Mais en vain il ose le tenter,
Et, quoiqu'il m'ait surpris, il ne peut
me dompter.
Est-ce à moi de sentir et ses feux et ses
flammes?
L'amour ne doit régner que sur de foibles
âmes ...
(Act II, scene V).

The soliloquy also affords a character the opportunity
to examine and solve a moral difficulty. Damon, for instance,
in Le Curieux impertinent (1710), is given two monologues to
consider the implications of the dilemma with which Léandre
confronts him. The theme of the first, whose opening lines:
"Où vais-je m'engager? A ma foible vertu,/ Trop indiscret ami,
quel écueil offres-tu?" (Act II, scene VII) are sufficient sign of Damon's uneasiness, is taken up again as if without pause in Act IV, scene IX, where he resolves the issue with the conclusion that the responsibility for the outcome of the situation is not his. The monologue has allowed Damon to set out the terms of the problem and subsequently to progress from a state in which he is tormented by guilt to one in which he has salved his conscience and can proceed on a chosen course of action. It is clear, therefore, that these speeches of reflection on a seemingly impossible position are an essential element both in his development and in that of the play as a whole.

Cleon, in Destouches's Le Dissipateur (1736), confesses his folly both in wasting his fortune and in his choice of friends:

Inutile remords,
Pourquoi me tourmenter? O raison trop tardive!
Que ne prévenois-tu le malheur qui m'arrive!
Je suis abandonné, trahi, déshérité,
Et, pour comble de maux, je l'ai bien mérité.
Compter sur des amis; quelle étoit ma folie!
(Act V, scene XV).

This function of the monologue is clearly illustrated in Fagan's Les Originaux (1737). The action here, which is based on a series of conversations between the Marquis and a number of eccentrics, is punctuated by the Marquis's observations on those he meets. His last soliloquies, however, are quite different in kind from the first: whereas these merely comment on the strangeness of the social types encountered by the Marquis, the later ones contain a recognition of error.
Scene XIV, for example, finds him undergoing a realisation of his own objectionable behaviour:

Seroit-il possible que j'eusse quelque ressemblance à ce que je viens de voir, & à tout ce que j'ai vu aujourd'hui? Si cela étoit, en vérité, je serois bien haïssable.

Scene XVI, containing further solitary meditation, reveals a more general moral sense and marks the final stage in the Marquis's development.

Similarly Act III, scene XII of Le Méchant has Valère avowing the baseness of his conduct towards Géronte and determining to adopt his own standards:

Ma conduite à mes yeux me pénètre de honte. Pourrai-je réparer mes torts près de Géronte?

Il m'aimait autrefois; j'espère mon pardon. Mais comment avouer mon amour à Cléon? Moi sérieusement amoureux! ... Il n'importe! Qu'il m'en plaisante ou non, ma tendresse l'emporte.

Whatever the precise purpose of the monologue, it allows a character to seek an insight into his reactions and motives. As Léandre in Les Philosophes amoureux puts it: "Examinons un peu dans quel état je suis" (Act III, scene VII). Reflective soliloquies had become rare in the comedy. Indeed, monologues of any sort are not common, either in Molière or his successors. If the device is employed, it is normally to permit a character to formulate a plan of campaign and then to assess its progress or success. Such speeches are still a feature of the new comedy, affording both protagonists and audience time to consider the action and its implications. In Molière one also thinks of Arnolphe's soliloquy in Act IV of L'École des femmes, of Harpagon's distracted monologue in L'Avare or the opening speech from Argan in Le Malade imaginaire. Scenes such as
these are nevertheless small in number when viewed in the context of Molière's theatre as a whole. Moreover, Molière's great central characters, supremely oblivious of themselves and their folly, unwittingly betray their obsessions in their monologues: their lack of awareness indeed increases the comic impact of the play. Given the fact that it is a form of direct communication between protagonist and spectator, however, the soliloquy can arouse compassion and this is surely its aim in the plays we have been considering: it contains an appeal for understanding in a difficult situation. It is significant that the monologue is generally delivered by a character who has a certain capacity for feeling, which has already become apparent or which reveals itself during the course of the speech. Those who are cynical or superficial, who show a lack of concern in the widest sense, do not usually pause to examine their state of mind or the scope of a problem, should it exist.

As the tone of the comedy must inevitably be affected by this use of the soliloquy, so too will its form necessarily be modified. Spoken by characters, who, far from being ignorant of their real selves, are quite lucid in their appraisal of their emotions and controlled in their expression of them, the soliloquy makes the new genre introspective and brings it close to a study of the psychology of many major protagonists. Such an analysis forms no part of the traditional comedy and it might perhaps be said to suggest a resemblance between the eighteenth-century plays and the romanesque form. It is certain that both discussion and self-examination divert attention from the main plot, which is often forgotten for an entire scene, or number of scenes, and only recalled with a brief
mention at the end of a debate or monologue. More than this, however, so fundamental is the desire to put across a particular point of view, or to stress a change of heart, that in many cases indeed debate and soliloquy are the plot itself.

A further, radical effect on the structure of the comedy is brought about by one of its most significant features, namely the intention to advocate certain moral principles and to reform those characters without moral values. In the first place, a substantial degree of discussion enters the play and it may be lengthy, retarding the unfolding of the action and even interrupting it. No longer is it sufficient for a relationship - be it one of sympathy or antipathy - to be created whenever characters first appear on stage: a moralising comment on that relationship is now almost indispensable. Thus in Act III, scene XIII of *Le Philosophe marié*, discord within the family is made immediately apparent, but to it is added condemnation of Géronte, quite superfluous as far as the intrigue is concerned. In *L'Enfant prodigue*, Lise does not hesitate to state her opposition to Rondon's plans for her in Act I, scene II; any hero or heroine of classical comedy would do the same. There follows, however, an idyllic portrayal of married life, a digression which would have been quite out of place in seventeenth-century comedy.

The disruptive nature of the moralising tendency may be illustrated by the form of Act I in *L'Obstacle imprévu* (1717). The opening scene of the play depends on a recent clash between Valère and his father. The potential of this conflict is not exploited - or not immediately, at least - and the first scene leads into one between Valère and Angélique, revolving
from the start around Angélique's accusations to Valère of neglect, her criticism of his attitude towards love and marriage and her determination to reform him. Several of the subsequent scenes are based on the same theme, with the result that the original point of interest, that is to say the relationship between father and son, has been temporarily abandoned and the action taken off at a tangent.

If the moralising scenes alter the expected course of the action, they seek in addition to eliminate divisions between characters. When Valère, for example, endeavours to change Damon in Act III, scene VII of *Le Médisant* (1715), or Lycandre the Comte in *Le Glorieux* (1732), Céliante the Baron in *Les Dehors trompeurs*, they are all attempting to bring the object of their homily closer to themselves. Where the whole of the action leads to the moral regeneration of a central protagonist, the play tends towards agreement and sympathy at the close, a movement which clearly distinguishes the new from the traditional comedy.

As we have already observed, the desire to show the audience the reform of a libertine and as a result the pleasure inherent in virtue, is a major feature of the works we are examining. With few exceptions, however, immoral or callous conduct is not presented by the dramatist on stage: a character such as Euphénon fils or the Marquis de Clarendon in *L'École de la jeunesse* first appears after he has realised the unacceptability of his original values. Where the new genre proposes, therefore, to illustrate the possibility of a genuine rebirth in moral standards, description and explanation are essential if the process undergone before the opening
of the play is to be appreciated by the spectator. Act I of
Le Préjugé à la mode sees the setting forth of what would
appear to be the most important components of the plot,
rather than Sophie's objections to marriage and thus her clash
with both M. Argante and Damon; to this are added Dorante's
neglect of Constance and her unhappiness. Dramatic potential
seems to reside principally in the relationship of the young
lovers. The focus shifts, however, at the start of Act II
with Dorante's revelation that he loves Constance, a revela­
tion which demands a significant amount of detail about the
past and some clarification by Dorante of the development
which has taken place within him.

This characteristic of the new comedy is yet more strik­
ing in Voltaire's L'Enfant prodigue. The introduction to
events has apparently been effected in the first two acts with
an outline of Euphémon fils's profligacy and selfishness. In
Act III, however, we find what amounts to a second exposition
with the return of Euphémon fils and his portrayal, in conver­
sation with Jasmin, of events leading up to his present dis­
tressed state. Euphémon is a reformed character, but in
these scenes and in his confrontation with Lise, which occurs
in Act IV, scene III, an account of both past and present is
indispensable if Lise and the audience alike are to be convin­
ced of his sincerity.

The tearful situation may also be said to interrupt the
progress of the plot with pure narrative. If the audience is
to sympathise fully with a character's predicament, all the

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12 The elucidation necessary here is, moreover, given in two
scenes, separated by the interventions of Mme Croupillac and
Euphémon père and thus takes some time to complete.
factors contributing to it must be known and must furthermore justify his distress. Many scenes in the new comedy thus contain a history of the past in order to explain unhappiness in the present. In Act I, scene IX of Le Glorieux Lycandre, having aroused Lisette's affection for her father, increases her concern and compassion with a lengthy evocation of the misfortunes which have befallen the family and, moreover, takes up the theme again in Act IV. Detail of a more recent past is required at the beginning of Act V in L'École des mères to account for Mme Argante's distress on her son's elopement and La Gouvernante, in the play of that name, describes for Angélique the fate of her parents in Act II, scene II. The demands of this component of the new genre are at their most striking in Mélanide. In Act II, scene III, Mélanide outlines to Théodon the catastrophe which occurred so long ago and which yet has such importance for the present. Again we see that at a comparatively late stage in the intrigue narrative is essential if the spectator is to participate in events. Mélanide's shame and consternation are such that the truth does not emerge in its entirety even in Act II, scene III and we have to await Act IV and scenes with Théodon and then Darviane for complete elucidation. Past misfortunes thus influence the structure of the comedy, which, in the case of Mélanide and indeed some other plays, is beginning to resemble a slowly unfolding story.

Factors fundamental to the new genre thus force it to break with the traditional methods of construction. The comedy becomes reflective and gains in complexity as discussion or secondary plots seemingly unconnected with the central
issue, are introduced into it. As we have already implied, however, the very relationships between characters can in themselves effect a change in comic structure. A small number of plays in the period we are studying, although influenced by the new climate of the time, do admittedly obey convention, which is to use conflict as a source of action. In *Le Jaloux désabusé*, for example, the intrigue stems from Dorante's opposition to his sister's choice of husband. The protagonists are clearly divided into two groups - Dorante and the rest - and the substance of the play derives from the stratagem to defeat Dorante. His change of heart at the end owes nothing to solicitude for Julie; on the contrary, it depends entirely on his selfish desire to rid his house of men who might be courting his wife. There is no doubt that this play contains elements, such as Dorante's soliloquies, his moralising comment at the close, and Celie's scruples in tricking her husband, which indicate a move towards a new genre, but in its basic framework *Le Jaloux désabusé* belongs to the old tradition.

So too does Piron's *L'École des pères* (1728), where again there are two firmly opposed sets of characters, one intent on destroying the schemes of the other. We have noted that the purpose of this play - to reveal the sons' lack of moral standards - is not that of classical comedy, but unmasking of a more general kind is and this play, in developing out of tensions established in the first act, remains

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In some plays a whole act or sequence of acts may be devoted to discussion. Much of the first two acts of Destouches's *Les Philosophes amoureux* is taken up with debate and Boissy's *Les Dehors trompeurs* contains little but argument about moral issues in the first three acts.
faithful to the usual dramatic practice. A clash of wills also provides the starting-point for the plot of Destouches's *L'Amblitieux*, where Don Fernand, greedy for power, is radically at odds with Don Phillipe, whose only concern is the good of King and state. Their struggle, which comes out into the open at the end of Act II, gives the impetus to the whole of the ensuing action, in which each attempts to prevent the success of the other. To this hostility between brothers must be added that of husband and wife, Dona Béatrice too being determined to gain prestige at court, by marrying her niece to the King, a plan which is anathema to Don Phillipe. This work, in common with those discussed above, is by-and-large self-contained, in that there is little reliance on complicated events before or on shattering occurrences during its action. These are comedies which are conventional in structure, if not always in purpose.

There are yet others of which, at first sight, one might make the same judgment. In *L’Ingrat*, for instance, the plot seems to be prepared in terms of the disagreement between father and daughter, as it does in *L’Enfant prodigue*. The antagonism between parents and daughter in *Le Médisant*, between father and son or guardian and ward in *L’Obstacle imprévu*, between uncle and niece in *Le Préjugé à la mode* or brother and sister in *L’Homme singulier*, suggests that these plays will also follow tradition. Despite the fact that Lisette may remark to Isabelle in *L’Ingrat*: "Eh! je sais qu’il vous aime./ Il faudra qu’il se rende en dépit de lui-même ..." (Act I, scene IV), and that Lise, in *L’Enfant prodigue* says of Rondon "sous les plis d’un front atrabilaire,/ Sous cet
air brusque il a l'âme d'un père ..." (Act I, scene III), neither in these plays, nor in the others mentioned, is there any change in attitude on the part of the character in authority, still less any word of affection at the close. It might be supposed, therefore, that these relationships are used to furnish the substance of the play.

In every instance, however, the action moves away from what had appeared to be the principal focus of interest to centre on something quite different. Although, in L'Ingrat, the intrigue stems at the outset from Isabelle's struggle against Géronte, it soon turns first to the moral argument between Damis and Pasquin and thence to the attempt to discredit Damis. During the last three acts, Isabelle is fighting, indirectly, against her father, Orphise is intent on punishing Damis, while he is desirous of retaining the favour of both Géronte and Orphise, now a rich woman. Much of the action of the play derives from efforts by Damis, well aware of the plot against him, to pre-empt the schemes of the others. Conflict is always present in the play, but except in Act V, when Géronte orders Isabelle to sign the marriage contract, it is not explicitly one between the characters of father and daughter. The intention to unmask Damis is of course a consequence of the initial clash, which also undoubtedly gives an impetus to the action, but it would seem nevertheless that Destouches wishes to avoid arguments between parent and child on stage.

In L'Obstacle imprévu, the opposition between Lisimon and Valère, deliberately fostered by Julie in Act I, and between Julie herself and Lisimon, is exploited as a basis for
the first part of the play, as each character pursues his or her own ends. The intrigue eventually centres, however, on the despair felt by Julie and Léandre on discovering that the latter has married the woman believed to be Julie's mother. Equally, in L'Enfant prodigue, with the reappearance of Euphémion fils, the antagonism between father and daughter is abruptly forgotten. There is the suggestion of traditional comic structure in L'Homme singulier, with Sanspair's insistence on choosing a husband for Julie. A certain part of the plot derives, it is true, from Julie's attempts to hoodwink her brother into believing that the Comte is no longer a "petit-maître", and that she herself has undergone a radical transformation to become sensible and studious, as indifferent to fashion and social approval as Sanspair. More important are the portrayal of Sanspair and his ideals, the self-analysis which we have already examined and his relationship with the Comtesse. The hint of rivalry with his nephew for the love of the Comtesse is not followed up.

It would be tempting to advance explanations for the departure from convention noted in these works. It is possible that playwrights such as Voltaire or Destouches enjoyed devising and unravelling an intricate plot; the complexities of L'Ingrat, for example, might support this notion. It would perhaps be wrong, however, to ignore the possibility

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14 So, too, might a remark by Destouches in the Suite de la Lettre III: "Je suis fort avancé dans mes observations sur les deux Corneille, dont le cadet, plus je le sonde et l'examine, me paraît infiniment plus estimable qu'on ne s'imagine ordinairement, surtout par rapport à l'invention et à la disposition des sujets. Jamais homme, à mon avis, n'a mieux possédé l'art de bien conduire une pièce de théâtre" Oeuvres dramatiques (Paris, 1820), V, 211-12. Destouches is commenting in this letter to Monsieur le Chevalier de Bxxx on the progress of his history of the theatre.
that the writers under discussion had no liking for relationships of antipathy or for their exploitation. Antagonism, as we have shown, is disregarded at some point and is replaced, in almost every case, by a relationship of sympathy or the search for a relationship of sympathy. In L'Obstacle imprevu, for example, Lisimon relinquishes all claims to Julie himself and forgets his opposition to her union with Valere, since such a union appears to him inevitable and indeed beneficial:

Oh çà, ma chère Julie, je triomphe de la faiblesse que j'avois pour vous, dans l'espérance de prévenir la perte de mon fils. Daignez me seconder, je vous en conjure. Consentez à l'épouser ...

(Act III, scene IV).

This collusion between Lisimon and Julie removes from the play an important source of conflict and thus of dramatic action. Even the return of Léandre, which might have provoked Lisimon's aggression, is greeted with equanimity and once Léandre has received approval from both Lisimon and Licandre, no real tension remains. If, in L'Enfant prodigue, complete understanding does not immediately come into being between Lise and Euphémon fils, there is certainly a movement towards it as Euphémon urges Lise to believe in his reform and the two subsequently attempt to win over Euphemon père. A desire to find harmony underlies the last three acts of this play and the relationships of affection and understanding, potential or actual, are the dominant ones, overshadowing hostility.

This inclination to ignore conflict is also a feature of plays which are not prepared in the traditional manner. A number of relationships characterised by dislike are implied in the first act of Destouches's Le Glorieux, for example. In particular, Lisimon and his wife clash over the choice of
a husband for Isabelle; they never meet on stage, however, and although Lisimon threatens continually to assert his authority and the disagreement can be used, indirectly, to provide comic action in the confrontations between the Comte, favoured by Lisimon, and Philinte, supported by his wife, no real substance is to be had from a relationship where the protagonists argue off-stage. Moreover, at the end of Act IV, Lisimon announces a change of mind in his wife and any further action which might have derived from their difference is thus ruled out.

The possibility of opposition between Isabelle and the Comte is suggested in Act I:

**LIBETTE**
Elle (Isabelle) est d'humeur liante, affable, sociable:
L'orgueil est à ses yeux un vice insupportable;

**PASQUIN**
Si bien qu'avec mon maître elle est mal assortie?

**LIBETTE**
Il aura son congé, s'il ne se contraint pas.

(Act I, scene IV).

In spite of the action latent in such a relationship, there is no encounter between these characters on stage in the first two acts. The meetings in Act III, scenes II and IV, in which Isabelle endeavours to demonstrate to the Comte the folly of his arrogance and her own distaste for it, are the only ones between the lovers until the final scene of the play. Here the anxiety felt by Isabelle throughout is assuaged without apparent difficulty by the reassurance that the Comte has undergone a genuine transformation.
Similarly all suggestions of conflict between Lisimon and his son Valère are played down, in spite of the fact that both are attracted to Lisette: after a brief confrontation in Act I, this traditional clash is forgotten. The hostility between the Comte and Philinte provides, as we have implied, some comic action in Act III, scene VII, but neither this, nor Philinte's refusal to obey Lisimon's orders to leave the house, is exploited in the last two acts. In short, the antagonism between the protagonists in this play is talked about or used sparingly as a source of action, but true antipathy is avoided.

The opposition between the Marquis and Darviane is minimised in Mélânide, as Nivelle de la Chaussée causes the argument between them to be conducted off stage, the audience being apprised of the incident through a letter from Dorisée to Mélânide, read in Act IV, scene III. In Boissy's L'Epoque par supercherie there is a hint once more of conflict between the characters of father and son, but the former in fact never appears and neither the relationship nor the threat it poses can give impetus to the play.

Ignored, therefore, in some comedies, where it might have provided a structure, antipathy between characters is, in others, deliberately destroyed in a situation where it might most naturally be expected. In Le Curieux impertinent the trust between Léandre and Damon is threatened by the former's determination to test Julie through Damon. Léandre, however, not only urges Damon to: "Aime-la donc, morbleu! sois-en vraiment touché" (Act II, scene VI), he also absolves Damon of all guilt and responsibility. He states, for instance: "Ne crains point que par là notre amitié s'altère ..." (Act II, scene VI),
and subsequently adds the reassurance that: "Si tu te fais aimer, va, je te le pardonne ..." (Act III, scene VII). Even Damon's confession that he loves Julie elicits no anger; on the contrary, Léandre replies:

\begin{quote}
    Eh bien! tant mieux pour toi;
    Par là, tu mets Julie à la plus vive épreuve.
    Si je suis malheureux, je ne m'en plaindrai point.
\end{quote}

(Act IV, scene VIII).

No doubt Destouches wishes to heighten the absurdity of Léandre's plan with this show of reckless complacency, but a desire on his part to keep intact the friendship between the two characters cannot be ruled out. As far as the structure of the play is concerned, the fact that Léandre forgives Damon in advance means that all possibility of conflict is removed before it has even emerged. What might have been a comic rivalry, and thus a source of intrigue, certainly in the later stages of the play, is obviated from the start.

Ill-will and a desire to shame Dorante would be natural reactions in Constance, in Nivelle de la Chaussée's Le Préjugé à la mode. Fearful of jeopardising what still remains between them, however, she refuses to challenge him:

\begin{quote}
    Je ne veux point aigrir son cœur & son esprit,
    Ni détruire un espoir que mon amour nourrit.
\end{quote}

(Act IV, scene III).

Once more it would seem that the dramatist deliberately ignores conflict or the possibility of it, electing instead to emphasise the sympathy in the relations between his characters. This he does again in L'École des amis, where Hortence, informed that Monrose is unfaithful, decides to assist and not harm him:
More significant still, however, is the creation of protagonists with a capacity for feeling, in harmony from the outset with those around them. In L'Irrésolu, for example, Tyrante gives Dorante his approval of any course he might adopt:

Vous ne devez pas craindre
Qu'à prendre aucun parti je veuille vous contraindre.
Je ne vous ai parlé que comme votre ami,
Et je ne serai point complaisant à demi.
Pensez, examinez, j'ai résolu d'attendre,
Et j'approverai tout ...

(Act III, scene I).

We have a similar situation in Nivelle de la Chaussée's L'École de la jeunesse, where the Comtesse allows Zélide complete freedom in her choice of a husband. Equally, in Fagan's La Pupille, Ariste, Julie's guardian, remarks that "je l'ai vingt fois assurée que je ne gênerois jamais son inclination ..." (Scene IV); although in love with her himself, he is true to his word. Lisimon, in Le Philosophe marié, feeling compassion for Ariste in his dilemma, offers him help:

Il s'agit d'inventer quelques expédients.
Pour amuser votre oncle; et nous devons tout faire.
Afin de lui cacher quelque temps cette affaire ...

(Act IV, scene II).

Where important relationships are ones of affection, the impetus for the play, and indeed its very framework, must necessarily be something other than the conventional clash of wills. This is also the case to a certain extent in those plays where a relationship of antipathy changes to one of sympathy. There is clearly a degree of tension in such a
relationship, which can be used to provide some of the substance of the play. In Le Philosophe marié, for example, the disagreement between Géronte and Ariste is at the basis of part of the intrigue, which involves Ariste in an attempt to avoid the match arranged by his uncle. The moral arguments between Léonore and Damon constitute the plot of Acts II and III of La Fausse Antipathie (1733), while Darviane's refusal to do Nélanide's bidding, his determination to pursue his own desires, furnish some of the intrigue in Nélanide. Similarly, the conflict between La Gouvernante and Angélique or the Président and Sainville in Nivelle de la Chaussée's La Gouvernante, or Brice père and Brice fils in L'Homme de fortune, contributes to the action in both instances. As we have already observed, however, the hostility in these relationships is not deep-rooted and depends on a misapprehension or on incomplete knowledge rather than on genuine hatred: a revelation of the truth could and does remove the opposition between the characters in question, which in turn destroys dramatic potential. There is thus a limit to the action which can be derived from these relationships, with the result that the playwright is obliged, in order to maintain tension for as long as possible, to resort to the invention of incidents which conceal the real state of affairs. Were the facts to be discovered, the play would immediately come to an end.

The new comedies must, therefore, be different in structure from, say, the plays of Molière or those of the very early years of the eighteenth century. Several of the works we have mentioned are contingent in the first place upon the
development of a love intrigue. *Le Curieux impertinent*, for example, can be said to follow the course of the relationship between Damon and Julie, from Damon's approaches, at Léandre's behest, in Act II, scene VIII and his subsequent decision to woo Julie on his own behalf in Act IV, scene XI, to Julie's eventual disenchantment with Léandre and her acceptance of Damon's hand. Much of the play moves inevitably towards each encounter between these two characters and attention is focused on the reactions of moral indignation and anger in Julie, together with the changing relations between her and Damon; the plot depends in other words on a gradual evolution of feelings.

It is, however, by no means as uncomplicated as this outline would imply. There are naturally sub-plots, one concerning the servants and arising out of Lolive's desire to test Nérine in imitation of his master; this part of the action exactly mirrors, on a lower level, that occurring between the principal protagonists. Another revolves around Lolive's hoodwinking of Géronde in an effort to postpone the wedding of Léandre and Julie and reaches a kind of climax in Act IV with Géronde's threats on discovering Lolive's lies. These two elements in the play provide the distraction from the central theme which one might expect in any drama. Into this framework, Destouches introduces Julie's reproaches to Léandre and the discussions between the latter and Damon about the success of Léandre's plan, accompanied by objections and warnings from Damon, both of which are fundamental to the purpose of the play.

In addition, however, there is a significant change of
direction in Act IV. In Act III, scene VIII, Julie had believed Damon's story that Léandre was unfaithful and had resolved to feign love for Damon in order to gain her revenge. This scheme might have lent substance to the rest of the play. Destouches chooses, in spite of this, to make Lolive confess the truth of Léandre's intentions to Géronte and it is thus passed on to Julie. Furthermore, Damon is informed of all this, since Crispin overhears the conversation between father and daughter. This transforms the nature of the intrigue. Julie is now in a superior position and commands the course of events, determining to punish Léandre for his lack of trust in her. Act V is thus founded on antipathy of a sort, but it remains essential, nevertheless, that one character at least, namely Léandre, be unaware of the real situation. At the end of Act V, scene II, for example, Julie deliberately leaves the stage before Léandre's confession and in Act V, scene V he in turn refuses to listen to Lolive's admission of his role in the affair. Ignorant but utterly confident, Léandre is humiliated and defeated at the close - he is in fact the classic "dupeur dupé" - which suggests that part of Destouches's aim is the deflation of his central comic character. The shift of emphasis in Act IV would appear to be indispensable in bringing this about. It is not impossible, however, that Destouches considered the growth of the relationship between Damon and Julie to be insufficient as a basis for the entire play and perceived the necessity of creating a twist in the plot to fill out the action. Whether this is the case or not, we might perhaps conclude that the absence of a strong relationship of antipathy influences the play in
two ways. In the first place, there is considerable variety
within it and, secondly, it requires the use of somewhat
artificial devices in order that dramatic tension be sustained.

A development in the feelings of lovers or potential
lovers seems particularly suitable as the basis for shorter
plays of three acts or less. In *La Pupille*, although some
action might stem from the rivalry of the three male charac-
ters for the love of Julie, the intrigue is founded in reality
on the relationship between Ariste and Julie; it is devoid of
antipathy, as we have seen, and follows the course of Julie's
attempts to reveal her love for him to Ariste. Indeed, her
statement: "La difficulté est d'en instruire celui que j'aime"
(Scene VI), might well be said to summarise the essence of the
plot, which revolves around each encounter between Julie and
Ariste, the former using various subterfuges to make Ariste
see the truth. In short, the action, interrupted admittedly
by the self-confident claims of the Marquis and Oronte, depends
on the growth of love between ward and guardian. A compari-
son of this play and, say, *L'Ecole des femmes*, could give no
better indication of the change in attitude, and subsequently
in structure, which has taken place in the comedy.

The plot of Boissay's *L'Époux par supercherie* derives
from the Marquis's desire to win the love of the woman who is
in fact his wife and from Belfort's attempts to woo Constance.15

15 At the start of the play, Belfort is believed to be the hus-
band of Emilie. In fact, the Marquis has secretly taken his
place at the ceremony, unbeknown even to Emilie, because mar-
rriage to her would have been forbidden by her mother. Speaking
of Belfort's desire to give up Emilie, he says: "Un obstacle
cruel, & presque insurmontable,/Arrête cependant son dessain
généreux./Prêts à l'exécuter, nous sentons tous les deux/Qu'aux
mains d'un Étranger, la Mère d'Emilie/Ne livrera jamais une
fille chère ..."(Act I, scene I). This "obstacle" is not men-
tioned again, nor does Emilie's mother appear in the play.
Both male characters thus have a particular goal and the play is built up around the progress of their approaches, from initial rejection by the women to acceptance. In neither of these relationships is hostility the result of dislike: rather is it proof of attraction, but of attraction which is felt to be morally wrong. That Emilie is not indifferent to the Marquis is suggested in the last speech of Act II, scene II, for instance:

**EMILIE, troublée:**

On verra ...

*Quand vous serez plus calme, on vous écoutera ...*

Votre trouble est trop grand; ... & le mien est extrême.

Adieu. Je ne sais plus ce que je dis moi-même.

(à part, en s'en allant).

If this conflict between the characters is unreal, it can at least be exploited, however briefly, to provide the action of the play, since the Marquis and Belfort must destroy the objections of Emilie and Constance. It must nonetheless evaporate when it becomes known that the Marquis and Emilie are in reality husband and wife. We see, therefore, that once again the new genre relies on misunderstanding or on incomplete knowledge on the part of several protagonists for the substance of its plot.

*Le Sage étourdi* (1745) by Boissy also involves the break-up of one apparently stable relationship and the formation of two new ones. On one level, the intrigue concerns Léandre and his endeavour to win the hand of Eliante. His first advances meet with resistance, as he is in theory already engaged:
LEANDRE
Vous m'aimerez, vous-dis-je; oui, malgré vos refus.
Il le faut. Je me suis arrangé là-dessus.

ELIANTE
À moins que comme à vous la tête ne me tourne,
Je ne souffrirai pas que l'amour y séjourne.
Je la crois assez forte.

(Act II, scene I).

These words and the initial framework of the play might be said to resemble those of many a Marivaux comedy. The speech by Eliante quoted above perhaps recalls a riposte from the Comtesse in La Première Surprise de l'amour (1722):

LE BARON, sérieusement
Madame, n'appeliez point cette faiblesse-là ridicule; ménageons les termes: il peut venir un jour où vous serez bien aise de lui trouver une épithète plus honnête.

LA COMTESSE
Oui, si l'esprit me tourne.

(Act I, scene VIII).

Similarly in Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard (1730) Silvia protests:

Tiens, Bourguignon, une bonne fois pour toutes, demeure, va-t'en, reviens ... je ne te veux ni bien ni mal, je ne te hais, ni ne t'aime, ni ne t'aimerai à moins que l'esprit ne me tourne.

(Act II, scene IX).

Marivaux, like the dramatists we have been discussing, endows his characters with a capacity for feeling and makes the creation of a relationship of sympathy the main theme of his plays. The spectator may suspect the protagonists themselves of less than complete awareness and sincerity where their feelings are concerned, however. Guided by pride, timidity or obstinacy, the lovers are reluctant to admit attraction: in Les Serments indiscrets (1732), for instance, Lucile and Damis,
having declared themselves hostile to the idea of marriage,
are obliged to reject each other on first meeting in spite of
a kind of understanding; Lucile's "vous ne vous souciez point
de moi, je ne me soucie point de vous ..." (Act I, scene VI)
encapsulates and determines the apparent nature of their
relationship. The tension produced by attraction towards a
character who in fact represents a challenge to an assumed
attitude manifests itself in antagonism. *Les Serments indis-
crets*, together with much of Marivaux's theatre, thus depends
on verbal sparring, even though the opposition is more imagi-
nary than real. In *La seconde surprise de l'amour* (1723) the
agreement between the Marquise and the Chevalier contains the
seeds of conflict should the question of love arise. At the
beginning of Act II, the Chevalier does not confront his natu-
ral rival the Comte, because this would be tantamount to a
confession of love for the Marquise; she in turn does not
vent her anger on Mortensius, who had provoked the situation.
Each attacks the other and the establishment of a relationship
of sympathy thus provides the very action of the play.

In Boissy's play *Eliante* is alone in resisting love:
Léandre is certain of success and the plot thus depends on a
gradual wearing down of Eliante, rather than on a struggle
within and between the lovers. In the relationship between
Lucinde and Eraste, however, there is a degree of antagonism,
for both are averse to marriage; indeed their relations are
based in the first instance on Lucinde's desire to be given
a "cours d'indépendance" by Eraste. There is a reluctance,
therefore, to become involved, but it is clear that for
Eraste at least apprehension is accompanied by attraction:
Vous savez à quel point ma liberté m'est chère;
Je risque de la perdre, en restant près de vous.
Vos yeux ont sur mon âme un ascendant si doux,
Que je ne puis vous voir, sans en sentir du trouble.
Plus je vous vois, & plus je le sens qui redouble.
(Act II, scene V).

This part of the play thus relies on a conflict within as much as on one between the characters: indeed it is their efforts to control and repress their feelings which give rise to the hostility in their relationship, since both attempt to keep at a distance the cause of their dilemma. The action inevitably traces the development of each protagonist from a desire for independence to a realisation that commitment brings greater satisfaction and, ultimately, to a declaration of love. The terms in which Eraste expresses to Léandre his new found philosophy establish a firm link between this play and the climate of the time:

Eh! Peut-on être heureux, quand l'ame ne sent rien?
C'est dans le sentiment qu'est le souverain bien.
Oui, c'est lui seul qui touche, intéresse, remue,
Qui fait passer, du cœur, son charme dans la vue;
L'Amour en est le père, il peut seul l'aimer;
Et pour sçavoir sentir, il faut sçavoir aimer.
(Act III, scene VIII).

If some plays resemble the unfolding of a love story, others seem to depend to a significant extent on several easily recognisable and well-tried effects. The first of
these is the exploitation of an event which appears sudden and even unconnected with the previous action. Thus in Destouches's *L'Obstacle imprévu*, for example, the last three acts rely almost entirely upon the return, not in itself unpredictable, of Léandre, Julie's former lover. In view of the understanding and collusion between Lisimon and Julie, which we have already noted, Léandre's arrival is most opportune, coming as it does at a point when the situation holds little dramatic potential. A degree of tension can be created initially from Léandre's possible opposition to Léandre, but the plot stems above all from the "discovery" that Léandre has married the woman believed to be Julie's mother and the reversal thus produced. There is, admittedly, some preparation for this in Act I in a scornful speech from Nérine:

> La vieille folle!... Se marier en secondes noces, sans en avertir personne! S'enrichir puissamment par ce second mariage... s'amouracher d'un jeune godelureau, le faire en mourant son légataire universel, et vous déshériter par son testament!

(Act I, scene VII).

Nevertheless, the introduction of a largely unforeseen incident lies at the basis of Acts IV and V, which revolve as a result around the lovers' despair. A resolution of the dilemma is naturally the purpose of the action, but the situation would be hopeless were it not for Léandre's revelation that Julie is not in fact the daughter of the Comtesse de la Filandièrê and can therefore marry Léandre. Thus we have an unexpected solution to an unexpected problem, although some suspense is created in Léandre's hint of the impossible to Lisimon in Act IV, scene VI:

> ... je vous révélerai certaines aventures secrètes, par lesquelles vous vous convaincrez qu'il n'est pas étonnant que Julie tienne si peu de ma belle-sœur.
The last part of *L'Obstacle imprévu* thus relies on two main devices. The first is the use of an event from the past, extraneous, it would seem, to the action as it had been developing in the opening acts, where the antipathies and conflicts would have been adequate to provide an intrigue for the remainder of the play. In addition to this, we see the dramatist employing an element of mystery in the construction of his plot: the uncertainty arising out of lack of detail about Julie's mother is reintroduced and maintained as we have seen, in Act IV, scene VI, by Licandre's refusal to give a full explanation of the difference between Julie and the Comtesse. Elucidation comes in Act V, and then only for Lisimon and the audience, after further suspicion has been aroused. It is interesting that Lisimon observes on being told the truth: "Il a tout l'air d'un roman, ce mystère-là . . ." (Act V, scene I). The procedure adopted by Destouches is the gradual discovery, first to the spectator and then to the majority of the characters, of a crucial fact which annuls the dilemma confronting the central protagonists. The creation of suspense becomes a substitute for real action. There is nonetheless a necessity for what might be called padding in the later acts, in the shape of narrative scenes between Crispin and Nérine, covering events since Léandre's departure, and rivalry between Léandre and Valère, reflected in comic fashion, by that of Crispin and Pasquin. If this comment is perhaps uncharitable, the apparent determination on the part of the playwright to avoid any true antagonism leads to a plot which is fragmented and continually shifting in focus.

16 There is a long preamble to Licandre's revelation of the truth in Act V, scene I.
Despite a clash between Sophie and M. Argant, the action in *Le Préjugé à la mode* rapidly comes to revolve around Constance and Durval, characters who are essentially in sympathy, despite Durval's neglect. This attitude contributes substantially to the plot, both in discussion and in the soliloquies which express the torment aroused by Constance's apparent indifference, itself caused by his inability to declare his love. Moreover, his hesitation in sending a letter and present to Constance constitutes the whole of the end of the third act. Indeed, the gifts received by Constance can be said to provide much of the intrigue, for although the audience is quickly made aware of their origin through Durval's aside: "Voyons un peu l'effet qu'ont produit mes présens" (Act I, scene VII), there remains an enigma for the characters on the stage and a desire to solve it. At the end of Act III, for example, Durval has placed diamonds in Constance's room without a message. The plot now rests on a further anonymous present, with the added complication that Durval's letters to a former mistress have come into Constance's hands. Dramatic irony is thus used to build up to what may be termed the first climax of the play in Act IV, a climax not the outcome of real conflict, for, as we have seen, Constance refuses to confront Durval with his misdemeanour, but one which stems in the first instance from an incident involving two minor characters, Damis and Clitandre, believed to love Constance.  

17 The scenes between them and Durval, which arouse

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17 The diamonds have been given to Damis and Clitandre by Finette, who assumes that one of them must be responsible for the gift. It is Durval's discovery of this fact, together with Damis's boasting about a portrait of Constance, commissioned by Durval, which he has come upon, which cause Durval's anger.
the latter's jealousy, lead to Act IV, scene X, in which Durval challenges his wife, and thence to Act IV, scene XIII, where Durval seeks to prove Constance's infidelity by insisting that letters which have fallen from her pocket be read out by each protagonist in turn. Two events are thus brought together at the end of Act IV to achieve Durval's humiliation and force him to do Constance justice. It is clear that there is significant exploitation here of an occurrence, namely an old love affair, which belongs strictly speaking to a time before the start of the play. The intrigue surrounding the anonymous gift, on the other hand, illustrates once again the extensive use of mystery in the new comedy. The whole episode is based on a misunderstanding, originating not in the nature of the protagonists concerned—although Durval's jealousy could be said to make him jump to conclusions—but in circumstances or characters independent of them and this produces complexity of plot.

The first act of Voltaire's Nanine is also rich in dramatic potential, depending as it does on the antipathy between the Comte and the Baronne and the latter's jealousy of Nanine: it is from this indeed that the main action at the beginning of the play, that is to say Nanine's flight from the Comte's house, derives. When, in the middle of Act II, Nanine has been brought back and the Comte has proposed to her, there seem to be few further possibilities for the ensuing plot. The dramatist therefore has recourse once again to an incident which exists outside the confines of the play: in this case it is Nanine's sudden decision to send a letter containing money to a character named Philippe Hombert. The letter is of course intercepted by the Baronne, misinterpreted
and used to have Nanine banished from the house; this event furnishes the substance, both in action and discussion, of Act III. As in L'Obstacle imprévu, a seemingly impossible dilemma is resolved by an unexpected revelation: Philippe Hombert is Nanine's father. In the cast list he is merely designated a "paysan du voisinage;" audience and protagonists alike are thus caught up in the mystery, which it is the purpose of the third act to clarify. It is plain that the happening used as a source of intrigue here has very little connection with the opening sections of Nanine and tends to make the play episodic in structure.

Other plots depend less on a misapprehension or on a sudden and unexpected event, than on the unravelling of a mystery deliberately created in the exposition, usually for both spectator and protagonists. In Destouches's Le Glorieux, for example, there is some obscurity surrounding Lisette, as her own words reveal: "Songez que je n'ai rien, et ne sais d'où je sors" (Act I, scene VIII). This theme is taken up again in Act I, scene IX with Lycandre's rather tantalising reassurance: "La fortune se lasse/ De vous persécuter." This is followed by a series of more precise statements, such as: "Et, respectant en vous une haute naissance,/ Ils brigueraient l'honneur d'une telle alliance" and leads finally to the remark that Lisette's father is alive: "Il respire, il vous aime,/ Et viendra de ce lieu vous retirer lui-même." A further strand is thus added to a plot which is already relatively intricate; in this instance, however, the effect is the result of suspense as Lycandre refuses to complete his account:

18 "Ils" refers to Valère's parents.
Interest which is aroused, but not satisfied, here is maintained in Act II, scene II with the discussion between Lisette and Valère, and then carried over into scenes III and IV, since Valère mentions to Isabelle that Lisette is of higher birth than they imagine. This subject, allowed to rest for a time during Acts II and III, re-emerges in Act III, scene V with Lisette's remark to the Comte: "Il faut que je vous parle; on me l'ordonne; et moi,/ J'en meurs d'envie aussi;/ mais je ne sais pourquoi," and finally reaches a climax in Act IV, scene III. Here again Lisette's allusions to her inexplicable concern for the Comte recall the enigma of her own origins, since both are shrouded in uncertainty, and once introduced, Lisette's identity becomes the central issue of the scene. Under pressure, Lycandre gives a long account of the circumstances of her father's life, admitting finally that he is her father. This part of the action is therefore built up over a considerable period of time and the tension, increased by Lycandre's preamble, is only released with his confession. The "discovery" is not merely a convenient device for bringing the play to a close; the action is dependent upon it.

While the audience is now in full possession of the facts, the majority of characters on stage are not and this dramatic irony underlies the closing section. Indeed, at the end of
Act IV and beginning of Act V, due to the sudden and unexplained capitulation of Mme Lisimon, there are no more than two elements in the intrigue, namely the correction of the Comte and the necessity of revealing that Lisette comes from a noble family. Act V thus has a clear line and moves steadily towards the humiliation of the Comte and the disclosure of the bond which unites him, Lycandre and Lisette.

Part of Le Glorieux relies therefore on the creation of mystery at the start, on reminders of its existence at certain points in the action and on the gradual elucidation of both characters and spectators. The intrigue derives not from conflict but from suspense, itself dependent upon the deliberate and indispensible ploy of omitting to divulge essential detail. Even in the cast list, for example, Lycandre is merely a "vieillard inconnu" and Lisette the "femme de chambre d'Isabelle." The effect on the structure of the play of this element of mystery is marked: it naturally makes the plot more intricate, but it also means that the intrigue revolving around Lisette and Lycandre, and, to some extent, around the Comte, must inevitably resemble a slowly unfolding story, a story which results, furthermore, from events which have taken place long before the opening of the play. The comedy is no longer an entity in itself. Its action relies on techniques belonging essentially to narrative fiction.

If the enigma surrounding the identity of an important protagonist is one component only of Le Glorieux, that associated with the central characters of Nivelle de la Chaussée's La Fausse Antipathie is fundamental to the entire play. In
the absence of any real dramatic potential in the relationship between Damon and Léonore, the playwright uses in constructing his plot the device of leaving in ignorance those involved in the action: crucial questions go unanswered, particularly with regard to Damon, who mentions neither the name of his wife nor the circumstances of his wedding. A reference to either of these and the play would, of course, be over. Thus, despite Orphise's hostility towards Léonore, we have the makings of an intrigue founded on the necessity to unravel a mystery.

Confrontations based on genuine or deep-rooted antipathy, are replaced by suspense, which is created firstly by the fact that the real names of Damon and Léonore are never employed in a way that would clarify the situation and secondly by tantalising or ambiguous remarks. In Act I, scene VI, for instance, Damon adds to the announcement that he is married, the observation: "Mais enfin/ Un prompt événement peut changer mon destin," and Finette, returning at the end of Act I with papers from Damon's lawyer, says: "Je ne sais pas pourquoi j'ose encore espérer" (Act I, scene VIII). The idea is thus sown that new facts remain to be uncovered and that the unexpected is possible; the tension at the close of the first act is indeed increased in Act II with Damon's: "Faisons cesser enfin le bruit de mon trépas" (Act II, scene V), and his news that his wife is seeking a divorce. If this suggests a happy outcome and thus an end to the action, the direction of the plot is abruptly altered with Géronte's revelation that Léonore's husband is still alive. This peripeteia introduces a further factor into a play which continually raises
expectations without satisfying them and which depends on avoiding all allusion, in the first acts, to the names Sainflore and Silvie. Act III, however, is founded on a misunderstanding between Damon and Orphise, arising out of the latter's question: "Quoi? voulez-vous d'honorer Silvie," (Act III, scene III) whom Damon naturally takes to be his wife, whereas Orphise is referring to Léonore.

We have seen that much of *La Fausse Antipathie* is contingent upon debates about a moral issue between Damon and Léonore and might thus be said to stem from a clash of outlook. As the title makes perfectly plain, however, the conflict between the lovers is in fact non-existent and comes into being purely because they are unaware of reality. It is essential that key facts be kept secret if the action is to continue; the devices outlined above ensure some kind of plot. Relying on the use of two assumed names, the intrigue is one of twists and turns, as new information and new events are brought into the play and additional, but insufficient, detail is given to audience and characters alike, producing a series of reversals. The spectator may guess the truth, but in common with the major protagonists, he is not enlightened until the end of the play and can therefore participate in the confusion and uncertainty.

*Mélanide* might be based on two relationships of antipathy, the first being that of Darviane and Mélanide, the second that of the lovers, Rosalie and Darviane. In neither case, however, is the antagonism real: Rosalie's resistance to Darviane is occasioned by her decision to obey her mother and the second relationship is ultimately one of affection.
In this instance it is crucial that the nature of the bond between the characters be concealed for as long as possible, since the revelation to Darviane that Mélanide is his mother immediately destroys all hostility. For the purposes of plot a certain mystery is created around Mélanide in the very opening speeches, with Dorisée's question:

Mais auriez-vous mieux fait de demeurer tranquille
Au fond de la Bretagne, où, depuis si long-temps,
Vous avez essuyé des chagrins si constans?
(Act I, scene I).

In addition there is scanty detail only about the Marquis d'Orvigny, intended by Dorisée as a husband for Rosalie: we merely have his statement to Théodon:

Je vous ai raconté
L'histoire de ce triste & secret hymenée,
Dont on me fit briser la chaîne fortunée.
(Act II, scene I).

accompanied by a reference to his efforts to find his former partner.

At the beginning of the second act there are thus two important characters about whom several protagonists and the audience are in ignorance. The plot is taken forward, and curiosity somewhat satisfied, in Act II, scene III, which contains an outline by Mélanide to Théodon of part of her former life. The action here, however, is furnished entirely by narrative, with suspense created by Théodon's remark: "(à part) Le Marquis, à peu près, m'a tenu ce langage." A new possibility is also introduced with his question:

"N'êtes-vous pas un fils?" The tension produced by this first statement ends in anti-climax when Mélanide informs Théodon that her husband's name was the Comte d'Ormancé, only to be recreated between scenes IV and V by Mélanide's discovery
that the Marquis is indeed the man she had loved seventeen years previously. Act II is thus made up of a series of incidents which begin to complete the events which occurred so long before the opening of the play. It unfolds like a novel, depending on an increase in information, rather than on a series of scenes which are confrontations or conspiracies.

This is the pattern of the play as a whole. As in La Fausse Antipathie, the plot is based on reversals and the sudden introduction or realisation of facts which change its direction and outcome: Mélanide discovers at the end of Act II, for example, that she has a rival in Rosalie and the Marquis learns in Act III, scene VI that Mélanide is still alive. In essence, therefore, the intrigue consists not of clashes of those in opposition, for these are systematically avoided on stage, but of episodes in a story, following the lives of the major protagonists as they evolve out of the initial situation, dependent itself on a fairly complex sequence of events prior to the start of the play, which are not revealed in the exposition.

This is the inevitable result of using mystery to replace real antipathy. Once the original enigma has been established as a source of intrigue, the complete picture can be revealed only gradually to the characters and indeed to the audience. Again there is no intimation of the family bond between the three main protagonists, since Mélanide appears in the "dramatis personae" as "amie de Dorisée," and both the Marquis and Darviane as "amant de Rosalie." Mélanide's confession to Théodon: "Voilà tous mes secrets. Ils sont si douloureux/ Qu'il faut les arracher les uns après les autres" (Act IV, scene I), might be said very accurately to describe the
structure of the play.

Without exception, the last works of Nivelle de la Chaussée, from L'École des mères to L'Homme de fortune, all use the technique of obscuring crucial information to provide a kind of drama. L'École des mères, for example, derives its substance from the belief that Marianne is M. and Mme Argant's niece; the audience, admittedly, is told that she is their daughter in Act II, scene VIII, but the dramatist deliberately brings into being a tension on which the rest of the play may be founded by causing M. Argant to demand secrecy of Doligni père:

Sur-tout ne dites point ce que je vous confie;
Pas même à votre fils.

That no more than two characters be aware of the truth is essential; it is indeed difficult to conceive how Nivelle de la Chaussée could have filled out his play were it not for the error of most of the main protagonists, so small is the antagonism between them. Opposition between the characters of husband and wife over a "marquisat" for their son briefly furnishes something of a plot in the second act, it is true, and Doligni père had, at the outset, shown all the authoritarianism of the traditional father. M. Argant yields, however, to the pleadings of his wife and Doligni père, learning that the woman loved by his son is the daughter of an old friend, finds himself in sympathy with Doligni fils by the end of Act II. The latter had in fact stated earlier in the play: "Il cessera d'être inflexible" (Act I, scene I), thus intimating that the clash between father and son was unlikely to prove a serious threat. At the end of Act II there is harmony
amongst most of the major characters and the only obstacle to the lovers' union is Mme Argant.

In such a situation, one possible source of action is irony, that is to say dissimulation or misunderstanding. Thus in Act III, scene VII, M. Argant's announcement that Doligni fils had been promised to his daughter - thought by all but himself and Doligni père to be in a convent - throws Marianne into confusion and allows Mme Argant to consider herself triumphant: "(à part) Je sçais qu'il aime ailleurs; feignons." Playing along, therefore, with M. Argant's plans until they are rejected by Doligni fils, she leaves the stage before the disclosure of the facts:

MAD. ARGANT
à Messieurs Argant & Doligni père
Tâchez une autre fois de vous arranger mieux.

MR. ARGANT
La méprise n'est pas telle qu'on l'imagine.
Sçachez, à votre tour . . . .

MAD. ARGANT, en s'en allant
Ah! ne m'arrêtez plus.
Allez, vous auriez dû m'épargner ce refus.
(Act III, scene VIII).

This abrupt departure and the manner in which M. Argant had broached the subject in the first place, 19 are necessary if any dramatic potential is to remain in the play, for without

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19At the end of Act III, scene VI, he says: "Cette fille, en un mot, que la prévention/ La plus injuste & la plus dure/ A peinte à votre idée avec tous les défauts/ Qu'on peut puiser au fond d'une clôture ..." and is interrupted by the entrance of M. Doligni. He continues at the beginning of Act III, scene VII: "Quels qu'ils soient, vrais ou faux,/ Telle qu'elle est enfin, on offre de la prendre:/ Et le fils de Monsieur, si vous le permettez . . . ./ Avec plaisir deviendra votre gendre," thus omitting to reveal the identity of their daughter and the fact that marriage to Doligni fils would be entirely acceptable.
them a relationship of affection would immediately bring
Mme Argant and Marianne and terminate the action.

Antipathy of a sort thus underlies the plot here, but it
is an antipathy which is false, kept alive only by artificial
devices, designed to maintain suspense for as long as possible.
For this very reason, it is scarcely a framework for the
entire play. As a result, a number of different strands con-
stitute the plot of *L'École des mères*: Act II, for example,
depends in some measure on discussion between Mme Argant and
the Marquis about the latter's future, a theme which is taken
up again in Act III, scene IV, when mention is made of a pos-
sible match for the Marquis. In addition, much of the play,
from the end of Act II onwards, revolves around Marianne's
distress at the inhumanity of Mme Argant. Furthermore two
incidents quite unconnected with the intrigue as it has evolved
by the end of Act III are introduced by the dramatist to
move the action forward, namely the rumour that Marianne is
not the niece but the mistress of M. Argant, which lends
substance to Act IV, and the elopement of the Marquis, made
known at the beginning of Act V. *L'École des mères* relies
partly on progress towards enlightenment of all its characters
from a mystery or false premise consciously created by the
playwright at the start, but it also requires incidents out-
side the scope of the initial action if it is to have any
weight in the last two acts.

The complexity of structure to which the lack of any
genuine antipathy gives rise in *L'École des mères* is equally
striking in *La Gouvernante*. There is certainly hostility
between Angélique and her mother, the Gouvernante of the
title, and it stems from the latter's insistence that
Angélique renounce all interest in Sainville. Yet, as we
have seen, dislike and suspicion disappear entirely once
Angélique discovers that she is La Gouvernante's daughter.
Dramatic tension had also seemed likely between the characters
of father and son, in view of the Baronne's remark in Act II,
scene X: "Sainville est dépendant;/ Jamais il n'obtiendroit
l'aveu du Président," and of the Président's commands to
Sainville in Act I. The relationship between them, however, is
one of real sympathy. The Président indeed, guessing the
truth about Angélique's identity and family ties in Act IV,
seems to destroy what potential had existed in the disagree­
ment between himself and his son with this assurance to
Sainville:

Eh! rapportez-vous-en, de grace, à votre
père:
Croyez que je prendrai le plus sage parti;
Bientôt de votre sort vous serez averti.
(Act IV, scene IV).

The intrigue derives in the first place from the mystery
surrounding Angélique:

Au lieu de bénir chaque jour
La main qui vous a fait sortir de ce séjour,
Où les infortunés de qui vous êtes née.
Dès vos plus jeunes ans vous ont abandon­
née,
Vous songez à rentrer dans le sein de
l'ennui?
(Act I, scene I).

This speech from Juliette establishes uncertainty as to
Angélique's origins, an uncertainty which is hardly removed by
La Gouvernante's account of her family history in Act II,
scene II. On the contrary, her announcement that Angélique's
father was killed in battle and her refusal to respond to
Angélique's tentative: "Sans doute que depuis un si malheureux
jour, / Elle n'a pu survivre à ce coup si funeste ..."20 only serve to increase the enigma of Angélique's birth and background. The audience, it is true, may begin to surmise the truth after La Gouvernante's monologue in Act II, scene I, but none of the characters on stage is at this point aware of it. The action can once again turn on gradual revelation and, as is the case in this play, on gradual understanding on the part of the characters themselves. La Gouvernante's confession to Angélique, for instance, does not occur until the beginning of Act V, suspense of a kind thus being maintained for the greater part of the play.

A further intrigue, also characterised by mystery, is added to and finally complements this central plot. It concerns the Président and a judgment made many years before the start of the play, which deprived a family of both money and status. Here, there is a slow build-up of tension over several acts, as the suspicions of audience and protagonists alike are aroused. In Act I, for example, we have a despairing question from the Président:

Mais se peut-il qu'enfin nul espoir ne vous reste,
Et qu'en dix ou douze ans à peine révolus,
Des gens d'un si grand nom ne se retrou-
vent plus?

(Act I, scene II).

Moreover, his statement that "le défunt avoit une femme, une fille," is followed by the Baronne's hesitant:

J'ai bien quelques soupçons; mais ils sont si légers,
Ils sont si dépourvus ...

All these remarks provide a context against which to set La

20 Angélique is here inquiring about her mother. La Gouvernante replies: "Ne comptez plus sur elle, & revenons à vous."
Gouvernante's cry in the first scene of the following act:
"Grands Dieux! lorsque j'y pense, étoit-ce là mon sort?"
Interest created in this manner is intensified by La Gouvernante's explanation to Angélique of the necessity for placing her in a convent:

Vos parens ruinés par un procès fatal,
Furent forcés de faire un si grand sacrifice.
(Act II, scene II).

The two aspects of this plot, already too close to suggest mere coincidence, are brought together in Act III, scene IX with the Baronne's challenge to La Gouvernante: "Vous êtes sûrement la Comtesse d'Arsfleurs," the latter being the woman sought by the Président. This discovery does not, however, conclude the action. On the contrary, La Gouvernante refuses to inform Angélique of the truth, asserting that:

On n'est point malheureux, quand on peut ignorer
Tout ce que l'on pourrait avoir à déplorer.
(Act III, scene IX).

To the suspense made possible here is added an argument at the close of Act III between La Gouvernante who has returned her compensation and the Président, aware only that his victims have been found, but unaware of their identity. This situation can be exploited in Act IV, since the Président opposes and then begins to regard favourably the union of Sainville and Angélique, as enlightenment comes to him:

Plus j'y songe .... Ah! grands Dieux!
... allons chez la Baronne
La forcer de céder à mon empressement;
Il faut que j'en obtienne un éclaircissement.
(Act IV, scene IV).

Clarification of the mystery at the heart of the play is
indeed always the central issue. To it are added tiffs of a superficial nature between Sainville and Angélique, inspired by La Gouvernante, and a certain struggle between this character and Sainville, as the latter attempts to win Angélique. All these threads are brought together in Act V, when La Gouvernante, who had been motivated throughout by pride rather than ill-will or contempt for Sainville, yields to the entreaties of the rest.

Many of the plays which we have been examining tend, by virtue of the devices used by the dramatist, to be episodic in nature. There are still others in the new genre which would be difficult to place in the categories we have so far established and which seem to be made up of a series of sometimes disjointed incidents. In Destouches's *Le Philosophe marié*, for example, the only true conflict is that between Ariste and Géronte and even this, as we have seen, can be easily destroyed by Mélite's appeal to Géronte for understanding. His capitulation must be delayed, of course, until the final act and to that extent his authoritarianism and the threat he poses to Ariste's happiness might be said to provide the action of the play. He does not appear, however, until Act II, scene VI and at this point merely announces his plan of marrying off Ariste: the audience is aware of a latent clash of wills, but as far as the plot is concerned, battle is not yet joined. Moreover, the potential inherent in this situation is by no means exploited immediately; at the end of Act II and beginning of Act III, the intrigue centres on the arrival of the Marquis du Laurent, who, against marriage but in love with Mélite, is doubly dangerous to Ariste. As the
latter himself remarks: "Bon! voici nouvelle affaire" (Act II, scene VIII). There follow scenes in which the Marquis taunts Ariste and pays court to his wife. Clearly these are events associated with Ariste's dilemma, but they are intended to make him appear ridiculous and do not in any sense evolve out of real antagonism between the characters. Furthermore, the action subsequently turns to revolve around Céliante and her desire to arouse Damon's jealousy. The relationship of the lovers, which had furnished an important part of Act II, thus again provides some substance here and the possible opposition between Géronte and Ariste does not re-emerge until the end of Act III. Even when conflict has declared itself, however, Lisimmon and Ariste endeavour to reason with Géronte in an effort to delay catastrophe and the argument becomes one about the character and role of the "philosophe".

A number of distinct strands are therefore discernible in this play and the action appears to stem now from the development of relations between Céliante and Damon, now from Mélite's attempts to persuade Ariste to reveal the bond which unites them, now from the mockery of the Marquis du Laurent, his designs on Mélite and Ariste's fear of becoming a butt for satirical comment. In addition, Ariste's distress and self-analysis are, as we have observed, a not insignificant part of this comedy. Most of these different elements are aspects of the problem with which Ariste is confronted, it is true, but they would also seem to be a consequence of Destouches's desire not to emphasise and make use of the hostility between the characters of uncle and nephew.

The theme of L'Enfant prodigue, namely Euphémon fils's moral regeneration, inevitably demands a considerable amount
of discussion. This is scarcely sufficient as substance for the whole play, however, and Euphémon does not in any case appear until the beginning of Act III, Voltaire thus relying on creation of suspense in the first two acts, since there are constant allusions to Euphémon, his misdeeds and probable death. In addition to these and other ingredients which go to make up the opening stages of the play, there is, further, Euphémon père's request that Lise's wedding to Fierenfat be postponed. The action is therefore moving away from the opposition between Lise and Rondon as a new incident is introduced into the intrigue. It gives an indication, of course, of Euphémon père's state of mind and prepares later events; nevertheless, despite Rondon's threat to Lise at the end of Act I, attention now focuses in part at least on a hitherto unexpected occurrence and a different framework from that originally established is possible. It is used, indeed, in Act II scene VI, where Euphémon père, explaining his conduct, gives Lise an opportunity to employ stalling tactics, by refusing to sign a document which disinherits Euphémon fils. The second act also sees the rather sudden arrival of Mme Croupillac, to whom Fierenfat has promised marriage; this is again a diversion from the central issue, but a diversion which once more allows Lise to challenge her father's plan. Conflict between two of the principal characters can thus be said to underlie this act, but it is a conflict fuelled by rather opportune and somewhat unconnected happenings. Moreover, at the close of the act there seems to be little direction for the plot: Rondon's renewed command to Lise had tended

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21 Rondon remarks of Euphémon père: "Il dit qu'il sent une douleur insigne" (Act I, scene V).
to suggest that the play would continue to be founded on ruses for delaying the inevitable by both Lise and Euphémon père. Act III, however, introduces the real subject of the play and it becomes plain that Acts I and II, made up of a number of seemingly unrelated threads, were but the elaborate preparation for the rest, which moves towards harmony between the characters of father and son and reconciliation of sympathetic protagonists. Even here, however, appearances by Mme Croupillac are needed to fill out the action, which, like that of Le philosophe marié, depends on the accumulation of several separate elements.

Plays based on the correction or unmasking of one of their characters are also episodic in structure. Julie's efforts to bring Cléon to a sense of his foolish extravagance constituting almost the whole of Le Dissipateur, for example, the intrigue is comprised of incidents designed to ruin Cléon financially; other characters join the scheme at Julie's request or are used by her, unbeknown to themselves, to achieve her aim. Thus Julie and Finette are in league to gain the Comte's assistance in extracting money from Cléon. The Comte is naturally unaware of Julie's plans, believing himself to be in alliance with her to defeat Cléon. As a result, the opposition which in fact exists in their relationship has virtually no dramatic potential. In addition, Julie is in love with Cléon and acting purely for his own good. There is thus no question of the plot evolving out of antipathy between the central protagonists. Cléon is in any case oblivious of impending ruin and blind to the gravity of the situation until the final catastrophe. This is clearly
essential to the success of Julie's plans, although presumably Cléon could have been apprised of Julie's actions, if not her real motives, and decided to fight her. Indeed, at the end of Act IV, he takes up her challenge at the gambling table with the ironic: "Puisqu'elle veut jouer, nous la ruinerons" (Act IV, scene VI). For most of the play, however, Destouches chooses to leave Cléon in ignorance and the plot takes the form of an accumulation of events and tricks devised to destroy him and discredit his friends. Furthermore, these events often occur off-stage and are reported to characters and audience alike. The play terminates with the systematic humiliation of Cléon in Act V, the previous action being a deliberate preparation for it.

Although the intrigue of Le Dissipateur derives from the implementation of Julie's schemes and can be said to resemble a slowly unfolding story, it is nevertheless interesting to note the substance of Act III. It revolves around the sudden appearance of Géronte, an uncle from whom Cléon is expecting to inherit. His inopportune arrival in the middle of the play has a purpose, in that his anger with Cléon's way of life causes Géronte to cut him off. Disaster is thus rendered more imminent. Much is made of this incident, however, as the servants endeavour to convince Géronte of a change of heart in Cléon, only to see their efforts brought to nothing through Cléon's inept behaviour. It would seem, therefore, that to provide variety, or simply because Julie's aims are not sufficient as a basis for the entire action, Destouches considered it necessary to introduce new material at this point. This procedure makes a work already dependent upon a series of
events, rather than on a clash of characters, each attempting to gain his own personal ends at the other's expense, even more episodic in nature.

The action in Gresset's Le Méchant, which has as its main aim the unmasking and, if possible, the "correction" of Cléon, unfolds in a household at odds with itself, as we learn from Lisette's opening remarks to Frontin:

... dans toute la maison
Il règne un air d'aigreur et de division.
... Au lieu de cette aisance
Qu'établissait ici l'entièrre confiance,
On se houde, on s'évite, on bâille, on parle bas;
Et je crains que demain on ne se parle pas.
(Act I, scene I)

Indeed, scenes II and III in Act I immediately betray disagreement between the characters of brother and sister, Géronte and Florise, over the marriage of Chloé, Florise's daughter. In Géronte's assertion:

Sans l'avis de ma sœur, je marierai ma nièce:
C'est sa fille, il est vrai; mais les biens sont à moi:
Je suis le maître enfin.
(Act I, scene II)

we see the old battle for domination within a family, so often at the basis of the comedy in the past. If one of the themes of this play may be said to be the attempt to unite Chloé and Valère, we clearly have a framework of the traditional kind here, since a figure in authority is opposed to the marriage. In addition, outraged by Valère's affected and insolent behaviour in Act III, Géronte too forbids the union.

There is therefore some scope, it would seem, for classic dramatic action, but the possibilities in the situation are not exploited to any significant extent. In the first place,
there is a suggestion of affection between brother and sister; Géronte's claim in Act I, scene II "et puis, j'aime ma sœur," find an echo in Florise's words to Cléon: "Il m'a toujours aimée, et j'aimais à lui plaire ..." (Act II, scene III). As Lisette's statement quoted above appears to imply, the antagonism between the two is of recent occurrence and their relationship is usually one of sympathy. Of greater import as far as the plot is concerned, is Florise's reluctance, expressed in her: "Je ne puis me résoudre à le désespérer ..." (Act II, scene III), to enter into Cléon's schemes to force Géronte to prevent Chloé's marriage and Cléon himself is well aware that he cannot depend on her. Moreover, there is no further encounter between Florise and Géronte on stage until Act V.

Secondly, although Géronte's opposition to the young lovers' desires provides some action in Act IV, in that Valère and Ariste are obliged to persuade him that Valère is not what he had appeared, Géronte's dislike of Valère is not deep-rooted and is easily dispelled. His real attitude to Valère is one of affectionate interest and it is clear from the latter's response to Géronte's initial greeting: "Comment faire?/ Son amitié me touche" (Act III, scene VIII), that he in turn is drawn to Géronte. The antipathy between the two, such as it is, is purely fabricated by Cléon.

It is indeed Cléon who is the true cause of strife, his motive apparently being the pleasure of destroying happiness and creating discord. We return, therefore, to the substance originally proposed for the play, namely the necessity for

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22 In Act II, scene IX he says: "Florise s'en défend; son faible caractère/ Ne sait point embrasser un parti courageux ..."
ridding the household of a morally unacceptable character, reducing him in stature in the process. This makes it no easier to define the structure. There is clearly a kind of conflict underlying the didactic aim, in view of the fact that Cléon, pursuing his ends, and Lisette in league with Ariste, pursuing theirs, are in opposition to each other. The struggle between them, inevitably, cannot be an open and frank clash between characters avowedly hating each other. On the contrary, as Lisette says: "Vraiment, pour mon projet, il ne faut pas qu'il sache/ Le fonds d'aversion qu'avec soin je lui cache" (Act III, scene I). It is essential for her purposes that Cléon believe her to be in collusion with him. Much of the first part of the play, leading to Géronte's break with Valère in Act III, scene IX, is taken up with the preparation of the ground by Cléon and involves a great deal of discussion. Thereafter, Lisette's and Ariste's attempts to discredit Cléon constitute the major part of the plot, beginning in Act IV, scene III with Lisette's suggestion to Florise that she listen unseen to Cléon's real opinion of her—this plan being completed in Act IV, scene IX. Act V is entirely devoted to disabusing Géronte, as Lisette again makes plain:

Dans l'esprit de Florise il (Cléon) est expédié.
Grâce aux conseils d'Ariste, au pouvoir de Chloé,
Valère l'abandonne: ainsi, selon mon compte,
Cléon n'a plus pour lui que l'erreur de Géronte,
Qui par nous tous dans peu saura la vérité.
(Act V, scene I).

This is indeed a very fair description of the course taken by the action as a whole and of the form of the play: because of
its didactic nature, it is episodic since it relies on demonstrating to several protagonists in turn Cléon's perfidy and hypocrisy. The plot in the last two acts is made up of a series of incidents which do not in essence evolve out of each other, but which are devised by Ariste and Lisette with a specific aim in view.

Some substance is provided by Ariste's debates of a moralising tendency with Valère in Act III, scene VI and Act IV, scene IV, together with his efforts to reform Cléon in Act IV, scene VII. After what might be termed the climax to the action in Act III, scene IX, each of the didactic elements in the intrigue is taken forward in turn: the play has a traditional structure, in that everything builds up to the clash between Géronte and Valère, but as we have seen, their antagonism is false. In reality the plot has no one definite line. The focus seems to shift continually as a result of the lack of any clearly defined opposition and the action depends on a number of different strands all bearing equal weight.

While the purpose of the plays just discussed might be called moral analysis, that of Boissy's Le Médecin par occasion (1745) is to unite a pair of lovers in the face of possible resistance. Family opposition to Montval, in love with Lucinde, is implied in Champagne's comment: "Un Amant sans fortune est un monstre pour eux./ Son mérite ne sert qu'à

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23 Lisette had in fact stated at the start of the play: "J'imagine un moyen d'éclairer votre mère/ Sur le fourbe insolent qui la mène aujourd'hui ..." (Act I, scene VI). She is speaking to Chloé about Florise.
redoubler leur crainte" (Act II, scene I). And yet an understanding is quickly established between Montval and the characters in authority. It is achieved by a trick on Montval's part, admittedly, but it is plain nonetheless that the dramatist is avoiding conflict between his major protagonists. The action takes the shape of a series of separate incidents in which Montval "cures" each character, the Marquise's remark in Act III, scene VIII: "Songés qu'après la fille, il faut guérir le père," providing a very adequate summary of the way in which the play is constructed, at least in the first four acts. Montval's aim realised, there is general joy in Act IV, scenes VI and VII, the Baron and Lucinde, both recovered, meeting on stage and delighting in each other's new-found contentment.

Further substance has thus to be devised for Act V and a play which is already episodic in structure now moves in a completely different direction, depending for the rest of its action on a misunderstanding between Montval and the others. The way in which the situation is finally resolved casts a most interesting light on the form of the comedy. In Act V, scene XI, Montval approaches Cléon, who is his rival for the hand of Lucile, appealing to him, as if on behalf of another, to give up his claim to the Baron's daughter. Conflict between Cléon, an old friend of the family, and Montval had been suggested on Cléon's long-awaited return in Act III and again in Act IV, scene VII when Cléon proposes to Lucile. In

24 The subjects of this statement are the Baron, Lucile's father and the Marquise, her aunt.

25 They believe for some time that the woman Montval wishes to marry is the Marquise.
neither case is it exploited in the plot. An open clash between the suitors is systematically avoided by the playwright, and this explains the necessity for the misapprehension at the basis of Act V. Moreover, in this act, the intrigue is prolonged and suspense maintained by the fact that Montval does not immediately divulge that it is he who wishes to marry Lucile. Furthermore his plea, couched in language characteristic of the time:

Signalez vos vertus par un effort nouveau;
Et de deux vrais amans protégez la constance.
Je vous répons, Monsieur, de leur reconnaissance;
Vous goûterez le bien de faire des heureux,
En est-il un plus grand pour un cœur généreux?
(Act V, scene XI)

is heeded by Cléon, who renounces his claim to Lucile and unites all around him in harmony. The solution is thus brought about because, and not in spite, of a rival, the sympathy and solicitude of the close reflecting attitudes which had existed throughout the play.

It is not easy, of course, to categorise the comedies we have been considering in terms of one single device. This approach has been adopted in order to give some impression of the most striking techniques used by the comic dramatists in the first half of the eighteenth century in default of opposition of characters. Their plays often resort to two, if not more, of the sources of action analysed above. Le Curieux impertinent, for example, may be said to follow the
unfolding of a love story, but it also exploits mystery or "irony" in the form of deliberate deception of one character by another. This is the case indeed in many of the works which seem to be based on a love intrigue. Le Glorieux, with its debates on moral issues, and the enigma concerning the identity of Lisette, the whole action depending on events which took place before the opening of the play, moves between one theme and another, one relationship or situation and another, gradually working towards the humiliation of the Comte. Le Préjugé à la mode also includes moral analyses and debate, together with narrative about Dorante's past and relies for its intrigue upon unexpected incidents and misapprehension, "reversals" and "irony".

Discussion of subjects important to the age is, as we have seen, an integral part of the comedy and it is clearly introduced into the genre quite deliberately by the major dramatists at this time. If, on occasion, one may suspect it of being a convenient means of padding out a play, there is no doubt that the desire to examine a particular notion through debate between characters and the wish to avoid serious clashes and deep-rooted antipathy complement each other perfectly. Moreover, in the comedies whose aim is to depict the regeneration of one of the protagonists and where the charactering administering the lesson is, by and large, in sympathy with the one to be admonished, there is little scope for an intrigue dependent on conflict. Such plays rely on the inclusion of extraneous matter or on coincidence, but all depend as much on words as deeds.
Moralising is scarcely sufficient, however, to fill out the action of an entire play. For a number of reasons, the comedy thus becomes episodic, in the sense that it is contingent upon an accumulation of unprepared, perhaps unconnected "péripéties", and weaves its way between a number of separate plots, all, more often than not, of equal weight. Indeed, it is not infrequently impossible to isolate one central intrigue in the works we have been discussing. If we are expecting a play which develops inevitably out of a situation established in the exposition, we shall not find it in the majority of the new comedies. Even when the traditional device of "discovery" is used, the plots cannot be looked upon as self-contained; they demand narratives of greater dimensions than themselves. As Collé had suggested, there are resemblances between the new comedy and the "romantic" comedy of the seventeenth century. In spite of the use of the same structural devices, however, the new comedy is distinguished by its moral content from the old comedies of plot.

26 See p. 356 above.
CONCLUSION

In his "Lettre À M. le Comte de L'XXX" Destouches states:

Après avoir essayé de l'imiter dans ses nobles élans, j'avais cru pouvoir marcher sur les traces de ce grand homme, en volant quelquefois, comme lui, terre à terre. 1

The subject of this comparison is Molière - "l'incomparable Molière" - and much might lead us to believe that the two dramatists share the same concept of comedy. Destouches gives this advice to the Chevalier de B'xxx, for example: "... ne perdez jamais de vue l'objet de la comédie, qui est de représenter naïvement les mœurs de nos contemporains." 2 Further, in the Prologue to "Scènes de Thalie et de Melpomène," Thalie claims: "Corriger les humains est mon unique emploi;/ Et je les peins d'après nature ..." 3 Both these statements might recall an observation by Dorante in La Critique de l'École des femmes:

Mais lorsque vous peignez les hommes, il faut peindre d'après nature. On veut que ces portraits ressemblent; et vous n'avez rien fait, si vous n'y faites reconnaître les gens de votre siècle" (Scene VI).

Moreover, many of Destouches's Prefaces and letters betray, as do the titles of the plays themselves, a preoccupation with comedy of character, for which, one might argue, Molière also had a predilection.

Nevertheless, similarities between Molière and Destouches,


or indeed any other playwright of the first half of the eighteenth century, are few and the comic genre has undergone a transformation from a number of points of view. In the first place, it no longer opposes characters in irreconcilable fashion: it unites them with tender feelings which it endeavours in turn to inspire in the spectator. Theories of aesthetics, promulgating the superiority of a capacity for feeling, and theories of morals, founded on a belief that man, a feeling and not a thinking being, is drawn by instinct to his fellows, create a climate in which antagonism is both distressing and unacceptable. Rarely, it is true, do protagonists declare themselves "sensibles", but others comment on their capacity for feeling or their solicitude and thus indicate that they possess the quality so highly valued by the age.

"Sensibilité" also underlies what might be considered the most characteristic feature of the new comedy, namely its moralising tendency. Admittedly, Lanson has suggested that in this respect the theatre was usurping the role of the Church, which had lost its moral authority and Piron does refer to the author of La Fausse Antipathie as the "R. P. de La Chaussée." Evidence that playwrights regarded the theatre as a substitute for the Church is not easy to find, however, and

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5 See a note which would seem to have been written by Piron himself to the "Epître au Même. (Monsieur le Comte de Livry). Il étoit à Fontainebleu" (Oeuvres complètes d'Alexis Piron, ed. R. de Juvigny (Paris, 1776) VI, 99).
Destouches, at least, was a religious man, who would perhaps be unlikely to set himself up as a rival to it. It is equally difficult to prove that his audience, or that of any other dramatist of the time, were unbelievers for whom the Church and religion had little relevance; religious poetry was after all enjoying great popularity at precisely the moment that the new comedy was at its height.

The urge to assert the supremacy of certain qualities and to administer a lesson depend in the first instance on a capacity for feeling and on the desire to see all characters joined together in the possession of the same moral standards. In some cases there is a specific reference to the "heart" as the source of a moral judgment, in others the character who makes a moral pronouncement or who seeks to reform a libertine has revealed a "sensibilité" of a more general kind. In this context, several areas remain for further investigation. In particular, the use on the stage of some of the most important terms of the age might form the subject of a more detailed study than has been possible here, where relationships between characters, the main concern of sentimental morals, has been the central issue. There can be no doubt, however, that the new comedy becomes serious, if not tearful. Tears mark the superiority of characters aware of their own value, resigned to the blows of a fate beyond their control; the situations in which they find themselves illustrate more often than not the injustice of the destiny which seems implacably opposed to them. The comedy no longer affords an opportunity for laughter.

The plays of Marivaux, on the other hand, although
influenced by "sensibilité", are those of a true comic 
dramatist. Attinger has asked what would seem to be the most 
interesting question here: "Pourquoi ... sa sensibilité 
échappe-t-elle à la sensiblerie générale, bien qu'il ait 
abordé quelques thèmes chers au larmoyant?" He himself 
proposes that the antics of Arlequin, the use of the mask, 
 purely technical devices such as the "chassée-croisé" and the 
parallelism between master and servant, might provide the 
answer. The features he discusses may be insufficient to 
account for Marivaux's originality. Plays such as Le Prince 
travesti (1724) or La Mère confidente (1735), in which Arlequin 
or Lubin have roles of pure farce, remain serious; Le Petit-
maître corrigé (1734) treats a theme common in the new plays 
and is nevertheless comic. To Attinger's suggestions may be 
added the importance of dramatic irony in Marivaux's plays. 
Marivaux endows his characters with a capacity for feeling, 
but he also attributes to them a fear of commitment, stemming 
perhaps from pride, perhaps from recent unhappiness. The 
resistance to love is such indeed that many protagonists are 
unaware of the extent to which they have become implicated in 
a new relationship. Thus the discrepancy between word and deed 
can be exploited by the dramatist to create laughter for the 
spectator, always one step ahead of the characters on the stage. 
Feelings which are ambiguous and inchoate for the psychologist 
produce comedy for the playwright.

Further, the ambivalence of the central relationships, 
which take the form of a mixture of sympathy and antipathy, 
gives to Marivaux's plays a characteristic structure. Pulled

6G. Attinger, L'Esprit de la Commedia dell'arte dans le 
in two different directions, ill-at-ease with themselves, Marivaux's lovers instinctively attack the cause of their distress, that is to say the very object to whom they are attracted. This aggression can be used as a basis for the plot, which, in Marivaux's hands, moves from one confrontation between the protagonists to the next, until provocation and argument, destroying antagonism, paradoxically unite the lovers. With a confession of love, however reluctant, both comedy and action cease.

The complexity of the relations between the characters in Marivaux thus results in a striking simplicity of intrigue. The works of his contemporaries provide us with a complete contrast. In the plays which have been the principal subject of this study, the relationships between the protagonists, whether they be members of the same family, lovers or husband and wife, are understood by the characters concerned, uncomplicated and easily defined; even where a relationship changes from antipathy to sympathy, the transformation is sudden and carries with it neither anxiety nor torment. This feature of the plays which we have analysed would seem to demand complexity of intrigue. Lacking any real, unshakeable antipathy or, as in Marivaux, antipathy which is overcome by conflict, the new comedies are encumbered by, indeed constructed on, a long series of incidents which are often unexpected or unconnected with the situation as it is outlined in the exposition.

In his *L'Envieux* Destouches makes a distinction between a "pièce d'intrigue" and a "pièce de caractère," in which "il ne faut qu'une intrigue simple, naturelle, peu chargée d'incidents ..." (Scene XIV). Such, he believes, is *Le Philosophe*
marié, which is the play under discussion in L'Envieux. A speech by the Marquis in the same work describing a "pièce d'intrigue," much inferior to the comedy of character in Destouches's eyes, might more adequately characterise the structure of Le Philosophe marié, however, and indeed of the new comedy as a whole:

L'objet principal, dans une pièce d'intrigue, c'est de surprendre par un enchaînement d'aventures qui tiennent le spectateur en haleine, et forment un embarras qui croît toujours jusqu'au dénouement. Comme il ne s'agit dans ces sortes de pièces que de les charger d'incidents, ils en font ordinairement tout le mérite; les mœurs et les caractères n'y étant touchés que superficiellement. (Scene XIV).

Whether or not it is the aim of dramatists in the first half of the eighteenth century to create comedies of this kind, they often find themselves obliged to do so by virtue of their concept of human nature. Simplicity of character and relationships of sympathy produce a plot which is intricate, not to say unwieldy: "sensibilité" has a radical effect on the form of comic drama.
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