Moliére in Denmark, Then and Now
Annelise Leysieffer
THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

MOLIÈRE IN DENMARK, THEN AND NOW

BY
ANNELISE LEYSIEFFER

A Dissertation submitted to the
Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Degree Awarded:
Spring Semester, 2007

Copyright © 2007
Annelise Leysieffer
All Rights Reserved
The members of the Committee approve the dissertation of Annelise Leysieffer on February 1, 2007.

William J. Cloonan
Professor Directing Dissertation

Dennis D. Moore
Outside Committee Member

Alec G. Hargreaves
Committee Member

Mark F. Pietralunga
Committee Member

Mary Karen Dahl
Committee Member

Approved:

William J. Cloonan, Chair, Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics

Joseph A. Travis, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

The Office of Graduate Studies has verified and approved the above named committee members.
I dedicate this dissertation to my husband Fred Leysieffer as a thank you for his constant help, unfailing support, patience and encouragement during the past many years, enabling me to finish my Ph.D.

Annelise
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank the Danish theatre professionals and scholars without whom it would not have been possible to write this dissertation. I want to thank the managing theatre directors, directors, actors, professors, translators, journalists and a museum curator, who have all been tremendously helpful, open and welcoming and who have given me a fantastic insight into how Danish theatre is produced. They are: Kim Bjarke, Klaus Bondam, Asger Bonfils, Pernille Grumme, Frede Snippen Gulbrandsen, Emil Hansen, Preben Harris, Klaus Hoffmeyer, Eucun Johannessen, Jesper Kjær, Ebbe Knudsen, Lars Knutzon, Jesper Langberg, Peter Langdal, Dr. Klaus Neiiendam, Dr. Erik A. Nielsen, Ghita Nørby, Ulla Gjedde Palmgren, Dr. John Pedersen, Ida Poulsen, Jens Smærup Sørensen, Catrine Telle, Alexa Ther, Kasper Wilton and Vibeke Wrede. I want to thank the immensely talented scenographers for letting me photograph their designs to add a new dimension to the dissertation. They are Louise Beck, Karin Betz, Camilla Bjørnvad, Marie i Dali, Rikke Juellund, Lars Juhl and Nina Schiøttz, and I thank the photographers, who all have given me permission to use their photos in the dissertation. I also thank the three theatre critics Marianne Kjær, Lene Kryger and Rikke Rottensten.

Grateful thanks go to Alec Hargreaves and to the Ada Belle Winthrop-King Endowed Memorial Fund for providing me with funding for my many trips to Denmark, enabling me to conduct research in the archives and libraries and to interview the variety of theatre professionals mentioned above together with a few other people. Grateful thanks are also extended to my daughter Beth Leysieffer for her editing and grammatical advice throughout the writing process. I want to particularly thank my dissertation director Bill Cloonan, whose careful guidance over the past many years has brought me to the final chapter in my education. Many thanks also to the dissertation committee members who have all given me insightful advice, to Mary Karen Dahl, Dennis Moore and Mark Pietralunga.

Annalie Leysieffer
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures ........................................................................................................ vii
Abstract .................................................................................................................. x

**PREFACE** ........................................................................................................... 1

  History .................................................................................................................. 2
  Ludvig Holberg ........................................................... 6
  L’Avare .............................................................................................................. 9
  Tartuffe .............................................................................................................. 15
  L’École des femmes ............................................................................................ 19
  Le Bourgeois gentilhomme ................................................................................ 21
  Les Fourberies de Scapin ................................................................................... 25
  Le Misanthrope ................................................................................................ 26

**CHAPTER ONE. L’AVARE** ................................................................................. 29

  L’Avare 1724 ...................................................................................................... 32
  Translation Excerpts ......................................................................................... 35
  Examples From Recent Translations ................................................................ 43
  Different Conclusions in Recent Productions .................................................. 46
  Costumes and Stage Designs .......................................................................... 49
    Folketeatret 1974 ............................................................................................ 49
    Nørrebros Teater 1996 .................................................................................... 51
    Odense Teater 2003 ....................................................................................... 54

**CHAPTER TWO. TARTUFFE** ............................................................................ 63

  Translations ........................................................................................................ 64
  The Tartuffe Persona and Scenography ............................................................. 67
    Aarhus Teater 1962 ......................................................................................... 68
    Folketeatret 1986 ........................................................................................... 70
    Betty Nansen Teatret 1989-90 ....................................................................... 74
    Théâtre du Soleil 1996 ................................................................................... 79
    Aalborg Teater 1996 ...................................................................................... 80
    Odense Teater 2001-02 .................................................................................. 84
    The Next Tartuffe? ......................................................................................... 93

**CHAPTER THREE. L’ÉCOLE DES FEMMES** .................................................. 95

  Les Maximes du Mariage .................................................................................... 97
  Translation Examples ....................................................................................... 100
  Betty Nansen Teatret 1983 ................................................................................ 103
  Jørgen Blakstad Tournéen 1990 ....................................................................... 105
LIST OF FIGURES

1. L’Avare flier for opening night September 23, 1722 ............................ 30
2. 1724 L’Avare ..................................................................................... 30
3. Ove Sprogøe as Harpagon at Folketeatret ......................................... 50
4. Harpagon drawing by Erik Werner ..................................................... 50
5. Jesper Langberg as Harpagon at Norrebro Teater .............................. 51
6. Elin Reimer as Frosine and Jesper Langberg as Harpagon ............... 52
7. Jesper Asholt as Cléante and Marina Bouras as Elise ....................... 52
8. Marina Bouras as Elise ...................................................................... 53
9. Marina Bouras as Elise, Peter Jorde as Valère, Elin Reimer as Frosine, Peter Gantzler as La Flèche, Trine Pallesen as Mariane and Jesper Asholt as Cléante 53
10. Peter Jorde as Valère ....................................................................... 53
11. Preben Harris as Harpagon .............................................................. 56
12. Harpagon drawing by Hjørdis Plato ................................................ 56
13. Mette Horn as Frosine and Preben Harris as Harpagon ................... 56
14. Ole Møllegaard as Anselme and Laura Kold as Mariane ................. 57
15. Siblings: Lars Simonsen as Cléante and Mette Kolding as Elise .. 57
16. Laura Kold as Mariane, Lars Simonsen as Cléante, Mette Kolding as Elise and Anders Gjellerup Koch as Valère ........................................ 57
17. Preben Harris as Harpagon and Mette Horn as Frosine ................... 58
18. Rikke Bilde as Madam Claude ........................................................ 58
19. Kurt Dreyer as Mester Jacob and Mads M. Nielsen as La Flèche .... 58
20. Stage design by Camilla Bjørnvad .................................................... 59
21. Stucco roses by Camilla Bjørnvad ................................................... 59
22. Grey box by Camilla Bjørnvad ........................................................ 59
23. 1726 Tartuffe Lille Grønnegadeteatret ......................................... 63
24. Hanne Ribens as Elmire, John Hahn-Petersen as Tartuffe and Troels Munk as Orgon ................................................................. 68
25. John Hahn-Petersen as Orgon and Niels Hinrichsen as Cléante .... 71
26. Lisbet Dahl as Elmire and Waage Sandø as Tartuffe ....................... 71
27. John Hahn-Petersen as Orgon and Lisbet Dahl as Elmire ............... 71
28. Marianne Høgsbro as Dorine and Lillian Tillegren as Madame Pernelle .... 72
29. Waage Sandø as Tartuffe and John Hahn-Petersen as Orgon ....... 72
30. Waage Sandø as Tartuffe and Niels Hinrichsen as Cléante .......... 73
31. Ulla Henningsen as Elmire ............................................................ 75
32. Elmire’s costume by Karin Betz ..................................................... 75
33. Jørgen Reenberg as Tartuffe and Morten Grunwald as Orgon ....... 76
34. Tartuffe’s costume by Karin Betz ................................................... 76
35. Johan Rabaeus as Cléante ............................................................... 78
36. Cléante’s costume by Karin Betz .................................................... 78
37. Costumes for Valère, Damis and Mariane by Karin Betz ............... 78
38. Entire cast for Tartuffe at Aalborg Teater in 1996 ......................... 81
39. Ghita Lehrmann as Elmire and Morten Staugaard as Tartuffe ...... 83
40. Michael Brostrup as Valère and Ebbe Trenskow as Orgon ............ 83
41. Helle Dolleris as Mariane, Joan Henningsen as Dorine and Michael Brostrup as Valère ................................................................. 83
42. Entire cast for Tartuffe at Odense Teater in 2002 ............................................. 86
43. Elmire’s two costumes by Louise Beck ...................................................... 88
44. Madame Pernelle’s costume by Louise Beck ........................................... 88
45. Betty Glosted as Elmire and Henrik Larsen as Tartuffe .............................. 88
46. Tartuffe’s two costumes by Louise Beck ................................................ 89
47. Henrik Larsen as Tartuffe, Betty Glosted as Elmire and Henrik Weel as Orgon 89
48. Ove Sprogøe as Arnolphe ......................................................................... 104
49. Agnès and Arnolphe drawing by Hans Bendix .......................................... 104
50. Ove Sprogøe as Arnolphe and Kirsten Lehfeldt as Agnès .......................... 105
51. Jesper Langberg as Arnolphe and Eva Jensen as Agnès ............................ 106
52. Jesper Langberg as Arnolphe and Eva Jensen as Agnès ............................ 106
53. Eva Jensen as Agnès and Martin Elung as Horace .................................... 106
54. Martin Elung as Horace, Hugo Herrestrup as Alain, Susanne Lundberg as Georgette, Eva Jensen as Agnès and Jesper Langberg as Arnolphe .......... 107
55. Jørgen Reenberg as Arnolphe .................................................................. 109
56. Arnolphe’s costume by Rikke Juellund .................................................... 109
57. Jørgen Reenberg as Arnolphe and Sidse Babett Knudsen as Agnès .......... 109
58. Sidse Babett Knudsen as Agnès ............................................................... 110
59. Sidse Babett Knudsen as Agnès and Jørgen Reenberg as Arnolphe .......... 110
60. Jørgen Reenberg as Arnolphe and Sidse Babett Knudsen as Agnès .......... 110
61. Jens Jacob Tychsen as Horace .................................................................. 111
62. Sidse Babett Knudsen as Agnès and Jens Jacob Tychsen as Horace ......... 111
63. Georgette’s costume by Rikke Juellund ................................................... 111
64. Peter Gilsfort as Alain and Jannie Faurschou as Georgette ...................... 111
65. Jørgen Reenberg as Arnolphe and Joen Bille as Chrystalde .................... 112
66. Merete Hegner as Madame Jourdain, Kim Veisgaard as M. Jourdain and Jette Sivertsen as Nicole ......................................................... 123
67. Turkish ceremony. Olaf Johannessen as Cléonte, Kim Veisgaard as M. Jourdain, Merete Hegner as Madame Jourdain and Jens Albinus a Covielle 124
68. Louis XIV bust and Ruth Maisie as the Bag Lady ...................................... 125
69. Spreading tiles with Kim Veisgaard as M. Jourdain and belly dancers ........ 126
70. Dorante’s costume by Lars Juhl ............................................................... 127
71. Dorimène’s costume by Lars Juhl ............................................................ 127
72. M. Jourdain’s Turkish costume by Lars Juhl ........................................... 127
73. Entire cast for Le Bourgeois gentilhomme at Ringsted Summer Theatre ...... 128
74. Finn Jensen as M. Jourdain with two teachers ......................................... 132
75. Torben Jensen as Dorante and Mathea Jensen as Dorimène .................... 132
76. M. Jourdain with Dorimène in front of the camper .................................. 135
77. Sidse Berrit Kvorning as Dorimène and Lars Knutzon as M. Jourdain ...... 136
78. Gitte Siem as Madame Jourdain, Lars Knutzon as M. Jourdain and Sidse Berrit Kvorning as Dorimène .............................................. 136
79. 1726 playbill from Les Fourberies de Scapin ........................................... 142
80. Argante’s costume by Nina Schiøttz ....................................................... 150
81. Géronde’s costume by Nina Schiøttz ....................................................... 150
82. Tom McEwan as Argante and Hans Henrik Clemensen as Géronte ............ 150
83. Poster for Les Fourberies de Scapin for Det Danske Teater .................. 151
84. Zerbinetta’s costume by Nina Schiøttz .......................................... 151
85. Giacinta’s costume by Nina Schiøttz ............................................ 151
86. Leander’s costume by Nina Schiøttz ........................................... 152
87. Anna Leth Boesen as Zerbinetta and Rasmus Botoft as Leander .......... 152
88. Anna Leth Boesen as Zerbinetta, Hans Henrik Clemensen as Géronte and
    Christine Albeck as Giacinta .................................................. 152
89. Ottavio’s costume by Nina Schiøttz ........................................... 152
90. Sylvestro’s costume by Nina Schiøttz ......................................... 153
91. Scapin’s costume by Nina Schiøttz ............................................ 153
92. Henrik Koføed as Scapin and Søren Hauch-Fausbøll as Sylvestro ........... 153
93. Henrik Koføed as Scapin and Tom McEwan as Argante ....................... 154
94. Patricia Schumann as Scapin at Statens Teaterskole ......................... 156
95. Martin Hylander Brücker as Argante and Patricia Schumann as Scapin ..... 156
96. Stefánía Ómarsdóttir as Silvestre and Thomas Knuth-Winterfeldt as Octave .. 157
97. Thomas Knuth-Winterfeldt as Octave, Sune Quistgaard as Carlo and
    Josef Nielsen as Leander ...................................................... 158
98. Anna Fabricius Hansen as Zerbinette ......................................... 158
99. Patricia Schumann as Scapin, Signe Skov as Hyacinthe, Josef Nielsen as
    Leander, Anna Fabricius Hansen as Zerbinette, and Martin Hylander Brücker
    as Argante .................................................................................. 159
100. Henning Moritzen as Alceste and Ghita Nørby as Célimène ................. 167
101. Lise Ringheim as Arsinoē and Ghita Nørby as Célimène ...................... 168
102. Ghita Nørby as Célimène and Henning Moritzen as Alceste ................. 168
103. Henning Moritzen as Alceste ..................................................... 169
104. Trine Dyrholm as Célimène, Joy-Maria Frederiksen as Arsinoē and
    Klaus Bondam as Clitandre ...................................................... 173
105. Sidse Babett Knudsen as Célimène and Ghita Nørby as Alceste in 2002 ...... 175
106. Lotte Andersen as Célimène and Ghita Nørby as Alceste in 2003 .......... 175
107. Bodil Udsen as Philinte ............................................................ 176
108. Ghita Nørby as Alceste, Bodil Udsen as Philinte and Lotte Andersen as
    Célimène in 2003 .................................................................... 177
109. Ghita Nørby as Alceste and Bodil Udsen as Philinte ............................ 177
110. Ida Dwinger as Acastre, Sidse Babett Knudsen as Célimène and
    Andrea Vagn Jensen as Clitandre in 2002 .................................... 178
111. Ghita Nørby as Alceste and Karen-Lise Mynster as Oronte .................... 178
112. Annette Støvelbæk as Arsinoē and Sidse Babett Knudsen as Célimène in 2002 179
113. Map of Denmark with names of cities with the major theatre venues .... 188
114. Central København (Copenhagen) with major theatres marked in red .... 189
ABSTRACT

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the role of Molière in Danish theatre. More specifically, this dissertation identifies the extent to which Danish productions are faithful to the original French plays and discusses factors that have contributed to the success or failure of such productions in recent years. Factors relevant to this analysis include cross-cultural contrasts and similarities between France and Denmark, the themes of the individual plays and their transformations when translated into Danish, the quality of translations and adaptations and the use of modern or traditional dress. Included are comparisons of Danish translations of Molière from the seventeenth century to present-day productions.

Methodologically, I proceed by examining the above-mentioned factors in relation to six plays: L’Avare, Tartuffe, L’École des femmes, Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, Les Fourberies de Scapin and Le Misanthrope. In each case, I compare the original text with Danish translations and adaptations and draw on interviews with Danish directors, scenographers, other theatre practitioners, scholars, translators and journalists. The extensive interviews combined with research in theatre archives and national libraries, were conducted in order to analyze the ways in which Molière has been adapted for and received by the Danish public.

After interviewing the above-mentioned people, after examining a vast number of manuscripts and newspaper reviews and conducting extensive research in Danish archives and libraries, I have documented and thus established that Molière has had a crucial and lasting effect upon the development of Danish theatre ever since the early eighteenth century. After researching the various productions, I have identified the extent to which Danish theatre professionals remain faithful to the original plays including aspects such as theme, language and costumes. From this research, it is clear that Molière has had a tremendous impact on and remains a cornerstone in contemporary Danish theatre.
PREFACE

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the role of Jean Baptiste Poquelin (1622-1673), whose artistic name is Molière, in Danish theatre. Part of the project will include comparisons of Danish translations of Molière from the seventeenth century to the present. More specifically, this dissertation seeks to identify the extent to which Danish productions are faithful to the original French plays and to discuss factors that have contributed to the success or failure of such productions in recent years. Factors relevant to this analysis include cross-cultural contrasts and similarities between France and Denmark, the themes of the individual plays and their transformations when translated into Danish, the quality of translations and adaptations and the use of modern or traditional dress.

Besides a study of Tartuffe, L’École des femmes and Le Misanthrope that Ida Poulsen, the museum director and curator at the archives at Hofteatret (the Court Theatre), undertook in preparation for her masters’ degree at Københavns Universitet (the University of Copenhagen) in June 1973, this type of in-depth study of several versions of each of my chosen six plays of Molière in Denmark has not been undertaken since then. Methodologically, I proceed by examining the above-mentioned factors in relation to six plays: L’Avare, Tartuffe, L’École des femmes, Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, Les Fourberies de Scapin and Le Misanthrope. In each case, I compare the original text with Danish translations and adaptations and draw on interviews with Danish directors, scenographers, other theatre practitioners, scholars, translators and journalists. The extensive interviews combined with research in theatre archives and national libraries, were conducted in order to analyze the ways in which Molière has been adapted for and received by the Danish public.

The aforementioned plays, except for Le Misanthrope, were chosen because they had been performed at the original Danish theatre, the Lille Grønnegadeteatret (the theatre at Little Green Street). I chose to add Le Misanthrope because of its great importance in the history of Danish theatre due in large part to Ingmar Bergman’s famous 1973 production and Peter Langdal’s recent, controversial one. Based upon an early
interview with director Kim Bjarke, a series of questions were developed to facilitate the discussions with nearly forty theatre professionals with modifications made prior to each visit to suit the individual interviewee. These guidelines were meant to provide a sense of uniformity during the interview process.

In Chapters One through Six, I analyze each of the six different Molière plays produced in recent years in Denmark, comparing and contrasting these productions to the original Danish productions. I discuss how the plays have evolved over time from 1722 to the twenty-first century in Denmark (in particular depending upon translators, directors and scenographers) and examine what might have contributed to the failure or success of these productions. I will include photos and illustrations from the majority of the productions to help exemplify the variety of interpretations of Molière’s plays in recent decades.

**History**

Before discussing Molière’s importance to Danish theatre through in-depth analyses of these six plays, a brief introduction is necessary to establish the historical and theatrical context that led to the pivotal date of September 23, 1722. On this date, *Lille Grønne gadeteatret* opened its doors to Molière’s *L’Avare*. It was the first play ever to be performed in Danish by professional actors on the Danish stage for the general Danish population. It was translated into Danish and adapted directly for this performance on the Danish stage with Danish expressions and cultural milieu (as explained in Chapter One on *L’Avare*).

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Danish authors wrote comedies to be performed in Danish by school children and their teachers in small, private schools, the so-called Latin schools. The only other productions were miracle plays, performed in Danish churches with university students as actors generally speaking in Latin. These last ones were resurrection and miracle plays dramatizing the lives and deeds of saints. Violence took place directly on stage, in stark contrast to later centuries where violent acts were relegated to being graphically narrated while supposedly occurring off-stage. The primary knowledge of these plays derives from recently uncovered frescoes found in
ancient Danish churches dating from the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (Marker and Marker 7-12).

Beginning in 1669, the Danish King Frederik III commissioned a series of foreign theatre troupes to perform plays in their native tongues for the royal family, the nobility and possibly some members of the upper middle class, with some servants in attendance. These performances first took place in the wooden opera house erected on the palace grounds and later within Copenhagen Castle itself. During the next decades, various troupes from France, Germany, the Netherlands and England performed at court. Judging from the number of French troupes visiting Denmark, the French appeared to be the kings’ favorite performers. These foreign troupes changed regularly depending upon the varying political and moral climate in Denmark.

René Magnon de Montaigu is a well-known actor from this time period. Although his name does not appear on any playbills until 1689, according to Professor Anne E. Jensen, Montaigu is believed to have arrived in Denmark in 1686 together with five other French actors coming to replace departing French actors from King Christian V’s court theatre (Europæisk Drama 16). Montaigu played a pivotal role in establishing Danish theatre for the general Danish populace. He was the son of Molière’s friend, the dramatist Jean Magnon, who was born in Tournus in Bourgogne in France. A memorial placed at his birthplace reads: « Ici est né le poète Jean Magnon historiographe du roi, 1620-1662, son fils René fonda le théâtre national danois en 1722 » (qtd. in Jensen, Europæisk Drama 16).

In 1721, King Frederik IV, preferring to keep a German opera troupe at court, sent Montaigu’s troupe back to France. Montaigu opted to remain in Denmark with his family. After 36 years, he and his family were settled there with no wish to return to his native country. His second wife, the young Marie Magdalene de Montaigu, born in Denmark to French parents, acted first at the court theatre in French and later became the leading actress at Lille Grønnegade teatret (Jensen, Lille Grønnegade 29). During his years as the main actor at the royal Danish court, Montaigu noted the absence of and the need for a theatre in Copenhagen with plays performed in the vernacular for the Danish middle and lower classes (instead of just for the nobility and the upper classes as had happened at the court theatre).
Foreign troupes, performing in their own languages, created a barrier for the common folk who only understood Danish. During Molière’s time in the seventeenth century and continuing into the eighteenth century, French and German were the primary languages spoken at the Danish court in great part due to the international intermarriages within the royal houses of Europe. A popular saying about languages in Denmark during the eighteenth century goes “The nobles conversed in French, spoke German to their dogs and Danish to their servants.” Although this statement may seem strange to a foreigner, the fact remains that the nobles and members of the royal household were so intermingled that French and German were the languages of choice at court for centuries. In contrast, the majority of court attendants were far from fluent in foreign languages and often had difficulty understanding the plays presented at court by the foreign troupes. Even Queen Louise, wife of king Frederik IV, and part of her retinue spoke only German. The few remaining playbills in existence from before the opening of Lille Grønnegadeteatret lend testament to the assertion that some spectators did not understand the language spoken on stage. In fact, some playbills related the entire story line to aid the audience in understanding the play’s plot and intent (Jensen, Lille Grønnegade 25).

While the Great Nordic Wars raged in Scandinavia, with hardly a break between 1640 and 1720, the Danes, particularly the ones living in Copenhagen, suffered terrible deprivations. When peace was finally established, Danes had endured countless years of wars and hardships and were badly in need of diversion from their daily worries and monetary concerns. The Danes were ready for a new and novel kind of entertainment. In May 1721, Etienne Capion, a French theatre enthusiast and benefactor who had immigrated to Denmark in 1700, sought royal permission to open a theatre with foreign troupes. Having worked with Montaigu as his technical director at the royal court, Capion was familiar with the workings of a theatre. He opened his theatre in Lille Grønnegade in January 1722 where comedies performed in French or German, masked balls and assemblies were presented twice a week. This venture lasted only a few months before the foreign troupes returned to their own countries.

With this building standing empty, Montaigu deemed the time right to explore the possibility of producing plays in Danish. On July 1, 1722, he approached the king to request royal permission to perform comedies in the Danish language (Jensen, Lille...
Grønnegade 33). Lacking funds in addition to the required royal proclamation permitting him to operate the theatre, Montaigu joined forces with Capion and, as mentioned above, on September 23, 1722, Montaigu opened *Lille Grønnegadeteatret* as a venue for the general Danish populace.

The opening of *Lille Grønnegadeteatret* was a tremendous success with standing room only not only for *L’Avare* on opening night, but for the many plays that followed. The theatre was packed for weeks, and the audience eagerly awaited the variety of plays performed during the upcoming seasons. Was this because the choice of plays appealed to the Danish audience or because here was a new entertainment open to the Danes? I suspect that, after having been starved for entertainment after years of austerity during the continuous, ruinous wars, it was the latter that played a major role. Curiously enough, no mention appeared in the small local papers about this milestone that took place in Copenhagen on September 23, 1722. Nothing was written about the opening of the theatre until after the premiere two days later of Ludvig Holberg’s *Den Politiske Kandestøber* (*The Political Tinker*).

Thus the year 1722 marks a crucial time in the history of Danish theatre. Molière’s *L’Avare*, translated into Danish, was the inaugural play and as such the first play ever to be performed in Denmark in the Danish language on the Danish stage. During the next few years, *Lille Grønnegadeteatret* remained an important venue for this new form of entertainment. Unfortunately financial difficulties soon arose causing the theatre to periodically close its doors. It remained closed for an entire year, from February 1725 to February 1726, when it again opened with one of Molière’s plays, *Tartuffe*. Montaigu and Capion struggled for years to avoid bankruptcy. On February 25, 1727, they finally relinquished their joint venture and Montaigu closed the theatre. That night, his actors performed Holberg’s *Den Danske Komedies Ligbegængelse* (*The Burial of Danish Comedy*) specifically written for this evening’s performance (Jensen, *Europæisk Drama* 72).

During the next 1 1/2 years, Montaigu tried unsuccessfully to reinstate the theatre. The final blow occurred on October 20, 1728, when two-fifths of Copenhagen burned, razing 1,670 buildings including the university and the town hall (*A History of Scandinavian Theatre* 61). The theatre building itself survived the disastrous fire, but, due
to the pietism movement’s arrival in Denmark, a royal decree banned all theatre activity until 1747. The then reigning King Frederik V was ready to be entertained. He gave his permission for the new theatre to open its doors in Copenhagen, and Molière’s plays continued to be performed at regular intervals. This theatre, erected in 1748, later became *Det Kongelige Teater* (The Royal Theatre), which remains to this day in a new building erected in 1874 across the square from the other one (see the location on the map of Copenhagen in Figure 114 in Appendix C).

**Ludvig Holberg**

In his search for a playwright to produce plays in Danish, Montaigu recognized that many factors besides the actual meaning of the words determine a play’s success. Where a situation might bring forth peals of laughter in one language, it may fall flat in another. Cultural differences, religious beliefs, language usage, idiomatic expressions, local customs, local politics, class differences, background and upbringing all influence the way a situation might be understood or misunderstood. As an example, the inane behavior displayed by French nobility at court at Versailles did not have its equal in Denmark. Denmark was and is a primarily agrarian society. The common folk were ready to laugh at their foibles but did not necessarily understand Molière’s intent with his plays.

With these constraints in mind, Montaigu searched for a Dane who could provide plays for his theatre. After reading Ludvig Holberg’s *Peder Paars* -- a long, humorous and satirical poem he composed in 1719-20 -- Montaigu, or possibly an emissary sent by Montaigu, approached Holberg and suggested he write plays for the new Danish stage.

Holberg was born in 1684, eleven years after Molière’s death in France, and became known as the Nordic Molière. He was born in Bergen, Norway, which was part of the Danish kingdom until 1814. Because Copenhagen was the only city with a university in Scandinavia, Holberg traveled to Copenhagen to continue his advanced studies and moved there permanently when offered a professorship in metaphysics in 1717. In 1719, Holberg was promoted to professor in Latin literature and in 1730, in accordance with Danish university protocol, Holberg received a promotion to professor of history, his preferred subject matter, the subject he continued to teach and write about until his death in 1754.
Holberg immediately accepted Montaigu’s challenge to write comedies à la Molière for the Danish stage. He soon became the resident playwright at the theatre and diligently wrote for many years, producing five plays within six months followed by another ten within the next year followed by yet another ten soon after, using Lille Grønnegadeteatret as a venue for these plays. In response to Montaigu’s request, on September 25, 1722, two days after L’Avare was performed at Lille Grønnegadeteatret, as mentioned earlier, Holberg’s Den Politiske Kandestøber (The Political Tinker) was presented to the Danish citizens. This production marks the first play to be written directly in Danish by a Dane and to be performed on the Danish stage.

Although Danish translations of Molière’s plays continued to be performed at Lille Grønnegadeteatret and throughout the following centuries in Danish theatres, they appeared less frequently after the prolific Holberg began to provide comedies whose style better suited and appealed to the Danish sense of humor. On the basis of an examination of Holberg’s extensive writings including his letters, it is evident how his opinions of Molière, his admitted rival, gradually changed from time to time while his own literary career blossomed. Where it is obvious that Holberg first modeled his comedies after Molière, he quickly developed his own style and became critical of Molière’s oeuvre to help highlight his own importance in the literary world.

Throughout his writing career, Holberg continuously borrowed or directly stole from Molière, adapting themes and ideas to the Danish stage. One example of Holberg’s copying is Vielgeschrei, the main character in Holberg’s Den Stundesløse (The Restless One). The hero’s restlessness is a fixation comparable to Harpagon’s fixation on money in Molière’s L’Avare. Another example is Hans Frandsen in Holberg’s Jean de France whose obsession about anything French is comparable to M. Jourdain’s passionate wish to learn French manners in Molière’s Le Bourgeois gentilhomme. After studying Holberg’s many comedies, it is apparent that Molière had tremendous influence on this prolific playwright and, as such, tremendous influence on the development of Danish drama.

It is interesting to note that, just as Molière did, Holberg revised his plays after their release, at times after only one performance, in order to achieve a more successful outcome and possibly to placate his patrons. Holberg’s goal, like Molière’s, was to
critique certain behaviors. By using humor, both Molière and Holberg emphasized character flaws and idiosyncratic behaviors not previously treated by other authors. Through use of examples such as greed and stinginess, as observed in L’Avare, these two playwrights used their comedies as teaching tools not just to entertain but also to illustrate how such characteristics can be detrimental to the immediate family and to society as a whole. They wanted their audience to pay attention, to recognize themselves and to laugh at themselves. Where Molière’s general emphasis centered upon the nobility and the upper classes, Holberg focused on flaws in the common man.

After assessing Molière’s vast influence upon Holberg, I began to pose a question to the various theatre practitioners, asking them which playwright they considered to be the best, Molière or Holberg. Although everybody indicated Molière as the obvious choice, Erik A. Nielsen explains it best. Nielsen is a professor in Danish at University of Copenhagen and a Holberg specialist who wrote his dissertation on Holberg’s humor. He writes that Holberg has a broader literary range, being an essayist, biographer, historian, author and professor as well as a playwright, while Molière’s entire oeuvre is almost entirely gathered around the stage. Nielsen writes that “If the question had been which of the two playwrights he considers to be the most important dramatist, there is no doubt that Molière would obviously be number one. His plays are more in-depth, his eroticism is better and more fully developed, and his repartees are cleverer and better expressed.” He finishes by emphasizing that his statement does not make Holberg a lesser artist but an artist with different strengths (e-mail 4 June 2005).

During our interview in March 2005, Kasper Wilton, the managing director at Odense Teater in Odense on the island of Funen, went a step further and called Molière a cornerstone in Danish theatre. Other interviewees, including Nielsen, concurred with that assessment. In October 2005, the actor Preben Harris added that Holberg was a great dramatist and a great writer of comedies for the Danish public but simultaneously emphasized that Molière wrote comedies for the entire world. Harris called him a world poet, stressing that “Molière will never die!” Then Harris added, “But what should we Danes do without Holberg?”
L’Avare

In Chapter One, I will discuss L’Avare. As shown in the examples given here, I will provide an in-depth textual analysis of several manuscripts and also discuss the manner in which this play has been produced in Denmark in recent years. While planning the opening of *Lille Grønnegadeteatret*, in order to succeed with such a big and novel venture, it was imperative for Montaigu and his financial backer Etienne Capion that Montaigu choose an inaugural play with which he was familiar and which he felt would appeal to the Danish audience. It was equally imperative that he chose a play where major changes were unnecessary in order to attract and be appreciated by the eighteenth-century Danish audience. With these constraints in mind, he chose Molière’s L’Avare, first performed September 9, 1668, at *Palais-Royal* in Paris. This character comedy focuses on the concept of a miserly, universally disliked man who presents an easy target for ridicule.

According to the few remaining records, Montaigu and previous court troupes had performed L’Avare numerous times in French, dating back several decades, as far back as to Molière’s own time. As evidenced by one of the few existing playbills from the earlier era, L’Avare was performed in honor of King Frederik IV’s birthday on October 11, 1706 (Jensen, *Europæisk Drama* 19). Not only was L’Avare certainly among the plays produced by the French troupe when the unnamed theatre in Lille Grønnegade originally opened its doors in January 1722, but when *Lille Grønnegadeteatret* opened its summer season in 1725, L’Avare was again the opening play, once more stressing the popularity of this particular Molière comedy. Because he was familiar with French theatre tradition and felt certain that it would appeal to a broad audience, Montaigu now wisely chose to have L’Avare translated into Danish by an anonymous translator for the opening night performance on September 23, 1722. He might additionally have chosen this play because it was written in prose and consequently easier to translate.

The original translation of L’Avare was printed in 1724, two years after its presentation on the Danish stage. Together with Tartuffe, *L’École des femmes* and *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, it is included in Eiler Nystrøm’s frequently quoted study of the years at *Lille Grønnegadeteatret*. It is called *Den Danske Komedies Oprindelse* (*The Origin of Danish Comedy*) and was published in five volumes in 1918. The set includes
plays written by Molière and Holberg as well as by a few other Danish and foreign authors. These plays, all written in prose, were among the ones performed at the theatre until it closed permanently in 1727. Despite substantial research, it remains unknown who the translator of the 1724 version of *L’Avare* actually is, but from her extensive research into the subject Jensen suspects that one of the university students translated and adapted it to suit the Danish stage (*Europæisk Drama* 74-75). It was changed so drastically that Molière might have had difficulties recognizing his own play. The second version is an antique manuscript translated by B. J. Lodde and printed in 1756 directly for the Danish stage (as stated on the manuscript’s front page). Except for a few exceptions, Lodde’s translation follows Molière’s original play more closely than the anonymous 1724 version.

I will compare these two versions to three more recent productions. The first was performed at *Aarhus Teater* on the peninsula of Jutland in 1968 and at *Folketeatret* in Copenhagen in 1974. Although not a regular translator but instead an actor, director and, for quite a while, managing director of *Aarhus Teaterskole* (*Aarhus Theatre School*), Asger Bonfils translated this considerably changed version at the request of the late actor and director Edwin Tiemroth. This *L’Avare* translation was intended for a joint performance with *L’Impromptu de Versailles*, with the two plays called *Molière har travlt* (Molière is Busy) (telephone interview with Bonfils Aug. 2005). The adapted manuscript is short and concise both in language as well as in length, with five acts condensed into two.

In 1996, *L’Avare* was translated by Michael Segerström and performed at a Swedish theatre. Later the same year, Jesper Kjær was asked to adapt the Swedish play to be performed at *Nørrebros Teater* in Copenhagen. Although he looked at the Swedish translation, Kjær translated his own version of *L’Avare* with the two Swedish directors and the Swedish scenographer in charge of the production. The translation is casual and informal with occasional coarse language but easy to read and still truer to the original French play than Bonfils’s version. The Swedish translator added a Prologue to the comedy. Kjær followed this pattern by writing his own Prologue, adapting it to the Danish audience (telephone interview Oct. 2006). It is hilarious. Harpagon speaks and sets the stage for the play, emphasizing his opinions about the necessity for saving in
every aspect in life. I will provide explicit examples from this Prologue in Chapter One on L’Avare.

I am comparing these versions to Kristen D. Spanggaard’s translation from 1964 adapted by Kim Bjarke, a free-lance director, who directed the fall 2003 production of L’Avare at Odense Teater in Odense, the fourth largest town in Denmark. As with the 1756 version, Bjarke’s manuscript is much closer to the original French edition while only to some degree being adapted to the contemporary audience. In my interview with Bjarke, he explained how he felt that constant repetitions were unnecessary and that only certain words needed to be updated to modern Danish to be better understood by his audience.

The existing playbill from September 23, 1722, calls the play Gnieren, which translates to L’Avare (Den Danske Skueplads på Holbergs Tid [The Danish Stage During Holberg’s Time] 38). When printed in 1724, the title changed to Comoedie om Gamle Jens Gnier eller Pengepuger, which translates into Comedy about Old Jens Miser or Money Grubber. Although the title gives the principal character a Danish name, he retains his French name Harpagon in the play itself. His name appears to be the character’s only French feature in this Danish translation. Danish culture infiltrates the play with Danish expressions and social behavior and with an extensive amount of abusive Danish epithets. Since copyrights didn’t exist in eighteenth-century Denmark, rewriting while translating was not considered infringement.

In her dissertation Europæisk Drama i Danmark 1722-1770, Jensen draws attention to some specific examples of how the original, unknown translators changed Molière’s plays to better suit the Danish stage (81-88). Jensen explains how in the Danish L’Avare, we meet a common Danish family instead of a wealthy French haute bourgeoisie. This miserly Harpagon resides either in Copenhagen or in a large provincial town with servants from the country who introduce their rural attitudes and culture into the household (Lille Grønnegade 46). Harpagon’s servants and other characters speak the slow, drawling dialect spoken in Jutland, the large peninsula north of Germany and far to the west of Copenhagen (see map of Denmark in Figure 113 in Appendix C). A wealth of expletives and curses appear throughout the text (Jensen, Europæisk Drama 81). To ensure the audience comprehends the play’s intent, in particular the character flaw of
miserliness, the translator lengthens some paragraphs, adding Danish customs and names. I will provide some examples to highlight what occurred in this particular translation of *L’Avare*.

In Act II, Scene V, Frosine, the marriage broker, speaking a distinct Jutlandic dialect, describes Mariane’s modest and frugal standard of living to convince Harpagon what a catch this young woman would be.

In the French version, Frosine says:

Oui. Premièrement, elle est nourrie et élevée dans une grande épargne de bouche; c’est une fille accoutumée à vivre de salade, de lait, de fromage et de pommes, et à laquelle par conséquent il ne faudra ni table bien servie, ni consommés exquis, ni orges mondés perpétuels, ni les autres délicatesses qu’il faudrait pour une autre femme […]. (97-98)

In the 1724 version, it translates into:

First off, she is brought up in a thrifty and modest manner without delicacies and sweets. She is used to live on a meager diet, a spoonful of sour milk and curds, cabbage and fatback, gruel and herring, peas and porridge made from water, pumpernickel and beer soup and cod fish, floury bread and whey; so there is no need to keep a fancy table with delicacies, fancy grain and other such specialties as such a woman might demand […]. (59)

In the discussion that follows about a spouse’s age, Frosine emphasizes how Mariane prefers marriage to an older man instead of to one closer to her own age. In French, Frosine says, « Mais elle n’est point plus ravie, dit-elle, que lorsqu’elle peut voir un beau vieillard avec une barbe majestueuse » (100), which in the 1724 translation changes to a more Danish image of an old man with a long beard of such considerable length it is possible to use it to stuff an English saddle (61). Where in the French version, Frosine claims that Mariane prefers an older man of sixty or at least fifty-five and certainly with glasses (100-01), in the Danish version, Frosine says the man must be at least sixty years of age and says, “Yes! She says that fifty years is nothing to her. She especially prefers you wear glasses, and Mariane is ready to devour such a nose for the sheer delight of having such a nose on which to place the glasses” (62).
In the following French example, Frosine describes the various paintings and prints that decorate the walls in Mariane’s bedchamber: « On lui voit dans sa chambre quelques tableaux et quelques estampes; mais que pensez-vous que ce soit? Des Adonis? des Céphales? des Pâris? et des Apollons? Non: de beaux portraits de Saturne, du roi Priam, du vieux Nestor, et du bon père Anchise sur les épaules de son fils » (101).

In the 1724 translation, Frosine adds Danish names of ancient men to ensure that the audience understands Mariane’s preference for older men:

In her bedchamber, she has numerous paintings and copper prints; but do you think they are like those of Adonis, Cephalos, Paris, Apollo? No they are like those of Saturn, King Priam, the old Nestor, the good old Anchise whom the son is carrying on his back, the old ogre Tiliok with the beard, who is written about in Saxo Grammatico, the old Sterckodder with his coal bag on his back, Torkild Jernside (Ironside), Thorgrin (Grinning Thor), Eskild Tyrehoved (Bull Head) and such old fellows. (62-63)

In these same two examples, in the 1756 manuscript, also translated directly for the Danish stage, Lodde follows the original French version and barely deviates from the description of the food except by suggesting that Mariane does not need special strong soups, fresh fish, venison or other such delicacies (51). Lodde exchanges Cephalos for Narcissus, who is more likely to be known by the Danish audience (53). In Asger Bonfils’s more concise 1968 version, written for Aarhus teater, Frosine shortens her recitation a little, mentioning choice soups, endless lemonades or other delicacies (30), whereas in her reference to old men, the long beard undergoes a transformation and changes into dignified, white hair (31) with the description of the paintings entirely omitted.

In Jesper Kjær’s 1996 manuscript, used at Nørrebros Teater, Frosine says: “In the first place, she is brought up in a simple fashion in regard to food and beverages. She hardly eats anything but salad. In other words, she neither needs sumptuous hors d’oeuvres nor expensive meat dishes nor delicacies like other ladies” (41). Kjær omits the mention of either beard or white hair and simply writes that Mariane is delighted when she sees a distinguished elderly gentleman (42). His paragraph about the portraits is also shortened considerably to: “What do you think they represent? Adonis? Prince Paris?
Apollo? Oh no. She has portraits of the old King Priam, of the white haired Nestor and a copperplate of Methuselah” (43).

In his 2003 adaptation to the stage, Kim Bjarke retains Spanggaard’s 1964 nearly exact translation from the original L’Avare in regard to her food choices while his Mariane also prefers a nice elderly man with a majestic beard (47). This manuscript retains the original names for the portraits except for Cephalos. I presume this man is too little known to carry any weight with the Danish audience.

In Act II, Scene I, Cléante exclaims to La Flèche: « Comment diable! Quel Juif, quel Arabe est-ce là? C’est plus qu’au denier quatre » (78). These expletives change with the passing of time. In 1724, the Jew remains while the Arab is omitted in exchange for some ancient terminology for loan shark and miser “sikken skinder og skaver” meaning what a bloodsucking miser (http://www.dsl.dk). In 1756, the Arab changes to Turk (38), while in 1968 the Jew and Turk both remain (22). Both Kjær (32) and Bjarke (35) prefer to use the term loan shark instead of referring to a foreign national or to a man’s religion.

In the March 2004 interview with Bjarke, I questioned him about his decision to omit the slur Quel Juif. Being unsure if Molière was anti-Semitic, he commented that he had no wish to offend his audience. The second slur Quel Arabe had already been removed in Spanggaard’s translation, and What a Turk never replaced Quel Arabe. Bjarke explained that he saw no need for excessive bad language or references to nationalities or religion. Such racial slurs do not serve any purpose in the play, nor does he believe they elicit particularly humorous responses from the audience.

Before meeting with Bjarke, I listened to two online interviews, produced directly on the Odense Teater internet site, in which Bjarke explained his use of period costumes and language from Molière’s time. He mentioned his intention to follow the original comedy as closely as possible as it might have been performed in France centuries ago, in contrast to the way Molière’s comedies have been produced in Copenhagen in recent years (online 6 Oct. 2003). During the interview in March 2004, I questioned him about the actual production. Bjarke said he changed some of the words but generally kept the original dialogue with occasional alterations to provide a translation more suitable to the Danish language. Bjarke’s L’Avare received excellent reviews by the local newspapers and, according to Kasper Wilton, managing director of Odense Teater, the comedy
played to a nearly full house. Bjarke told me he attended several of the early performances and sat among members of the audience, listening to their laughter and comments, and later made changes, not in the dialogue but in the stage direction, if and when needed to produce an even better effect.

At the end of Bjarke’s L’Avare, the two young couples are united, ready to live happily ever after, while Harpagon solely contemplates his beloved money. He has not learned anything from recent events. Bjarke explained how the actors all file out. After leaving the stage empty for a moment, Harpagon returns alone, clasping his beloved money chest. As the curtain falls, Harpagon stands with the chest in his arms and slowly sinks onto the stage floor while stroking his treasure chest as if it were a woman (interview March 2004).

**Tartuffe**

In Chapter Two, I will discuss a number of recent performances of Molière’s _Tartuffe_ and compare them to the original translation first performed in 1723 during the second season at _Lille Grønnegadeteatret_. Montaigu directed _Tartuffe_, a play first performed in Paris and immediately forbidden both in 1664 and 1667 and finally accepted in its current form in 1669. Although the original French play is written in verse, the first Danish translation was written in prose directly for the Danish stage. The translation is attributed to Diderich Seckman, a diplomat, who worked in the Justice Ministry in Copenhagen (Jensen, _Europeisk Drama_ 75). I will examine this original eighteenth-century translation included in Eiler Nystrom’s _Den Danske Komedies Oprindelse_ and compare it with contemporary productions. I will further discuss what aspects, if any, of today’s _Tartuffe_ remain basically Danish, or whether modern productions have reverted to the original French version.

Montaigu ran a real risk presenting _Tartuffe_ by ignoring the royal privilege of 1722, which stated, “No theatrical performance may deal with religion or the Holy Scriptures, may conflict with chastity and decency or may scandalize the audience” (Neiiendam, _Studier_ 14). Not only did the translator change Molière’s words to fit the Danish setting, he also changed the characters themselves. With Lutheranism being the Danish State religion, _Tartuffe_ was portrayed as a Protestant hypocrite instead of a
Catholic. The leading character, M. Orgon, was portrayed as a working-class Dane living in central Copenhagen instead of as a French bourgeois living in Paris. In this vein, the translator reworked Tartuffe to help the Danish audience understand Molière’s implied intent with the play, which is essentially a critique of religious hypocrisy.

In an August 2003 telephone interview with Klaus Hoffmeyer, the former drama director at Det Kongelige Teater (The Royal Theatre) in Copenhagen, Hoffmeyer stated his belief that Tartuffe remains the comedy most frequently performed in present day Denmark, particularly in provincial theatres. Bjarke agrees with him but added Le Misanthrope to the line-up of popular Danish Molière productions while others prefer L’École des femmes. Basically, after having posed the same question to everyone I interviewed, there is no clear preference among Molière’s plays. The source of Tartuffe’s popularity today is worth discussing. With that statement in mind, I will examine the contemporary script directly translated and carefully rhymed by Jesper Kjær for direction by Peter Langdal at Betty Nansen Teatret in 1989-1990.

Kjær and Langdal conferred to attain Langdal’s unique style while taking care to complement Karin Betz’s costumes and set design. During September and October 2005 interviews, Betz described the symbolism and effect she wished to portray in Tartuffe. She provided drawings, which are included in the actual chapter, to explain the background for her choice of colors and costumes.

Jørgen Reenberg played Tartuffe. He is a revered actor with many years experience on the Danish stage. He played Valère in Tartuffe years ago in 1948 at Det Kongelige Teater opposite the late Poul Reumert in the role as Tartuffe. Reenberg insisted upon using his own manuscript from the earlier performance with far longer passages for his Tartuffe while the other actors used Kjær’s briefer and carefully rhymed paragraphs specifically written for the 1989 production. This irascible behavior caused Langdal numerous headaches during the rehearsals. However, the changing dialogue went unnoticed by the critics and the audience. The old-fashioned dialogue might well have created an interesting contrast, which served to emphasize how Tartuffe remained outside the norm.

In 1996, Langdal’s Tartuffe was followed by two unusual productions presented to the Danish audience. In July, Ariane Mnouchkine brought her touring company
Théâtre du Soleil to Torpedohallen in Copenhagen, where she presented a couple of performances of her one-year-old, French-speaking production of Tartuffe. Mnouchkine transformed her Tartuffe character into a Muslim Tartuffe.

Later on in 1996, the director Emil Hansen used Langdal’s adapted version of Kjær’s translation for his production of Tartuffe at Aalborg Teater in Aalborg, a large town in northern Jutland. Hansen drastically adapted the play, transforming it to make it almost unrecognizable with modern costumes and stage design. In a February 2006 interview, Hansen described how he at first entirely cut Cléante’s long monologues from the play. When the actors complained, he instead created a humorous diversion spanning the intermission. He compiled the shortened monologues into one enormous one and had Cléante begin his oration at length before the curtain fell at the end of Act III. When the curtain rose twenty minutes later, Cléante was still walking back and forth across the stage, pontificating as if he had never stopped this endless oration. Hansen transformed his characters to fit an ultra-modern stage. He changed Elmire into a young, sex-deprived woman, with Tartuffe appearing in slinky leather pants and long, greasy hair as seen in the photos. I will explain Hansen’s adaptation further in the Tartuffe chapter.

Vibeke Wrede, the director of Tartuffe at Odense Teater, also used Kjær’s translation for her production by the Odense Teater Touring Company during the fall of 2001. The tour was followed by a month-long production at Odense Teater during the 2002 winter season. According to Kasper Wilton, the production of Tartuffe was a success. The local newspaper praised the production and highlighted a few examples. The stage design was comparatively modern, placing Tartuffe in a middle-class home. Wrede and her scenographer Louise Beck furnished the interior with a piano and a billiard table at the rear of the stage. The setting was light and airy. During our March 2005 interview, Wrede told me that she emphasized how crucial it is to pay particular attention to every detail. She explained how she had Tartuffe extinguish five candles without any sign of getting burned to indicate his harshness and callousness. Wrede also emphasized that she wants her characters in perpetual motion to avoid stagnation and to steer clear of performances such as the one given by Gérard Depardieu as Tartuffe in Paris in 1984, where his fellow actors remained seated during most of the performance. Wrede became so bored she left the theatre at intermission.
The theatre critics vary in their praise, or lack thereof, for the touring production of *Tartuffé*. During the interview, Wrede also explained that the stage set and props were sometimes incomplete or improperly positioned, creating confusion for the actors and at times for the audience itself. Although Louise Beck, the scenographer, did not travel with the troupe, she explained in the October 2005 interview that some of those omissions were unfortunately necessary due to the varying stage dimensions in the towns they visited. Additionally, the touring company performed only one night in each provincial town, where time constraints could create additional problems.

After Wrede finished directing *Tartuffé*, as with Beck, she was not required to travel with the company so was unavailable to make last-minute changes should they have been required. Instead, Wrede kept up with progress from afar both during the tour and later at *Odense Teater* in case she was needed to step in with advice and suggestions. Wrede checked periodically with the theatre management to request the exact timing of each act during a specific evening performance. If the production followed the designated amount of minutes per act, she knew the performance was on target.

In a June 2005 telephone interview with Lars Knutzon, both an actor and director, he concurred with Wrede about theatre direction and explained that directors at *Det Danske Teater* (The Danish Theatre), a Danish theatre touring company, prepare their plays in similar fashion. He explained that directors finish their productions before the plays are forwarded to a variety of venues throughout the country, including small local theatres within the Copenhagen area. It is considered unnecessary in a country as small as Denmark to adapt productions to address different locations, size of the hall or type of audience. With productions only shown one night in each location, it would not even be feasible to make anything but minor changes.

When I was earlier discussing the 1996 *L’Avare* with actor Jesper Langberg, he explained his experiences when working with touring companies. He told me that actors frequently do not even see the stage until moments before the curtains rise. He liked the challenges presented by the different locations and added that those challenges infuse life into the play. If performed in identical fashion night after night, the play loses its life and becomes stagnant and uninteresting both to the audience as well as to the actors (interview Feb. 2006).
L’École des femmes

In Chapter Three, I will examine L’École des Femmes, which was first performed in Paris on December 26, 1662. As with L’Avare and Tartuffe, I will compare this play to the original Danish translation from 1724 included in Eiler Nystrøm’s Den Danske Komedies Oprindelse. I will then proceed with three recent productions of L’École des femmes. I will pay particular attention to the symbolic costumes and set designs from the 2000-01 performance at Det Kongelige Teater.

Diderich Seckman translated L’École des femmes directly for the stage at Lille Grønnegadeteatret. He made some major changes, which immediately strike the reader in the list of characters. Most of the actors have typical old-fashioned Danish names. Arnolphe, otherwise known as M. de la Souche, is called Peder Andersen, otherwise known as M. Hyldgaard; the servants Alain and Georgette are called Ole and Kirsten; and Chrysalde becomes Hieronimus. Peder Andersen is a common Danish country name with Hyldgaard referring to a farm surrounded by blooming elderberry bushes. In French, the name Agnès refers to agneau, the symbol of a lamb getting ready for slaughter, similar to the way Arnolphe prepares this innocent and naïve child to become his perfect wife. In Danish, she is called Agnete. The symbolic reference to a lamb is lost in the translation even if the two names Agnès and Agnete are similar in nature.

An example of how the translator locates the play within the Danish context is shown in Act I, Scene IV, when Arnolphe and Horace first meet. Horace is bringing a letter from his father Oronte, one of Arnolphe’s dearest friends. The discussion centers upon a friend about to return to his homeland with great wealth after having spent fourteen years in America (42). Whereas in the French version, “America” might refer to either the Caribbean islands or to the North American colonies, Seckman changes the location to “the man coming from the West Indies” (116). This change refers directly to the fact that the Virgin Islands belonged to the Danish empire from 1666 until they were sold to the United States in 1917. The Danes would have understood the reference to Danish land holdings far better than a reference to America.

The first of three recent versions of L’École des femmes discussed here was performed in 1983 at Betty Nansen Teatret in Copenhagen. Pastor Johannes Mollehave translated the play directly for their stage and included it later in his book titled
Møllehave gendigter Molière -- Misantropen -- Omskoling af Kvinder (Møllehave Recreates Molière -- Le Misanthrope -- The Re-Education of Women [L’École des femmes]) and published in 1988. The program shows a sad and grouchy old Adolphe. His appearance will be explained more fully in the chapter itself together with photos from the program.

The costumes, shown in the next program, designed for L’École des femmes and used in Jørgen Blakstad Tournéen (The Jørgen Blakstad Touring Company) in 1990, were quite a mix according to Jesper Langberg, the actor who played Arnolphe (interview 7 Feb. 2006). The costumes were colorful without belonging to a certain time period, and they lacked any apparent pattern or symbolism. Langberg was unimpressed with the Swedish director, who was fired only days before the play went on tour.

The photos from the theatre program provide evidence of the strange mix of costumes created for this play. In Act III, Scene II, while reciting the marriage maxims, Agnès sits on Arnolphe’s lap. She is wearing a long, black robe adorned with the white ruff worn by Lutheran ministers, and a tight black cap partly covers her hair. She presents the demure appearance of an innocent and devout young woman recently returned from the convent school where she has spent her formative years. In a later scene, she wears a negligee while Horace sleeps with his head in her lap. Horace is dressed in red leather pants with a patterned Thai silk shirt opened almost to his waist. In the last act in Act V, Scene III, Agnès looks cheap with long, disheveled flowing curls and a dress with a low-cut bodice. This costume contrasts drastically with her earlier prim and proper appearance. It is clear that Agnès has undergone a complete transformation both emotionally and psychologically. In the picture, Arnolphe is seen attempting to draw Agnès away from Horace, but as we know, he fails and loses the woman he has come to love deeply and sincerely.

The well-known Danish actor, Jørgen Reenberg, who played the title role in Tartuffe at Betty Nansen Teatret in 1989-90, plays Arnolphe for the winter 2000-01 production of L’École des femmes at Det Kongelige Teater. The theatre critic Alette Scavenius considers it to be among the 73-year-old Reenberg’s best performances in his many decades of acting. The young Sidse Babett Knudsen imbues the character with a delightful innocence and growing knowledge as she matures. Under Alexa Ther’s superb
direction paired with Rikke Juellund’s unique set design and costumes, L’École des femmes turns into a masterpiece presenting Molière at his best.

Juellund utilizes the red, orange, brown and golden fall colors both for Arnolphe’s apparel and for the set design to indicate that he has entered the fall of his life. At first, he exudes confidence and is neatly dressed. His early appearance contrasts starkly with the way he looks in the last act. Here Arnolphe wears a blue coat with grey unkempt hair standing on end. As the performance ends, the central area opens to the rear of the stage. Snow is falling outside as the forlorn, beaten Arnolphe walks out into the winter of his life. Meanwhile, Agnès is first dressed in a cream-colored little-girl dress with ruffles, wearing Mary Janes with ankle socks with one sock curled around the ankle. Her hair is dressed with ribbons in long, corkscrew curls. She sits and later stands demurely next to Arnolphe while reading the wifely maxims aloud to him. Despite their vast age difference, Reenberg and Babett Knudsen complement each other. It is their approach to life and not the age difference that matters here. I will go into further detail in the actual chapter on L’École des Femmes.

**Le Bourgeois gentilhomme**

In Chapter Four, I analyze three recent Danish productions of Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, a play first performed in Paris in 1670. As in the previous chapters, I will compare them with the original French version as well as with the first Danish production, which was performed for the king in Copenhagen palace and soon afterwards at Lille Grønnegadeatret in 1723. The manuscript was printed in 1725 and was also included in Eiler Nystrøm’s book Den Danske Komedies Oprindelse.

Euðun Johannessen from the Faroe Islands directed Den Fine Mand (The Elegant Man) at Aarhus Teater in Aarhus in Jutland during the spring of 1994. He used the translation specifically written by Jens Smærup Sørensen for this production. The scenographer Lars Juhl explained in our September 2006 interview that Aarhus Teater is fortunate to be an extremely well funded theatre, which allowed Juhl to design luxurious costumes and set designs for this elaborate and traditional performance.

A few years later, in August 1997, Pernille Grumme directed an amateur production of Le Bourgeois gentilhomme in Ringsted at the yearly outside venue in the
monastery gardens of this provincial town south of Copenhagen. Grumme had directed plays for this venue for several seasons. During her search for a play that would both amuse and impart some meaning, she discovered that *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* had neither been performed in Copenhagen nor been performed on the entire island of Zealand, where Copenhagen is situated, for the previous 100 years. She located Jens Smærup Sørensen’s translation from the 1994 production at *Aarhus Teater* and together with him adapted the play to fit the amateur summer production. The actors were tradespeople and business people, with the local blacksmith playing M. Jourdain. Being amateurs, they practiced for months, meeting only a few times a week. The play was shortened, with the Turkish part and the ballet omitted from this ballet-comedy.

In two March 2005 interviews, Grumme explained her reason for omitting the Turkish part. With Turkish culture -- decorative Turkish carriages, Turkish apparel and other Turkish objects -- being extremely popular with the nobility in France during the seventeenth century, Molière chose this obsession to demonstrate M. Jourdain’s extreme desire for social climbing. However in twentieth and twenty-first-century Danish society, it would not be right to ridicule the Turks and might not even be understood. The large Turkish contingent of foreign workers and immigrants in present-day Denmark is generally poor. These Turks are definitely not people who would suggest pretentiousness. Grumme opted to highlight affectations and obsession with fine wines to stress M. Jourdain’s character flaws. She provided M. Jourdain with a balalaika, which is not a classical instrument. These are just a few examples of how Grumme demonstrated M. Jourdain’s complete lack of knowledge of culture and etiquette. Based on the audience reaction in the video and in newspaper reviews, the play was quite successful.

This production stands in stark contrast to the summer 1998 production of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* played at *Grønnegårdsstetret*, a summer theatre based in the middle of *Kunst og Industrimuseet* (The Art and Industry Museum) in downtown Copenhagen. In a July 2003 telephone interview with Klaus Bondam, the managing director of *Grønnegårdsstetret* from 1996 to fall 2003, Bondam related his troubles with the production of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*. He said he realized the adaptation of the play was a flop and outlined his reasons for why he believed it happened. During a visit to Paris in 1996, he attended a performance of Jérôme Savary’s production of *Le*
Bourgeois gentilhomme at Théâtre National de Chaillot and decided to adapt this play to the Danish stage. Not being especially well versed with Molière’s comedies, tradition and wit, Bondam gave his choice of director, the Norwegian Catrine Telle, carte blanche to direct the play as she preferred.

In an effort to reproduce the French version to suit the Danish summer theatre audience and because its outdoor stage permitted few changes between scenes, Telle selected a camper as base for Monsieur Jourdain’s humble abode. She let the actors use poetic license in words and actions to fit the camper scene. Jens Smærup Sørensen’s manuscript was used (as it was in Ringsted the year before), and according to Lars Knutzon, who had played M. Jourdain at Grønnegårdsteatret, some of the actors changed their dialogue from performance to performance, diverging from the actual script and inadvertently altering significant moments. Telle changed the play to one single, long act, partly to keep the action going and partly, as Bondam suggested, to prevent the audience from leaving during intermission.

In a June 2005 telephone interview with Telle in Oslo, Norway, she explained that due to the poor reception of Pierre Corneille’s Le Cid in 1997, Bondam wanted to ensure better audience attendance so asked Telle to direct a humorous Le Bourgeois gentilhomme. Both Bondam and Telle acknowledge and regret that the play was poorly received. Was the lack of enthusiasm caused by the novel and unusual depiction of an old play? Was it because of a strange blend of actors, who in 1998, except for Lars Knutzon, were fairly unknown to the audience and also, according to Knutzon, were unfamiliar with the Molière tradition? Or was it simply because this particular play does not appeal to Danes? Knutzon believes it was in part caused by lack of sufficient direction, which in turn permitted the actors, unused to Molière, too much carte blanche. He also believes another reason was simply the problems that are associated with directing a play outdoors (Knutzon Oct. 2005).

One prime example of what proved to be an unfortunate directorial and scenographic judgment was Telle’s conversion of the wealthy Jourdain family apartment to a camper. In so doing, she relegated the family to a working-class society. When we discussed her choice of camper, Telle explained that she wanted it to serve as focal point in order to emphasize the Danish camping culture, calling it the “Danish baroque
camping period.” Telle’s novel ideas, further developed in Chapter Four, might well have worked but instead unintentionally offended some of the Danish spectators. Knutzon told me he begged Bondam to interfere and remove the camper but Bondam declined to intervene. The camper remained, and the use of this stage prop is the object mentioned by every single managing director and almost every theatre practitioner I have interviewed.

Telle described additional examples of how she stressed M. Jourdain’s excessive snobbishness. To demonstrate his apparent knowledge of stylish cuisine, M. Jourdain served Dorimène red hot dogs just like the popular ones Danes purchase from carts and eat while standing by the cart in the street. Lucile and Cléonte had a small, yellow plastic beach buggy. They loved the beach, and they listened to pop music while Madame Jourdain loved to shop. The Turkish scene was included in the play, and the actors wore period costumes and huge wigs, which all added to the confusion. According to both Telle and Knutzon, the entire performance continued in the same vein. In ongoing July 2005 telephone interviews with Telle and via e-mail, she outlined her vision for how the play should be produced, regretting its poor reception by the Danish audience.

When I asked Bondam in September 2004 if he intended to produce another Molière play, this time at Folketeatret (his venue from fall 2003 to spring 2005), he said that he would not attempt to produce a play by Molière for the next several years. His reason was financial. Having just taken over the position as managing director of the failing Copenhagen Folketeatret and being mindful of the audience’s reaction to Le Bourgeois gentilhomme in 1998, he could not afford to produce a show by Molière until he felt fairly certain that it would appeal to his audience. In February 2005, Bondam resigned from the world of theatre to entirely devote himself to the political scene and therefore now defers my questions to other theatre practitioners.

I later asked Lars Knutzon if he has plans to direct a play by Molière in the near future. In our August 2005 telephone interview, he told me that he has been given the green light to direct Le Bourgeois gentilhomme during the spring of 2008 for Det Danske Teater, the Danish touring company mentioned earlier. Knutzon plans to resume the role of M. Jourdain. Since he saw Jérôme Savary’s 1982 version of Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, not at Théâtre National de Chaillot in Paris but while that production was on tour in Copenhagen, he has felt inspired to produce a traditional version to be shown
throughout Denmark. He believes the Turkish Mufti should be included and explained that the use of turbans provides excellent opportunities for stressing M. Jourdain’s snobbishness without, in his opinion, insulting the Turkish population in present-day Danish society.

**Les Fourberies de Scapin**

In Chapter Five, I discuss two recent versions of *Les Fourberies de Scapin*. This comedy, one of Molière’s later prose plays from 1671, was translated for the Danish stage to be performed during the 1722-23 season at *Lille Grønnegadeteatret*. Although neither manuscript nor printed text remains dating back to that time, according to Anne E. Jensen in her separate book of notes for *Europæisk Drama i Danmark 1722-1770*, the comedy was definitely performed at the theatre. B. J. Lodde made the first existing translation in 1787 (43). In recent years, *Les Fourberies de Scapin* was directed by Lars Knutzon and performed by *Det Danske Teater* during the 2001-02 season. According to Knutzon, the play was well received throughout the country, as attested to by copies of the many positive theatre reviews *Det Danske Teater* donated to my research.

*Les Fourberies de Scapin* was performed as recently as March 2005 and is still, as of January 2007, the most recent Molière production in Denmark. The play was directed and performed in its entirety by the fourth-year students at *Statens Teaterskole* (The National Theatre School) in Copenhagen. The Norwegian Frede Snippen Gulbrandsen directed the play to fulfill his final examination requirement while Marie í Dali helped with the scenography. I attended this special performance to experience first-hand the work of these terrific young men and women. The students did a magnificent job with superb diction. *Les Fourberies de Scapin* is a perfect play for a group of students to use for their graduation production, giving them a wealth of different situations to deal with and solve.

The actors followed the wording of the script but the setting was changed. The set design was contemporary with a female Scapin as well as a female Sylvestro, who tended bar in a department store in downtown Copenhagen. During our February 2006 interview, Gulbrandsen explained that in his opinion a woman could just as easily play Scapin as a man could do it and possibly even better. He stressed how it is the manner in which
Scapin fools the older men that matters, not whether Scapin is played by a man or by a woman. Géronte’s well-known adage “What the devil was he doing on the galley?” was repeated plenty of times with peals of laughter from the audience of family, friends and theatre practitioners. Whereas in French « Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère? » actually means “Why on earth did he get involved in that mess?” in Danish, Géronte’s question similarly originates from Les Fourberies de Scapin. This adage has become part of the language, exemplifying a person who has acted foolishly. Although an old-fashioned adage, not in general use among the younger generation, upon leaving a grocery store in downtown Copenhagen in October 2005, I overheard an elderly lady telling her husband “What a galley I got you onto,” meaning how foolish and inconsiderate she had been to drag him along on such a useless errand. This expression is an example of how a foreign statement can affect and become part of another language.

**Le Misanthrope**

In Chapter Six, I will examine six translations of *Le Misanthrope*, with five of them translated from French into Danish and the sixth from French through German into Danish. I will pay particular attention to two popular productions of the play originally written by Molière in 1666. I will explore comparisons and contrasts between the traditional version of *Le Misanthrope* directed by Ingmar Bergman at *Det Kongelige Teater* and the recent experimental production at *Betty Nansen Teatret* in Copenhagen, where women comprised the entire cast. Klaus Hoffmeyer, formerly the managing director of the drama division at *Det Kongelige Teater*; Jesper Kjær, the recent translator of *L’Avare, Tartuffe* and *Le Misanthrope*; and John Pedersen, a retired French professor at the University of Copenhagen, all praise the 1973 production of the play.

According to Hoffmeyer, the Bergman production far outshines any recent attempts at directing Molière’s comedies. According to Pedersen, Bergman’s objective was to direct the play the way he believed it happened in France centuries ago when first performed in 1666. Furthermore according to Pedersen, Bergman emphasized the French Molière tradition in speech and apparel as well as in scenography. Bergman insisted upon keeping the curtain open throughout the performance while the actors sat in the wings, visible to the audience, waiting for their cues to enter the stage (interview 15 Mar. 2005).
Whereas almost every managing director, theatre practitioner and scholar I have interviewed expressed surprise at Telle’s use of a camper as the focal point for the 1998 performance of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, every one of them referred to Bergman’s *Le Misanthrope*, performed 176 times at *Det Kongelige Teater* in 1973, as the ultimate classical production played to perfection (Leicht and Hallars 227). As happened in the recent *Le Misanthrope* performed at *Betty Nansen Teatret* for their 2002 and 2003 seasons, Bergman employed superb actors and actresses for his production. Ghita Nørby, one of Denmark’s most popular character actresses, played a wonderful male Alceste in those recent productions after having played a beautiful female Célimène thirty years earlier in Bergman’s version.

As mentioned in the opening paragraphs, *Le Misanthrope* is the only Molière play I am discussing in this dissertation that was not originally performed on the stage at *Lille Grønnegadeteatret*. It was not performed in Denmark until 1951 at the new theatre, which opened in 1748, known as *Den Danske Skueplads* (The Danish Theatre). *Le Misanthrope* is also the only play I am discussing that was originally written in verse and remained in verse when translated into Danish from Molière’s original French play. In 1983, Pastor Johannes Møllehave translated *Le Misanthrope* into a free-form text while Jesper Kjær translated the play into verse in a nearly exact translation for the 2002 production requested by Peter Langdal, the managing director and director at *Betty Nansen Teatret*.

As mentioned above in Langdal’s version, while wearing French period costumes, women comprised the entire cast. Why did the director choose only female players? Only Langdal appeared able to answer that question, and until October 2005, the question remained unanswered by the various theatre practitioners. Neither Jesper Kjær, who translated the play for Langdal, nor the dramaturge Kitte Wagner had been able to explain the reason for the director’s choice of only female performers. However, Wagner believed and hoped that the unusual interpretation and subsequent success of *Le Misanthrope* would lead to a heightened interest in Molière (e-mail 27 Oct. 2003).

In our October 2005 interview, Langdal explained that he wanted to gauge the audience reaction to seeing only female players and that there was nothing unusual about his decision. Because of his belief that a woman is better able to demonstrate a man’s
inner feelings than a man, he one day asked Ghita Nørby whether a woman could portray a misanthrope. She answered that such a portrayal could certainly easily be done since she herself was a misanthrope all summer long. She described how she hid from the media while working with her roses in her summer garden. In our September 2006 interview, Nørby explained that she had professed doubt at first whether she would indeed be able to portray a man. However, she succeeded beyond all expectations. Ghita Nørby added further insight to Langdal’s assertion, which will be explained in more detail in Chapter Six.

The unusual production of this traditional play was so popular that the two managing directors of Betty Nansen Teatret, Henrik Hartmann and Peter Langdal, decided to repeat Le Misanthrope with equal success from December 2003 until February 2004. Why was it so popular? I agree with Kitte Wagner when she postulates that the reason for the popularity was most likely because the lead actresses, Ghita Nørby and Bodil Udsen, are considered to be two of Denmark’s most popular and best known performers (e-mail 27 Oct. 2003). The audience flocked to see them portray male characters and continued to do so during the second season. These two lead actresses, playing Alceste and Philinte, remained the same while most other roles, including Celimène, were reassigned to further improve the production, according to both Langdal during our October 2005 interview and an online review posted after the opening of the second season. This review describes Langdal as an enfant terrible who prefers to shock his audience by distorting the script and/or the stage to make the production almost unrecognizable (online 12 Dec. 2003). After having seen the video and spoken with Langdal, I disagree with that statement. Langdal has a unique approach to directing. In Le Misanthrope, it is the all-women cast that is unusual, while the play itself remains traditional from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries both in regard to language and costumes.

In what follows, I will expand upon the ideas and situations introduced in this Preface.
CHAPTER 1

L’AVARE

In the discussion about L’Avare, I am providing an in-depth textual analysis of five Danish translations. I compare and contrast them to Folio’s Gallimard 1999 French edition. The purpose for the comparison with the French original is to examine how well the translations adhere to Molière’s own script, and equally to determine whether the Danish versions create an effect that approximates that of the French original. A discussion will follow to analyze the different ways in which L’Avare has been produced in Denmark in recent years.

As noted in the Preface, while planning the opening of Lille Grønnegadeteatret, in order to succeed with such a big and novel venture, it was imperative for Montaigu and his financial backer Etienne Capion that Montaigu choose an inaugural play with which he was familiar and which he felt would appeal to the Danish audience. It was equally imperative that he chose a play where major changes were unnecessary in order to attract and be appreciated by the eighteenth-century Danish audience. With these constraints in mind, he chose Molière’s L’Avare, first performed September 9, 1668, at Palais-Royal in Paris. This character comedy discusses the concept of a miserly, universally disliked man who presents an easy target for ridicule. The subject of miserliness transcends the centuries, creating an equal impact in the eighteenth century as well as in today’s society whether in Denmark, France or the United States.

The five translations of L’Avare examined in this chapter consist among others of the original edition printed in 1724, two years after its inaugural presentation on the Danish stage at Lille Grønnegadeteatret. As mentioned in the Preface, despite substantial research, it remains unknown who the translator of the 1724 version of L’Avare actually is. From her extensive research into the subject, Jensen suspects it to be one of the university students who translated and adapted it to suit the Danish stage (Europæisk Drama 74-75). The existing playbill from September 23, 1722, calls the play Gnieren, which translates to L’Avare (Den Danske Skueplads på Holbergs Tid [The Danish Stage
During Holberg’s Time (38). It is explained below the playbill that this is a street flier used for the first performance on September 23, 1722 (see fig.1).

When printed in 1724, the title changed to 
**Comoedie om Gamle Jens Gnier eller Pengepugger** which translates into **Comedy about Old Jens Miser or Money Grubber** (see fig. 2). Although the title gives the principal character a Danish name, he retains his French name Harpagon in the play itself. His name appears to be the character’s only French feature in this Danish translation. Danish culture infiltrates the play with Danish expressions, social behavior and an extensive amount of abusive Danish epithets. As mentioned in the Preface, since copyrights did not exist in eighteenth-century Denmark, rewriting while translating was not considered infringement.

B. J. Lodde translated the second manuscript and had it printed in 1756 directly for the Danish stage titled **Den Gierrige eller Gnieren** (The Miserly Man or The Miser). Apart from a few exceptions, particularly in regard to long recitations about food, Lodde’s translation follows Molière’s original play much more closely than the anonymous 1724 version. However, Lodde does change some of the names. Cléante’s servant La Flèche is called Henric (Henrik in modern Danish and a popular servant name in Holberg’s comedies). Brindavoine and La Merluche are called Finkeljochum and Graaben (Gray Leg). These two names are ancient Danish words. According to a website about ancient Danish (http://www.dsl.dk), Finkeljochum refers to distilled liquor. La Merluche remains in the newer translations, whereas Brindavoine is omitted from both the 1996 and
2003 versions. In 1817, K. L. Rahbek adapted Lodde’s 1756 translation and further changed some of the names. La Flèche continues as Henrik, with Cléante renamed Leander and Anselme renamed Leonard. La Merluche changes his name from Finkeljochum to Jesper, and Dame Claude, who was Mutter Clausses in 1756, is now called Geske (Aumont and Collin). These are old, Danish names frequently encountered in Holberg’s comedies.

The remaining three manuscripts are from recent Danish productions. The first was performed at Aarhus Teater in Jutland in 1968. This production was combined with L’Impromptu de Versailles titled Molière har travlt (Molière is Busy). The late Edwin Tiemroth, the director and managing director of the theatre, asked Asger Bonfils to translate L’Avare directly for the stage at Aarhus Teater. An actor and director but neither a translator nor a French speaker, Tiemroth told Bonfils that surely he had learnt enough French in high school to translate the play into Danish (telephone interview with Bonfils Aug. 2005). Bonfils is vague about how closely he translated the play to match the original French edition, or whether it was Tiemroth who drastically adapted Bonfils’s translation. The lack of French knowledge might explain the condensed version. The translation is casual and informal with occasional coarse language, but it is easy to read and follow with short sentences, using plain, every-day language. The adapted manuscript is short and concise both in language and length with five acts condensed into two. The same combination of plays was performed at Folketeatret in Copenhagen in 1974, again under the direction of Edwin Tiemroth with Preben Harris as the new managing director of the theatre. In 1974, the plays retained their separate names with L’Impromptu de Versailles performed before L’Avare but with the same cast of actors appearing in both plays.

Michael Segerström had translated L’Avare into Swedish for a performance in Sweden. The two Swedish directors and the Swedish scenographer from that production were then asked to direct L’Avare at Nørrebros Teater in Copenhagen in 1996. Jesper Kjær was asked to translate the play into Danish. Although Kjær glanced at Segerström’s translation, he translated his own version of L’Avare. The language is casual and informal with occasional coarse epithets, but it is easy to read and truer to the original 1668 French play than Bonfils’s version. The Swedish translator added a Prologue to the
comedy. Kjær followed this pattern by writing his own Prologue, adapting it to the Danish audience (telephone interview Oct. 2006). It is hilarious and sets the stage for the play. Later in this chapter, I will provide explicit examples from this Prologue.

The most recent production of *L’Avare* was performed at *Odense Teater* in 2003. Kim Bjarke, the director, adapted his manuscript from a translation made four decades earlier by Kristen D. Spanggaard in 1964 in his book *Molière - Komedier II* (*Molière - Comedies II*). In a March 2004 interview, Bjarke explained that he preferred Spanggaard’s translation to the ones written by Bonfils and Kjær because he found Spanggaard’s translation truer to the original French one. Only a few words and expressions were adapted to make it easier to understand by the contemporary Danish reader. Bjarke made some additional adaptations to make the play more meaningful and relevant to suit his 2003 audience.

**L’Avare 1724**

As mentioned in the Preface, in the 1724 *L’Avare*, we meet a common Danish family instead of a wealthy French haute bourgeoisie. This miserly Harpagon resides either in Copenhagen or in a large provincial town with servants from the country who infuse their rural attitudes, language and culture into the household (Jensen, *Lille Grønnegade* 46). Harpagon’s servants and other characters speak the slow, drawling dialect spoken in Jutland, the large peninsula north of Germany and far to the west of Copenhagen. A wealth of expletives, curses and proverbs appear throughout the text (Jensen, *Europeisk Drama* 81). To ensure the audience comprehends the play’s intent, in particular the character flaw of miserliness, the translator lengthens some paragraphs, adding some Danish customs and names. I will personally translate a number of these examples to emphasize the Danish influence integrated into the 1724 translation as well as into the other manuscripts. Although the purpose with my own translations is to seek to reveal the Danish influence, it is necessary to change most paragraphs into proper English in order to ensure that the English reader understands the sentences. In some instances, I will provide a literal Danish translation followed by an English version to clarify how the anonymous translator infused common Danish country life into the play.
Some proverbs, explanations and expletives in the 1724 manuscript date from rural Denmark. These expressions are outdated and at times difficult for today’s reader to understand. The website http://www.dsl.dk is a great resource to help Danish readers understand the meaning of the old sayings. DSL stands for Det Danske Litteraturselskab (The Danish Literature Organization), and ODS stands for Ordbog over det Danske Sprog (Danish Language Dictionary). A number of references deal directly with specific words and sayings from the 1724 translation of L’Avare.

In Act I, Scene II, Cléante and Élise discuss being in love. Cléante claims Élise does not know what it means to be in love. Cléante says, « J’appréhende votre sagesse » (34). In the Danish translation, Cléante adds a proverb and says, ”I fear only your common sense because as long as the heart is not on fire, the understanding burns, and when one burns, the other is extinguished” (12).

In Act I, Scene V, Harpagon continually harps upon « sans dot » while Valère simultaneously emphasizes how important it is to realize that marriage is for life. The French version ends with « qu’un engagement qui doit durer jusqu’à la mort ne se doit jamais faire qu’avec de grandes précautions » (67). The Danish translation adds a proverb to finish the phrase with “a pledge, which is supposed to last until death. Unless the person making the pledge is extremely careful, it cannot be compared to purchasing a horse one can exchange and then get a pitcher of beer in return” (37).

In Act II, Scene IV, La Flèche emphasizes Harpagon’s miserliness by explaining to Frosine that « Le seigneur Harpagon est de tous les humains l’humain le moins humain, le mortel de tous les mortels le plus dur et le plus serré » (90). In Danish, La Flèche explains, “that in regard to money, he [Harpagon] is like iron and steel, like brick and flint, that the Devil must beg for any gift and that it would be a strange occurrence that would cause him to open his wallet and to tip even a penny.” La Flèche adds, “But speak to me about coins. You won’t be able to pull them from him with a pair of pincers or extract them with a wagon whip” and ends the long paragraph by saying that “He [Harpagon] buys cow manure for four skillinger [a mere pittance] and during the winter sells them as loads of peat for a daler [equal to two kroner] per load” (54-55). The Danish translator invents numerous such countrified expressions to ensure his audience grasps the extent to which Harpagon’s miserliness will take him.
Towards the end of the play in Act V, Scene II, Maître Jacques says, « Monsieur, le voici qui revient. Ne lui allez pas dire au moins que c’est moi qui vous ai découvert cela » (187). This sentence is rendered in Danish in a very countrified fashion as: “Yes Sir, one cannot believe the pigs. They eat the cabbage to make space for the plants. Look, there he [Harpagon] comes but at least do not tell him that I am the one who told you” (120). After Harpagon persistently refuses to reimburse Frosine for her work and departs, the Danish Frosine calls him quite a number of names such as “You damn old dog, you rotten, dirty dog” (67) and other equally uncomplimentary, old-fashioned names too unusual to translate or even to understand.

An elaborate addition of names is found in Act III, Scene II when Harpagon asks Maître Jacques to explain how people describe him in the village. In French, the paragraph ends with: « Vous êtes la fable et la risée de tout le monde; et jamais on ne parle de vous, que sous les noms d’avare, de ladre, de villain et de fesse-mathieu » (124). In Danish, Mester Jacob says, “People never call you anything but Blood Sucker, Dog in the Haystack, Christian Jew, Jens Nitpicker, Jens Close Fisted, Old Jens Poison, Jens Double Deposit, Jens Jew, Jens Miser, Jens Fleabag, Jens Flour Porridge, Jens Water Cabbage, Jens Sour Herring, Jens Devil […]” (80-81) and more equally unsavory names in general beginning with Jens. It is evident that the translator wants the audience to realize how Harpagon’s miserliness and pettiness cause the townspeople to hold him in contempt.

As mentioned above, the 1724 title for L’Avare is Comoedie om Gamle Jens Gnier eller Pengepuger, which translates into Comedy about Old Jens Miser or Money Grubber. Except for the long recitation of names in this central section, the name Jens does not appear anywhere else in the Danish version. I believe the name Jens in the title refers to this paragraph filled with epithets beginning with Jens. Jens is an old country name whose popularity throughout the Danish citizenry has never diminished during the ensuing centuries. For instance, Danish soldiers are referred to as Danish Jenser, a terminology that dates back to the war of 1864 when Danish soldiers in general were recruited from simple Danish farmhands, who frequently were named Jens (http://www.dsl.dk). Today the popular Danish soccer players are also referred to as
Danish Jenser. Similarly the Swedes refer to their countrymen as Swedish Gustaver, and the Germans refer to their German Fritz.

Translation Excerpts

Where most changes from French to Danish occur in the 1724 manuscript, presumably in order for the comedy to be accepted and better understood by the Danish commoner, other examples given in this chapter deal with the manner in which the different translators and theatre directors have adapted L’Avare to suit the style and mood of a specific time. For instance, in Act II, Scene V, Frosine, the marriage broker, speaking in a Jutlandic dialect, describes Mariane’s modest and frugal standard of living to convince Harpagon what a catch this young woman would be.

In the French version, Frosine says:

Oui. Premièrement, elle est nourrie et élevée dans une grande épargne de bouche; c’est une fille accoutumée à vivre de salade, de lait, de fromage et de pommes, et à laquelle par conséquent il ne faudra ni table bien servie, ni consommés exquis, ni orges mondés perpétuels, ni les autres délicatesses qu’il faudrait pour une autre femme [...]. (97-98)

In the 1724 version, this paragraph reads:

First off, she is brought up in a thrifty and modest manner without delicacies and sweets. She is used to living on a meager diet, a spoonful of sour milk and curds, cabbage and fatback, gruel and herring, peas and porridge made from water, pumpernickel and beer soup and cod fish, floury bread and whey; therefore there is no need to keep a fancy table with delicacies, fancy grain and other such specialties as such a woman might demand [...]. (59)

In the discussion that follows about a spouse’s age, Frosine emphasizes how Mariane prefers marriage to an older man instead of to one closer to her own age. In the 1724 translation, « Un beau vieillard avec une barbe majesteuse » (100) changes to a more Danish image of an old man with a long beard of such considerable length that it is possible to use it to stuff an English saddle (61). Where in the French version, Frosine claims that Mariane prefers an older man of sixty or at least fifty-five and certainly with
glasses (100-01), in the Danish version, Frosine says the man must be at least sixty years of age. “Yes! She says that fifty years is nothing to her. She especially prefers you wear glasses, and Mariane is ready to devour such a nose for the sheer delight of having such a nose on which to place the glasses” (62). The anonymous translator lets Frosine get carried away with her descriptions. Although they might have made sense in the eighteenth century, they sound peculiar to the modern reader.

In the following French example, Frosine explains the various paintings and prints that decorate the walls in Mariane’s bedchamber: « On lui voit dans sa chambre quelques tableaux et quelques estampes; mais que pensez-vous que ce soit? Des Adonis? des Céphales? des Pâris? et des Apollons? Non: de beaux portraits de Saturne, du roi Priam, du vieux Nestor, et du bon père Anchise sur les épaules de son fils » (101).

In the 1724 translation, Frosine adds Danish names of ancient men to ensure that the audience understands Mariane’s preference for older men:

In her bedchamber, she has numerous paintings and copper prints; but do you think they are like those of Adonis, Cephalos, Paris, Apollo? No they are like those of Saturn, King Priam, the old Nestor, the good old Anchise whom the son is carrying on his back, the old ogre Tiliok with the beard, who is written about in Saxo Grammatico, the old Sterckodder with his coal bag on his back, Torkild Jernside (Ironside), Thorgrin (Grinning Thor), Eskild Tyrehoved (Bull Head), and such old fellows. (62-63)

In these same two examples, in the 1756 manuscript, also translated directly for the Danish stage, Lodde follows the original French version and barely deviates from the description of the food except by suggesting that Mariane does not need special strong soups, fresh fish, venison or other such delicacies (51). Lodde exchanges Cephalos for Narcissus, who is more likely to be known by the Danish audience (53). In Asger Bonfils’s more concise 1968 version, written for Aarhus teater, Frosine shortens her recitation a little, mentioning choice soups, endless lemonades or other delicacies (30), whereas in her reference to old men, the long beard undergoes a transformation and changes into dignified, white hair (31) with the description of the paintings entirely omitted.
Still in regard to food choices, in Jesper Kjær’s 1996 manuscript, written for Nørrebros Teater in Copenhagen, Frosine says: “In the first place, she is brought up in a simple fashion in regard to food and beverages. She hardly eats anything but salad. In other words, she neither needs sumptuous hors d’oeuvres nor expensive meat dishes nor delicacies like other ladies” (41). Kjær omits the mention of either beard or white hair and simply writes that Mariane is delighted when she sees a distinguished elderly gentleman (42). His paragraph about the portraits is also shortened considerably to: “What do you think they represent? Adonis? Prince Paris? Apollo? Oh no. She has portraits of old King Priam, of white haired Nestor and a copperplate of Methuselah” (43).

In his 2003 adaptation for Odense Teater, Kim Bjarke retains Spanggaard’s 1964 nearly exact translation from the original L’Avare in regard to her food choices while his Mariane also prefers a nice elderly man with a majestic beard (47). This manuscript retains the original names for the portraits except for Cephalos. I presume this man is too little known to carry any weight with the Danish audience.

In the French version in Act II, Scene I, Cléante exclaims to La Flèche, « Comment diable ! Quel Juif, quel Arabe est-ce là ? C’est plus qu’au denier quatre » (78). These expletives change with the passing of time. In 1724, the Jew remains while the Arab is omitted in exchange for some ancient terminology for loan shark and miser “sikken skinder og skaver” meaning what a bloodsucking miser (http://www.dsl.dk). In 1756, the Arab changes to Turk (38), while in 1968, both the Jew and the Turk remain (22). Both Kjær (32) and Bjarke (35) prefer to use the term loan shark instead of referring to a foreign national or to a man’s religion.

In the March 2004 interview with Bjarke, I questioned him about his wise decision to omit the slur Quel Juif. Being unsure if Molière was anti-Semitic, he mentioned that he had no wish to offend his audience. The second slur Quel Arabe had already been removed in Spanggaard’s translation, and What a Turk never replaced Quel Arabe most likely due to the influx of Turkish immigrants to Denmark. Bjarke explained that he saw no need for excessive, bad language or references to nationalities or religion nor did he want to affront anybody. Such racial slurs neither serve any purpose in the play nor does he believe they elicit particularly humorous responses from the audience.
Although not written in the manuscript, in the actual production in 2003, Cléante adds a proverb to finish his statement about the loan shark and says, “You cannot pluck hairs from a bald man’s head” (35).

In regard to food choices, the Danish translators add typical Danish country fare in the scene where Frosine explains Mariane’s simple eating habits to Harpagon. The translators add further emphasis to the food differences in Act III, Scene I when Harpagon instructs Maître Jacques, called Mester Jacob in Danish, in the types of food to serve his guests to ensure the cook is as frugal as possible. In the French version, Harpagon says, « Il faudra de ses choses dont on ne mange guère, et qui rassasient d’abord : quelque bon haricot bien bras, avec quelque pâté en pot bien garni de marrons » (119).

In 1724 this changes to:

We need the kind of food which they will only sample and which will fill their stomachs such as good peas from Lolland (typical peasant food), beans covered with fatback, a cake consisting of half the flour made from cheap wheat and half from regular flour with just a couple of eggs, followed by half a Cumberland sausage […] and some bread to sop up the sauce in order to satisfy them. (74)

In 1756, Harpagon says, “We must have such food that we do not eat too much of and which is filling; a platter of good gray peas from Lolland surrounded by good fatty fatback followed by beef with carrots” (65). The 1968 version is simple and short: “We must have something which will cause us to not eat too much and which is filling -- a good lamb stew, a fatty paté with lots of chestnuts” (40). In 1996, Harpagon says, “It is best to serve dishes where one does not stuff oneself and where one quickly feels satisfied for example with food such as cabbage filled with turnips and maybe a solid cheesecake” (52). In 2003, Harpagon makes similar suggestions and says, “You must choose some dishes where one does not eat too much but which are filling for example a stew made from fatty lamb and a paté made from chestnuts -- filled with chestnuts” (58).

There are no great changes in the various Danish translations apart from the excessive additions made in 1724 such as the ones noted here translated from Act III, Scene I. After changing into the coachman’s outfit, Maître Jacques refuses to harness the
horses to drive the ladies to town for their shopping expedition because of the horses’ sorry health. In French, Maître Jacques deplores the conditions under which the horses are being kept and says, « Mais vous leur faites observer des jeûnes si austères que ce ne sont plus rien que des idées ou des fantômes, des façons de chevaux » (120).

In 1724, Maître Jacques gets carried away and recites one countrified proverb after another:

You let them [the horses] have so many free days [without feeding them], they have no choice but to look the way they are [completely emaciated] […] you can hang a pot of beer on each hip. Those hips rise up like those of a greyhound that has been chasing rabbits throughout town all day, but the horses are unable to lick their toes as well as Ole Archer’s dog whose foot was caught in the fox trap […]. (75-76)

This peculiar passage is an example of how the anonymous translator attempts to describe Harpagon’s extreme miserliness. Ole Archer’s dog might be known to the eighteenth-century audience but is not likely to be understood in later decades and centuries. As with other examples, Maître Jacques’s long recitation is meant to emphasize Harpagon’s obsessive and miserly behavior.

In 1756, the passage merely reads, “But you let them have such tough days of dieting that they are nothing but shadows or models of horses” (66). In 1968, Bonfils writes, “You keep them on such a poor diet that they will soon be no more than shadows or ghost horses.” In 1996, Kjær translates it to: “But when the master does not give them enough fodder, they become so weak and emaciated the horses rattle when they neigh” (53). Similarly in 2003, the paragraph reads, “But the master keeps them on such a strict diet that they look like ghost horses, true phantoms, lines in the sky” (58).

In regard to another food recitation, in Act III, Scene I, Harpagon tells Maître Jacques to prepare a meal for eight to be stretched to feed ten guests. The 1999 Gallimard edition is translated directly from the 1724 edition. The 1968 manuscript translates the dishes into plain Danish food, with the 2003 version describing better tasting cuisine. In contrast to these translations, the one from 1756 and the one from 1996 use a French edition printed in 1682 where Maître Jacques names numerous delicious dishes (Gallimard footnote 116).

In 1756 this section translates into: “O well. We must have four huge platters with five additional side dishes: Cray fish soup, a plate with partridge and kale, a hearty meat soup and a dish with ducks and beets. Added to these a chicken stew, a pigeon paté, veal breast with oyster sauce, white sausages and a platter with carp tongues” (63). When Maître Jacques only says, « Rôt… » (116) and « Entremets… » (117) based on the Gallimard edition, in 1756 Maître Jacques repeats what is written in 1682: “Roast on a huge platter piled high into the shape of a pyramid, a large veal roast, three pheasants, three fat poulards, twelve young pigeons, twelve chickens, two rabbits, twelve partridges […]. The second course must be steamed oysters, fried oysters, raw oysters…” (63).

In 1996, Maître Jacques says:

Well, then we must have four soups and five appetizers: Cray fish soup, grouse soup, vegetable soup, duck soup. Appetizers: chicken stew, wood pigeons, sweetbread, stewed mushrooms, goose liver…and for oven dishes: kidney pie à la pyramid on top of three pheasants, three young chickens, twelve pigeons…and seven wild rabbits, twelve partridges, two dozen quails, three dozen fancy birds… (51)

The translators get their messages across. The excessive rattling off of fancy menu suggestions stand in direct and obvious opposition to Harpagon’s actual wishes.

As noted in my examples, each recently translated manuscript has areas that differ from the original French version. The 1968 and 1996 versions are translated directly for the stage at the request of the directors, who in turn further adapted the plays to suit their visions for the play. Bonfils condensed his version, cutting out extraneous material and shortening the sentences to create a play that flows smoothly. His language is plain, direct and easy to follow. Kjær’s translation has the same easy flow and is equally direct using
expressions and epithets to suit a contemporary audience. Kjær’s actors speak a plain, easy-to-understand-and-follow Danish, addressing each other with the equivalent of employing the informal *tu* rather than the formal *vous*, which additionally lends a modern touch to the performance. Although during the past decades, the majority of Danes address not only their peers, but also generally their elders, with the informal *tu*, the courteous way to address one’s elders, employers and customers is with the formal *vous*.

Bjarke adapted an existing translation, made by Spanggaard in 1964 with fewer changes, in order to remain truer to the original French seventeenth-century edition, and he keeps the traditional *vous* in his adaptation. I am translating a few examples from each play to help analyze the recent versions of *L’Avare*.

In 1968, Bonfils added a Prologue with Molière presenting his play:

Ladies and Gentlemen, I beg you to imagine that the stage we have designed is the enclosed veranda with exit to the park at the home of the good Parisian Mr. Harpagon, who is known throughout the neighborhood for his miserliness. He is a widower and his son, Cléante, and daughter, Elise -- played by La Grange and Mlle. Duparc -- suffer daily under the father’s insanity. Valère, who is secretly in love with Elise, has been engaged to work in the house. -- “Mr. Brécourt, you are welcome to use the same costume, it is well suited to the butler.” -- Valère has been engaged in Harpagon’s house, and the play begins with a scene between these two.

Ladies and Gentlemen! …
(In an aside to La Flèche, who has helped him get dressed)
Thank you Beanval! --

We are presenting a comedy of Jean Baptiste Poquelin, whose artistic name is Molière, called:

(As he is putting on the wig)

*L’Avare*

(He motions to Elise and Valère)

… Please begin! (1)
In the 1996 production of *L’Avare* at *Nørrebros Teater* in Copenhagen, Harpagon addressed the audience with a humorous Prologue. Two Swedes, Susanne Halvares and Dag Malmberg, directed this particular production. They also brought their scenographer Elisabeth Åström with them from Sweden. Michael Segerström wrote the Prologue for the 1996 Swedish production. According to Jesper Kjær, the decision to include the Swedish Prologue was added late during the Danish production preparations with Kjær making sweeping changes to suit the Danish audience (e-mail 26 Nov. 2005).

Harpagon’s Prologue suggests a play-within-a-play tradition, a term used repeatedly by the Danish newspaper critics. Jesper Langberg, who plays Harpagon, enters the stage still dressed in his bathrobe and directly addresses the audience. Langberg welcomes the spectators and tells them how much he loves them all, particularly those who have paid full price for their tickets. He looks into the cash box, counts and says, “Thanks to the twelve of you.” He asks the spectators to please sit quietly in their seats and not move from side to side in order not to wear down the new seat cushions because of the expensive fabric [the theatre had actually just been renovated with brand new seat cushions]. The suggestion about the seat cushions is taken directly from *L’Avare* from the first paragraph in Act III, Scene I, where Harpagon says, « Je vous commets au soin de nettoyer partout; et surtout prenez garde de ne frotter les meubles trop fort, de peur de les user » (108).

Langberg requests that the spectators leave their programs to be recycled and resold [Danish theatre programs are quite expensive]. He furthermore states that should anybody in the audience be celebrating their birthday he has a special offer for them. He will sing “Happy Birthday” to them for 100 kroner ($15-$16). He asks, “Does anybody have a birthday this evening? Nobody? That is too bad.” Langberg then offers a T-shirt for sale to the audience with “Jesper Langberg” printed in huge letters and *L’Avare* printed in tiny letters, saying: “It says *L’Avare* and is made from pure cloth. It will cost you 100 kroner. We have a special this evening. Buy two and pay for three.”

Langberg then proceeds to introduce the entire cast, starting with Elin Reimer, who plays Frosine. Langberg tells the audience that although Reimer is an expensive member of the cast, she has entered into an agreement with the management that part of her salary is to be paid in dog biscuits that have been sponsored. He follows Reimer’s
introduction by explaining how important it is to have young actors because although they might not be great performers, they are inexpensive. The mature actors are only paid on Fridays and Saturdays. The other days, they are given coffee and Danish pastry, while Langberg’s own salary of course is a generous one. There will be no music because it is not included in the ticket price. That would be known as extra music. Langberg continues for a while in this vein and thereby sets the stage for the play with the audience engaged and ready to enjoy the evening’s performance. At the end of the Prologue, the younger actors drag Langberg off the stage, and the performance is ready to begin.

In 2003, Bjarke did not include or invent a Prologue to begin his version of *L’Avare* at *Odense Teater*. His play begins directly with Act I, Scene I with Valère and Elise discussing their interest in each other. The 1968 and 1996 Prologues add immediate interest to the play and engage the audience, whereas in 2003, the play is off to a slow start with the excessively long paragraphs that begin the play in Act I, Scene I.

**Examples From Recent Translations**

Another example of change in recent manuscripts occurs in Act I, Scene V. Here Harpagon and Valère discuss the merits of the man chosen by Harpagon to wed Elise, in particular the all-important fact that the future husband is willing to forego the usual dowry. In 1968, the sentences are shortened considerably with the last few paragraphs entirely omitted.

In French, we read:

```
HARPAGON. C’est une occasion qu’il faut prendre vite aux chevaux. Je trouve ici un avantage qu’ailleurs je ne trouverais pas, et il s’engage à la prendre sans dot.
VALERE. Sans dot?
HARPAGON. Oui.
VALERE. Ah! je ne dis plus rien. Voyez-vous? voilà une raison tout à fait convaincante; il se faut rendre à cela.
HARPAGON. C’est pour moi une épargne considérable.
VALERE. Assurément, cela ne reçoit point de contradiction. Il est vrai que votre fille vous peut représenter que le mariage est une plus grande
```
affaire qu’on ne peut croire; qu’il y va d’être heureux ou malheureux
toute sa vie; et qu’un engagement qui doit durer jusqu’à la mort ne se
doit jamais faire qu’avec de grandes précautions.

HARPAGON. Sans dot.

VALERE. Vous avez raison: voilà qui décide tout, cela s’entend. Il y a des
gens qui pourraient vous dire qu’en de telles occasions l’inclination
d’une fille est une chose sans doute où l’on doit avoir de l’égard; et que
cette grande inégalité d’âge, d’humeur et de sentiments, rend un
mariage sujet à des accidents très fâcheux.

HARPAGON. Sans dot. (66-67)

In 1968 this part becomes:

HARPAGON. No -- that is a moment to be seized! There is a distinctly
unique advantage: he will take her without a dowry!

VALERE. Without a dowry?

HARPAGON. Yes.

VALERE. Then I will say no more.

HARPAGON. It is a great saving.

VALERE. Well that is true. But on the other hand, although your daughter
might possibly say that on such an occasion one should take a
daughter’s feelings into consideration…

HARPAGON. Without a dowry!!

VALERE. I cannot gainsay that! Not that fathers do not exist, who put
more weight on their daughter’s happiness than money…

HARPAGON. Without a dowry!

VALERE. That is true: It stops everybody’s mouth! (17-18)

In 1996, Harpagon begins with a similar statement: “It is a unique chance. I have
here a possibility that might never be repeated. He will take her without a dowry” (26).
Although translated pretty close to the original French manuscript, Kjær omits parts of
this long recitation of “without a dowry.” He gets the point across to his audience and
keeps the play moving along at a fast pace.
In Bjarke’s 2003 adaptation, Harpagon changes his words a little in the same paragraph to: “It is an opportunity that must be seized immediately. Mr. Anselme’s offer is so advantageous that I will never find another one like it. Imagine, he offers to take her without a dowry!” (27). Where Kjær shortens the recitation of “without a dowry,” Bjarke retains the entire scene and translates this section to remain in close agreement with Molière’s own version.

Another part of the translations that undergoes a change in all three recent versions occurs in Act II, Scene I, where La Flèche lists numerous objects, besides the actual money, to be included in the money lending activity.

In French, we read:

LA FLECHE. Premièrement, un lit de quatre pieds, à bandes de points de Hongrie, appliquées fort proprement sur un drap de couleur d’olive, avec six chaises et la courtepointe de même; le tout bien conditionné, et double d’un petit taffetas changeant rouge et bleu.

Plus, un pavillon à queu, d’une bonne serge d’Aumale rose-sèche, avec le mollet et les franges de soir.

CLEANTE. Que veut-il que je fasse de cela?

LA FLECHE. Attendez.

Plus une tenture de tapisserie des amours de Gombaut et de Macée.

Plus une grande table de bois de noyer, à douze colonnes ou piliers tournés, qui se tire par les deux bouts, et garnie par le dessous de ses six escabelles. (79-80)

In 1968, this part changes considerably with only some of the original items even mentioned and with the paragraphs condensed:

LA FLECHE. A canopy bed with curtains made from Hungarian lace together with six chairs and a matching bedspread -- all in good condition... plus -- a canopy -- with rose colored lace.

CLEANTE. What the devil am I to do with those items?

LA FLECHE. Plus -- A tapestry representing Gombaut and Macée’s love -- plus -- a large walnut table with twelve turned pillars and an extension at each end. (23)
The recitation of objects continues in a similarly condensed fashion. As an aside, in the 1756 translation, the sentence with Gombaut and Macée changes to: “Wait a moment. Furthermore, some nice furniture upholstery for the room that represents the exploits of Holger Danske [a mythical Danish hero] and his fight for spinster Gloriant” (39).

The 1996 manuscript recites different items than noted in 1968:

LA FLECHE. Listen. First of all: one baby crib, sixty centimeters long with barely used sheets and including a richly decorated Hungarian rattle.
CLEANTE. What the devil?
LA FLECHE. Take it easy. Also: A woven tapestry representing Ovid’s Eros. Also: Eight small footstools with four legs. Also: Three antique chamber pots with illustrated bottoms. Also: A Belgian set of porcelain representing four dwarfs who have lost their way. Also: A Hawaiian ukulele with all strings intact except for a few. (33)

In 2003, the recitation changes a little:

LA FLECHE. First of all, a canopy bed with olive-green covers, elegantly appliquéd with Hungarian lace; add to that a foot rug made from the same cloth with six matching chairs, all in good condition, lined and covered with red and blue taffeta. Secondly, a pink canopy bed with silk cording and tassels.
CLEANTE. What am I to do with all that?
LA FLECHE. Wait! (he keeps reading) Thirdly, a tapestry depicting Gombaud’s and Macea’s love story.
Fourthly, a large walnut dining table built to be extended, with twelve turned legs and with six matching stools. (35-36)

**Different Conclusions in Recent Productions**

At the conclusion of the play, all three translations add their own special ending. In 1968, Bonfils adds a few lines in what at first glimpse appears to be an attempt to soften Harpagon’s single-mindedness in regard to money and only money. In the original
French version, Harpagon finishes the play saying, « Et moi, voir ma chère cassette » (213).

In 1968 Elise and Cléante bar his way exclaiming:

ELISE. Dad!
HARPAGON. Congratulations dear children -- where is my moneybox?
CLEANTE. Dad!
HARPAGON. Congratulations, where the devil is my moneybox?
LA FLECHE. (finds it) Here!
Harpagon rushes to his moneybox -- while the others… (80-81)

The curtain falls, leaving the audience well aware that Harpagon has learned absolutely nothing and that all that continues to matter to him in life is his beloved money and his moneybox.

In 1996, Kjær adds a humorous twist to his conclusion. When Anselme arrives in Act V, Scene V to quickly finish the play, he and Mariane speak in Italian. Maître Jacques translates the Italian paragraphs into absurd Danish. He says for instance, “You have landed in a terrible soup [in a nice mess],” “when they arrived in Naples, they killed the fatted calf” and “when they arrived in Genoa, there was a big pancake” (101). The Italian, followed by equally ridiculous translations, continues until the abrupt ending, when Harpagon is reunited with his moneybox, remaining utterly oblivious to his family. The audience is again convinced that money is the single most important object in his life.

During the September 2005 interview about his portrayal of Harpagon in 1996, Jesper Langberg related a humorous anecdote that occurred several times at the end of the performance. During the repeated curtain calls Langberg suddenly noticed that items were landing by his feet. It puzzled him until he noticed that those were coins tossed to him. There were one krone coins, five kroner coins and even five ører coins (five ører is worth less than a penny). Langberg had never experienced anything like it. His character portrayal of Harpagon had really engaged the audience.

Bjarke adds a different twist to the ending of his 2003 L’Avare. As the curtain is about to be lowered upon the two happy young couples, Harpagon solely contemplates his beloved money. The actors all file out. After leaving the stage empty for a moment,
Harpagon returns alone clasping his beloved money chest. As the curtain falls, Harpagon stands with his chest in his arms and slowly sinks unto the stage floor while stroking his treasure chest as if it were a woman. In the March 2004 interview, Bjarke related how the audience laughed and laughed. In reality this is a tragic finale because clearly Harpagon is so blinded by his miserliness that he is left utterly alone without a friend in the world besides his treasured money. As in every translation discussed in this chapter, it remains painfully obvious that Harpagon has learned absolutely nothing from recent events and that he is unlikely to ever change.

I am adding some final examples from 1996 to help underscore how Kjær’s Danish expressions and condensed paragraphs provide a natural flow to his translation. For example in Act II, Scene V, Frosine highlights Harpagon’s character traits. In French, Frosine says: « Eh! Cela est bien bâti, auprès d’une personne comme vous. Voilà un homme cela. Il y a là de quoi satisfaire à la vue; et c’est ainsi qu’il faut être fait, et vêtu, pour donner de l’amour » (103). Kjær translates that paragraph to: “Yes. Is that anything compared to you? You are a real man, yes you are. There is something solid to look at, something made for holding hands in a thunderstorm. A man should be built and dressed like you in order to love a woman” (44). In the next paragraph Frosine says, « Vous êtes à ravir, et votre figure est à peindre » (103) which Kjær translates to, “You ought to be cast in bronze” (44).

Kjær combines Act II, scene III and IV and shortens the scene considerably:

FROSINE. Hé! c’est toi. Mon pauvre La Flèche? D’où vient cette rencontre?

LA FLECHE. Ah! ah! c’est toi, Frosine. Que viens-tu faire ici?

FROSINE. Ce que je fais partout ailleurs: m’entremettre d’affaires, me rendre serviable aux gens, et profiter du mieux qu’il m’est possible des petits talents que je puis avoir. Tu sais que dans ce monde il faut vivre d’adresse, et qu’aux personnes comme moi le Ciel n’a donné d’autres rentes que l’intrigue et que l’industrie.

LA FLECHE. As-tu quelque négoce avec le patron du logis?

FROSINE. Qui, je traite pour lui quelque petite affaire, don’t j’espère une récompense.
LE FLECHE. De lui? Ah, ma foi! tu seras bien fine si tu en tires quelque chose; et je te donne avis que l’argent céans est fort cher.
FROSINE. Il y a de certains services qui touchent merveilleusement.

In 1996, this section is condensed to:

FROSINE. Is that you cute little La Flèche, are we meeting here?
LA FLECZE. Yes really. What are you doing here?
FROSINE. The same as I do everywhere else. Being useful. Facilitating contacts.
LA FLECZE. Do you have business with the master of the house?
FROSINE. Yes, I have a small job for him that I hope will give me a certain reward.
LA FLECZE. From him? Then you have to rise early. In this house money is an article in short supply.
FROSINE. There are small, sweet carrots that can even make lazy donkeys move. (37-38)

Costumes and Stage Designs

In this final part of Chapter One, I am providing examples of costumes and stage design from the three recent Danish productions of L’Avare in order to depict another way the modern Danish stage views Molière. I am including specific descriptions of Harpagon’s performance with particular emphasis on his costumes in these productions and am adding photos or drawings to illustrate how differently the scenographers have interpreted Harpagon’s character.

Folketeatret 1974

In a February 2006 telephone interview with Preben Harris, the managing director of Folketeatret in Copenhagen from 1971 to 2001, he explained the baroque set design and costumes and outlined the color scheme utilized for the entire 1974 performance. The brocade walls were green and gold on a cream-colored background with Harpagon’s black costume contrasting starkly with that of the other actors. Ove Sprogøe, a popular,
elderly actor, played Harpagon. Sprogøe wore a loose-flowing black jacket with large buttons and a white collar, reminiscent of a Lutheran pastor’s white ruff. This costume might well have been meant to resemble a clown’s collar to emphasize Harpagon’s personality and obsessive behavior (see figs. 3 and 4).

Although Harpagon is the Greek word for raptor, the name does not match his portrayal as a clown in this particular production of L’Avare. Harpagon’s apparel might be a contributing factor to Jens Kistrup’s comments in his theatre review *Ove Sprogøes solo-nummer (Ole Sprogøe’s Solo)*. He remarks that Sprogøe plays less a character role than a rather shabby, sly and malicious old clown. Kistrup finds Sprogøe’s Harpagon superb, foolish, awful but also somewhat touching.

In *Klassiker for hele folket (A Classic Performance for the General Public)*, Bent Mohn admires Sprogøe’s excellent portrayal of Harpagon. He effectively describes this round-shouldered, shuffling little man who becomes utterly hysterical at the apparent loss of his moneybox. Mohn mentions that Sprogøe never rests but continually changes his facial expressions and also directly addresses the audience in an attempt to befriend them. “We make note of his [Harpagon’s] fake but sour cheerfulness when he hears the truth about himself, and we make note of his fawning, lecherous behavior as he courts Elise with what he believes to be his personal attributes.” Mohn continues:

What Tiemroth has done earlier with Holberg, he has here succeeded in doing with Molière. He has dusted off the play, made it more flexible, relevant and familiar to the contemporary audience. What is maybe most surprising
is how Tiemroth infuses the highly unlikely happy ending with wicked irony as if it is a huge joke.

According to Preben Harris, Sprogøe worked extremely hard to stress Harpagon’s miserliness, and also according to Harris, Sprogøe succeeded admirably in the process. Harris later played Harpagon at Odense Teater in 2003 and emphasized in the October 2005 interview that Harpagon’s role is an utterly exhausting one.

Harris did not know how exhausting until he played the role himself at age 68. Harris explained how, after the first dress rehearsal with an audience in 1974, he laughed when he saw Sprogøe sprawled across the railing on his way upstairs to his dressing room. Sprogøe gasped that the role was going to kill him. It was so physically demanding he had no breath left. Harris called him an old windbag. Harris related to me that twenty-nine years later he was able to empathize with Sprogøe. He told me he had never experienced a more physically demanding role than Harpagon. He was exhausted after each performance of *L’Avare*.

**Nørrebros Teater 1996**

Where Sprogøe’s Harpagon dominated the 1974 performance, at Nørrebros Teater in 1996, several of the other cast members supported Jesper Langberg’s Harpagon. Here Langberg portrayed a somewhat different type of Harpagon than Ove Sprogøe’s pathetic, clown-like personality. Money, money, money naturally still remained the all-encompassing passion. Langberg was dressed in workman’s apparel in pale yellow pants with suspenders over a white shirt with long wide sleeves under a brown vest, a costume reminiscent of seventeenth and eighteenth-century styles (see fig. 5). Langberg’s Harpagon was passionate in his miserliness. He moved about constantly and brought life to his character. The audience may not have been tempted to feel sorry for Harpagon, but Langberg’s portrayal was
extremely well done to make the audience laugh at his foibles.

In *Den generøse fedtsyl (The Generous Skinflint)*, Bettina Heltberg praises Langberg for his portrayal and points out that he brings the right touch to the role helped by other cast members such as Frosine and Maître Jacques. She comments upon how Harpagon is so utterly caught up in his passion and greed for money. She explains how Langberg shakes like an alcoholic without spirits and that Langberg’s performance is so funny and touching that if it is true that laughter prolongs life, the reader ought to hurry to Nørrebros Teater to see *L’Avare*.

In her article, Heltberg looks beyond stage design and costumes to the actual performance and gives additional high praise to the directors and actors. In contrast to Heltberg, in his article *Den gerrige på Nørrebro (The Miser on Nørrebro)*, Erik Thygesen is bothered by the mediocrity of the portrayal in this particular Molière presentation of *L’Avare*. Thygesen praises Frosine but suggests that Langberg has a difficult time in his portraiture of the miserly, single father. Thygesen emphasizes that Langberg, an excellent actor, does not succeed in the necessary timing required for this important role.

Me Lund finds the production far less praiseworthy in her review titled *Gennemført rodebutik (A Complete Mess)*. It bothers her that the costumes do not match (see figs. 6 and 7). The actors wear a blend of apparel displaying seventeenth-century
frippery mixed together with twentieth-century outfits. Lund describes Frosine’s apparel as one better suited to the festivities that center around Mardi Gras.

I agree with the mixed-up styles, which can be confusing to the spectators. Upon entering the stage, Elise wears a short, black tulle skirt adorned with red roses and topped with a small, white camisole, and her black shoes are covered with huge red flowers (see fig. 7 above). Next, Elise wears a voluminous, green tulle dress (see fig. 8), and as the play draws to its conclusion, she is wearing a timeless, long, white evening gown (see fig. 9). As seen in Figures 7 and 9, Cléante’s shirt has long, flowing, lace-covered sleeves and a lace ascot worn over twentieth-century black leather pants and leather boots, while Valère is dressed in a traditional baroque costume. As seen in Figures 9 and 10, he wears...
a yellow brocade suit that complements his long-sleeved, lace-festooned shirt with its frilly ascot.

Lund calls this production an utter mess due to the mixed messages sent to the audience by the varying stage settings and costumes. I believe, the blend of costumes might help the directors emphasize how, in reality, Harpagon is neither poor nor does he belong to the working class. It might also be a way for the directors to tie the seventeenth and twentieth centuries together although that fact might elude all but the most astute spectators. Lund utilizes Cléante’s costume to emphasize her point by pointing out that he is wearing modern leather pants with a shirt sporting an old-fashioned, lace-festooned ascot and overflowing lace cuffs. As a contrast to Lund, Randi K. Pedersen enjoys the production and comments in *Liderlig -- efter penge* (*Lusting for Money*) how she finds that the young Swedish directors and scenographer have succeeded in recovering Molière’s satire and blowing wonderfully fresh air into the old story.

After reading Kjær’s translation and the newspaper reviews, I watched the video in October 2005. Although I agree with the reviews that the scenography is somewhat puzzling in its mix of period and modern clothing and with its plain, uninteresting stage design, I found the production to be fast-paced and an excellent portrayal of this seventeenth-century play, a play which continues to engage the audience throughout the centuries. The basic concept remains of this miserly man. The novel, additional and humorous Prologue sets the stage and engages the audience. Langberg portrays a man caught up in an insane greed without apparent feelings for his offspring. He neither engenders pity nor asks for it. In the above quoted article, Erik Thygesen states that in reality Molière emphasizes the moral with this story through proverbs such as “money is the root of all evil” and “the clever one fools the less clever people.”

**Odense Teater 2003**

Kim Bjarke’s 2003 production of *L’Avare* is much closer and truer to Molière’s original than either the 1968/1974 or the 1996 version. As previously mentioned, Bjarke used Kristen Spanggaard’s 1964 translation of *L’Avare* included in a book with numerous plays by Molière. When asked by Kasper Wilton to direct *L’Avare* for *Odense Teater*, Bjarke chose this translation. During our March 2004 interview, he described
Spanggaard’s text as musical and said it used elegant Danish “filled with rows of pearly expressions.” Bjarke wanted his audience to listen to an elegant language and hoped that within ten minutes the spectators would appreciate the refined language as opposed to the coarse language frequently heard in contemporary theatre.

It bothers Bjarke that current theatre has trivialized the Danish language. He believes that we can extract hidden meanings in Molière if we remain true to the original text. Bjarke is not fluent in French, but he knows enough to appreciate and to follow Spanggaard’s excellent translation. Bjarke analyzes his chosen text. He is detail oriented and it shows. He searches in depth to understand the author and remains true to the text except for the few areas where a modernized text is necessary for the language to be better understood by the audience. During our meeting, Bjarke explained how many directors simply omit parts of the text they do not understand instead of making a concentrated effort to ensure that the author’s original intent with the play is not lost in the process of presenting a modern version.

Before meeting with Bjarke, I listened to two online interviews, produced directly on the Odense Teater internet site, in which Bjarke explained his use of period costumes and language from Molière’s own time. He mentioned his attempt to follow the original comedy as closely as possible as it might have been performed in France centuries ago in contrast to the way Molière’s comedies have been produced in Denmark in recent years (online 6 Oct. 2003). In a later October 2005 interview with Bjarke, he emphasized the need for presenting a traditional play in period costumes to help the audience step back in time and better appreciate the past.

During the March 2004 interview, I questioned him about the actual production of the 2003 L’Avare. Bjarke said he changed some of the words but generally kept the original dialogue with occasional alterations to provide a translation more suitable to Danish speech. He explained how in his opinion modernizing a play seldom appears innovative or adds to the production. He wants women to be women and men to be men. Bjarke explained how many actors gave a sigh of relief upon hearing about his intention to direct a traditional production in period costumes. The older performers were not the only ones to react positively to this suggestion. The younger ones were equally interested in a traditional production. Bjarke said he attended several of the early performances and
sat among members of the audience, listening to their laughter and comments. If he deemed it necessary, he then made changes, not in the dialogue, but in the stage direction, to produce an even better effect. The deviation from tradition was however noted in the music, which played as the stage turned. The music was atonal from the mid-twentieth century and modern in contrast to the seventeenth-century costumes, serving as a bridge to the present.

In this production of *L’Avare*, Preben Harris superbly portrays Harpagon. Harris is dressed in a long, black cloak adorned with lace cuffs and an old-fashioned baroque collar. The cloak is only partly buttoned and partly stretches across his protruding stomach, which pops out above his ill-fitting trousers (see figs. 11, 12 and 13). Harpagon’s apparel gives the impression of a man who has money but does not care to spend it. Harpagon’s hair is long, grey, uncut, dirty, straggly and unkempt. He tells Cléante that he sees no need for spending money on expensive wigs when one’s perfectly good head of hair can suffice.

In tandem with his scenographer, Bjarke presented the audience with a well-chosen and well-matched cast of performers. They wore seventeenth-century period costumes suitable to the bourgeoisie except for Harpagon’s
ill-fitting costume. Bjarke chose Camilla Bjørnvad to be in charge of set design and costumes but not of light and sound.

Bjarke’s L’Avare received excellent reviews by both local and national newspapers, and according to Kasper Wilton, the comedy played to a nearly full house (Mar. 2005). Where the theatre critics were somewhat mixed in their comments about the presentation of L’Avare in 1974 and 1996, they are unanimous in their praise of Bjarke’s 2003 production, of his choice of scenographer and of his choice of actors.

In Ypperlig komediekunst (The Superb Art of Comedy), Lene Kryger writes that she can hardly recall when she last saw such a well-performed presentation of a Molière play filled with superb actors and actresses. Kryger discusses how the young lovers are dressed in matching colors (see figs. 14, 15 and 16) to ensure the audience’s awareness of who...
belongs to whom. She describes how Cléante and Mariane are dressed in romantic pink to emphasize their central romantic role in the play. The photos above show Mariane dressed in a voluminous pink gown and sporting a huge pink confection on her head while Cléante wears a creamy-pinkish suit sporting a red tie. Valère and Elise are dressed in frothy pale blue. Bjørnvad’s photo shows Frosine wearing a voluminous skirt in alternating wide, red, white and blue stripes, the colors of the French flag (see fig. 17). These costumes stem from the late baroque / early rococo time period. The servants are dressed in white (see figs. 18 and 19), and all costumes except for those of Harpagon’s are intentionally exaggerated. As shown in the photos, apart from Harpagon, most actors sport huge bows on their shoes. (Bjørnvad interview Sept. 2006).

Lene Kryger also discusses the elegant and extremely simple, monotone set decorations (see figs. 20, 21 and 22 below). They consist of grey painted wall sections and grey carved doors. In the last scene, enormous white stucco roses and dozens of rose petals, descend from above the stage to cover part of...
the stage to underscore the romantic ending (see fig. 21). The roses appear at the end of Act V the moment Anselme arrives to bring closure to the play with this extremely unlikely and quick solution. Bjarke calls it a *hovsa* ending, better known as a Hollywood ending to the American audience. As previously seen in Figure 12, the artist Hjørdis Plato joined forces with Kryger to help illustrate the review.

In *Penge er dyre* (*Money is Expensive*), Monna Dithmer explains that what may appear to be a rather dull but elegant stage design is, in reality, Harpagon’s house in the shape of his beloved moneybox (see fig. 22). The stage continually turns like a music box both between many of the scenes and between the acts. When questioned in October 2005, Bjarke commented that he was unsure whether he originally intended the stage to resemble a moneybox. He explained how the association with music boxes and moneyboxes, which turn around and around in tune to the music, are associated with the barrel organ, which in turn is associated with toys as if to emphasize that the comedy itself is a game. The barrel organ is also associated with the circus. When I discussed the set design with Bjarke in February 2006, he added that although he was unaware whether Bjørnvad had
intended the grey walls and grey box to resemble a moneybox, if Dithmer, the theatre critic, made that intuitive suggestion, Bjarke considered it an added bonus.

Dithmer praises Bjørnvad’s stage design and writes: “It is a pleasure to see the elegant gray walls turn around and around between scenes while the music plays. The miser’s house is in reality a large music box or a mechanical moneybox.” Dithmer continues: “The miser, played by Preben Harris, is a realistic, humorous gnome, who is almost the only normal character with whom we can identify. We simply must swallow him [we must accept him and like him as he is].” Later in the article, she writes:

The moment his noble son and daughter enter the stage with their large, bobbing bows on their shoes, it is clear to the audience that they are not exactly rooted in reality. Money is all that matters. Ribbons and lace flutter around Lars Simonsen’s slight Cléante, a tender romantic in front of his more robust, tulle-clad sister Elise played by Mette Kolding.”

In this excellent review, Dithmer points out how the various characters manipulate each other and the situation to reap their own reward.

As seen in the video, Harris portrays Harpagon so magnificently, we almost feel sorry for him in his insanity. Mette Horn portrays a terrific Frosine, who flatters Harpagon to the utmost in an attempt to convince him to help her monetarily. We see Harris strut his stuff across the stage with his stomach protruding even further than before while she flatters his appearance and even his cough. Harpagon remains immune to her pleading. Frosine follows him begging on her knees across the floor until Harpagon escapes from the stage. He remains cold and unapproachable, displaying how nothing matters to him in life except for his obsessive miserliness. This makes him utterly incapable of empathizing with or helping others.

In his review *Tostemmig teaterleg (The Two-Part Theatre Game)*, John Christiansen highlights how life affirming it is for it to still be possible to perform a Molière play from the seventeenth century and to keep it from appearing dusty. He praises Bjarke’s work and points out that although Bjarke remains within the seventeenth century, his direction adds a modern dimension to the play to make it a play within a play. Christiansen not only praises Harris’ exceptional performance, he highlights the performance by numerous other members of the cast. He mentions how Harpagon is
cunning, sly, dangerous but also vulnerable, and that he is amusing and a pleasure to watch. Christiansen adds his full praise of Bjørnvad’s effective and elegant scenography.

In *Grim, grov og grådig* (*Ugly, Coarse and Greedy*), Randi Pedersen points to the central issue in *L’Avare*. He comments that although Harpagon is extremely rich, he is so greedy and coarse he is dubbed The Miser by Molière. This appellation is not only in regard to all the gold he hoards, by among other things, denying his children their rightful maternal inheritance, but also where his feelings are concerned; he is a petty miser. Pedersen continues with the statement that despite the man’s callous manner, Preben Harris entices a disarming bit of humanity out of the character of the old domestic tyrant.

In September 2005, I interviewed Camilla Bjørnvad about her scenography to discuss her ideas and symbolism. She stressed how she strove to make the set design a simple but effective one with carefully choreographed costumes. Symbolic references to miserliness were rife throughout the play. Although the metallic grey walls resembled Harpagon’s treasured money chest, as seen in Figures 21 and 22, Bjørnvad decorated the box walls with delicate but unfinished, baroque patterns superimposed on the grey color to avoid a monotonous look. She used a translucent gray, which was a perfect background color for the elegant, vibrant and multi-hued costumes. She added stucco, which intentionally did not reach the sides of the walls. The decorations and stucco were meant to indicate that Harpagon had money but was too miserly to spend money on finishing his house. Bjørnvad purposefully went to extremes with her symbolism to ensure the audience readily understood how miserly Harpagon was. She meant to send out opposing messages with his ill-fitting clothes. Where he clearly saw no need to replace his worn-out wardrobe, his fat protruding stomach was equally meant to suggest that although he cared little for his children’s wellbeing, he himself did not suffer from starvation.

In the October 2005 interview, Bjarke, who also serves on the dramaturgical staff at *Odense Teater*, explained that when he discussed the 2002-03 season with Kasper Wilton and was asked to direct *L’Avare*, Bjarke immediately thought of Preben Harris as representing the perfect Harpagon. Harris told me he jumped at the offer to play this famous role. Bjarke also asked Mette Horn to travel from Copenhagen daily to play Frosine. The remaining actors belonged to the regular cast at *Odense Teater*. 
From seeing the video and from talking with Bjarke, Harris and Wilton, it is evident that this particular production of *L’Avare* was a great success and stands far above the other two recent productions described in this chapter. In the 2003 version, the cast was superb with all the actors complementing each other. The 1974 and 1996 productions were successful in their different ways with excellent actors playing Harpagon. However, they lacked the superb supporting cast played to near perfection under Bjarke’s direction aptly complemented by Bjørnvad’s elegant set design and colorful period costumes.

The 2003 production proves that presenting a period piece still succeeds in contemporary Denmark. It is not necessary to modernize a play for it to be accepted by the general Danish public. The plot succeeds in retaining its identity throughout the various adaptations. The continuous production of *L’Avare* for the past many years also proves that the play’s concept, that of a miserly man caught up in his own insane greed, continues to engage and intrigue the audience throughout the centuries ever since the inaugural presentation to the Danish public on September 23, 1722.
CHAPTER 2
TARTUFFE

The discussion in this chapter focuses primarily upon Jesper Kjær’s 1989 translation of Tartuffe and the manner in which this play has been presented by three directors for their recent productions in Denmark. The discussion also includes other Tartuffe productions to emphasize the variety of ways the play has been directed during the past several decades. These translations are compared to the original French version as well as to the translation utilized for the first performance in 1723 or 1724 at Lille Grønnegadeteatret called Tartuffe eller Den Skinhellige (Tartuffe or The Hypocrite). It is included in Eiler Nystrøm’s five-book series Den Danske Komedies Oprindelse (The Origin of Danish Comedy). Figure 23 shows the playbill from 1726.

Tartuffe was first performed on May 12, 1664, at Versailles. Although King Louis XIV enjoyed the play, he felt forced to ban it immediately due to the implied religious criticism (Berg 116). In 1667, Molière again attempted to present Tartuffe, and once more it was banned before finally being accepted in its present form with five acts in 1669. Although the original French play was written in verse, the first Danish translation was translated to prose directly for the Danish stage.

The translation is attributed to Diderich Seckman, a diplomat, who worked in the Justice Ministry in Copenhagen (Jensen, Europæisk Drama 75). Jensen suggests that Seckman’s translation could be a confrontation with the pietism movement, which was in its upswing in the country in the 1720s. She believes the Danish Tartuffe might have been considered an attack against the pietists (Europæisk Drama 93).

As with the other plays produced at Lille Grønnegadeteatret, Montaigu directed Molière’s Tartuffe. He ran a real risk presenting this play by ignoring the royal privilege
of 1722, which stated, “No theatrical performance may deal with religion or the Holy Scriptures, may conflict with chastity and decency or may scandalize the audience” (Neiiendam, Studier 14). According to Jensen, not only did Seckman change Molière’s words to better suit the Danish setting, he changed the characters themselves. With Lutheranism to this day being the Danish State religion, Tartuffe was portrayed as a Protestant hypocrite instead of a Catholic. The leading character, M. Orgon, was portrayed as a working-class Dane living in central Copenhagen instead of Molière’s French bourgeois living in Paris. In this vein, Seckman reworked Tartuffe to help the Danish audience understand Molière’s implied intent with the play, which is essentially a critique of religious hypocrisy.

Since its first performances at Lille Grønnegadeteatret in 1723 or 1724, Tartuffe has frequently been presented to Danish audiences. Although originally considered a daring play, its popularity has remained steadfast as attested to by the variety of venues utilized during the past centuries and by the variety of ways it has been produced. As shown in this chapter, a series of directors have attempted, more or less successfully, to alter the play while keeping the basic concept of the sanctimonious hypocrite intact.

Translations

When examining Seckman’s translation as well as translations by three other Danish authors, it quickly becomes apparent that in general they do not vary a great deal from Molière’s original French text. The biggest difference is noted in the change in language during the preceding centuries and decades. Alfred Flinch’s translation from 1870, reprinted in Kristen D. Spanggaard’s book from 1964 Molière - Komedier I, presents a rather old-fashioned Danish. Frank Jæger translated Tartuffe in 1974 to be read rather than acted. His book includes humorous black and white illustrations by Jean Luc Giraud. Jæger’s translation is easy to read. It is quick and witty and written in free form with some rhyming schemes. However pleasant to read, the confusing variation in style would make this translation more difficult to use on stage. As with his L’Avare, Kjær’s translation of Tartuffe is easy to read, to follow and to perform. He uses familiar language interspersed with slang but less so than in his L’Avare. He appears conscious of Molière’s original French while adjusting his words to the twentieth-century spectator.
Kjær explained in the March 2005 interview how a careful rhyme scheme works well for the actors with one line leading to the next.

In regard to Seckman’s Tartuffe, Jensen best explains the issue of language encountered in his translation in her book *Europæisk Drama*. She points out that the Orgon family has moved down a notch on the social scale. She writes that Orgon curses freely, that the woman of the house speaks rather crudely, and that Dorine treats her superiors with great familiarity. All the characters except for Tartuffe include proverbs, folksy sayings and tautology in their lines (95).

My primary focus in Seckman’s translation concerns Tartuffe’s persona and the manner in which Seckman presents him to the Danish audience. He has carefully removed traits that might characterize Tartuffe as Catholic. This statement becomes evident the moment Tartuffe makes his first appearance in Act III, Scene II. Here Tartuffe tells his servant: « Laurent, serrez ma haire avec ma discipline; et priez que toujours le Ciel vous illumine. Si l’on vient pour me voir, je vais aux prisonniers des aumônes que j’ai partager les deniers » (101). Seckman changes this sentence to: “Laurentz! Place my prayer book on the shelf and mark the chapter where I stopped. Hold a book and should anybody ask for me, tell them that I have gone to the hospital to share the alms given to me” (242). The reference to hair shirt and whip, used for penance, is carefully omitted in this translation but is reinstated in the newer translations researched for this chapter.

Another Catholic reference Seckman omitted from his text is found in Act IV, Scene III where Mariane falls on her knees and begs her father not to force her to marry Tartuffe. In the original French version, she claims she would rather suffer strict convent life as opposed to marrying Tartuffe. Orgon tells her that in no uncertain terms will he permit her to become a nun (123). Seckman has Mariane plead with Orgon to spare her and let her spend her remaining miserable days granted to her by Heaven in wretched solitude. Orgon responds that her wish is utter nonsense. He adds that as soon as a father refuses to grant her daughter the least whim, she decides to spend the rest of her life unmarried. Orgon then orders Mariane to proceed with the wedding preparations and cease her nonsensical talk (261).
At the end of Act I, Scene II, the moment Cléante and Dorine discuss Tartuffe and his pious ways, in Molière’s French text Dorine disgustedly relates how Tartuffe tore her handkerchief into shreds upon finding it in the family’s book of *Fleur des Saints* (60). This book is a heavy, pious Jesuit tome, which, according to the endnotes, was frequently used by the women of the house to press lace handkerchiefs used to cover up their low-cut bodices (214). Seckman has Dorine describe how the other day that rogue Tartuffe tore one of her favorite handkerchiefs to shreds after finding it in the house bible (207) while Kjær refers to Tartuffe finding a garter in the Bible (9), an object, which makes better sense to the twentieth-century spectator.

A last example of an omitted or changed Catholic reference is noted at the very beginning of Act V, Scene IV when M. Loyal addresses Dorine with « Bonjour ma chère sœur » (146). According to the endnote in the original French edition, this appellation refers to a pious member of the congregation, a nun (226). In 1724 M. Loyal, now called M. Robbert, calls Dorine a *Fæstemø*, which refers to an indentured servant (280). Flinch writes “Dear Sister” as if referring to a nun (242), and Jæger writes “Dear girl” (113), while Kjær translates it to “Hello my sweet child” (81).

This careful deletion of Catholic references no longer exists in the three recent translations researched here. These translators have no fear of religious restrictions in current Danish theatre. All three include the references to convent and nun -- as presented by Molière since his first production in 1664 -- while modernizing the objects to suit the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

From the very first scene in *Tartuffe*, both Seckman and Kjær set the tone for their translations. They use language which indicates a less refined family than the reader would expect from the French bourgeoisie. The actors curse freely. As expected, Dorine is impertinent and sassy. She addresses Madame Pernelle, called Madam Peternelle in 1724, as *Granny*, which is not the way servants are expected to address their superiors neither in 1724 nor in 2007. When Madame Pernelle tells Dorine, « Voyez la langue » (55), Kjær literally tells Dorine to “shut up” (5), an expression he uses freely throughout his translation as does Seckman. In 1724, in Act II, Scene II, Dorine calls Orgon *Falille*, a pejorative way of saying Daddy, which again is a discourteous way to address the master of the house (222). Orgon in turn tells her to “shut up.” When Dorine continues to
talk, he repeats his curses and says, “Oh! Shut up for the sake of the Devil’s skin and bone, you viper -- damn you…” (223). Kjær has Orgon say, “Keep quiet you snake, you are poisonous and nasty” and proceeds to call Dorine a battleaxe (25). In Act I, Scene I as she departs, Kjær’s Madame Pernelle tells her servant, “Flipote, you stupid girl! Do not sit there and yawn! Get up you lazybones and close that stupid mouth of yours! Let us go home!” (7).

Another difference in translations is the use of the occasional proverb by both Seckman and Kjær. In Act II, Scene III, Dorine says, « Je ne compatis point à qui dit des sornettes et dans l’occasion mollit comme vous faites » (84) which Seckman changes to: “I have no sympathy with people who talk pølsesanak [sausage talk meaning nonsense] and that as soon as der er en kurre på tråden [there is a knot in the thread, meaning as soon as they are at odds with each other] they have a spat, lose courage and leave just like you do now” (228). In Act I, Scene I, in the long passage where Dorine speaks to Madame Pernelle, she says, « Dans un tel abandon, leur sombre inquiétude ne voit d’autre recours que le métier de prude » (57) which Kjær changes to: “When the fire is extinguished and the pressure is off the pot, the time has come to turn virtuous,” meaning that as a woman ages and loses her attractiveness, she turns to virtue (6).

A final example is noted in Act I, Scene II when Dorine answers Cléante: « Ah! certes, c’est dommage qu’elle ne vous ouît tenir un tel langage: elle vous dirait bien qu’elle vous trouve bon, et qu’elle n’est point d’âge à lui donner ce nom » (58). Kjær changes this sentence to: “Ha! You call her the “Old One”? I doubt Madame Pernelle would like to hear you say that. She would tell you that she is anything but dead and that the fireplace is still filled with embers” (8).

The Tartuffe Persona and Scenography

In the second part of this chapter, describing six productions of Tartuffe that have been performed in recent decades, I focus primarily on Tartuffe’s character and apparel as well as upon the scenography. The discussion includes descriptions of Preben Harris’s production at Aarhus Teater in 1962, Preben Neergaards’s Tartuffe ’86 at Folketeatret in Copenhagen in 1986 and Peter Langdal’s production at Betty Nansen Teatret in 1989-90. I will include a brief mention of Théâtre du Soleil’s Touring Company, which brought a
French language Tartuffe to Copenhagen in July 1996 followed by Emil Hansen’s ultra-modern production at Aalborg Teater during the fall of 1996. I will finish the Tartuffe chapter with Vibeke Wrede’s production by the Odense Teater Tourné Selskab (Odense Theatre Touring Company) during the fall of 2001, which was followed by a month-long production at Odense Teater during the 2002 winter season.

**Aarhus Teater 1962**

Preben Harris, who played Harpagon in L’Avare in 2003 at Odense Teater, began his career in Aarhus directing contemporary plays. In his recent autobiography Tæppet op (The Curtain Rises), he describes his surprise when the managing director at Aarhus Teater in Jutland arrived on the young Harris’s doorstep and asked him to direct Tartuffe (72). Harris vividly explained his Tartuffe in our October 2005 interview and further elaborates on it in his autobiography. It was a tremendous honor for the young Harris to work with a classical play, and the older actors made sure they made him aware of how displeased they were about the managing director’s choice of a comparative newcomer for such an important assignment. Their displeasure made Harris even more eager to succeed in directing a successful production. He chose the frequently used translation by Alfred Flinch, first made in 1870 and revised in 1904 and 1914.

Harris described the stage design and in particular Tartuffe’s costume. The stage decorations were black and white, meant to resemble a baroque copperplate. The colors repeated themselves in the black and white furniture, in stark contrast to the brightly colored brocade dresses and gentlemen’s garments (see fig. 24). Tartuffe was striking in his black clothing. Harris said that his Tartuffe was as black as a snake to emphasize the man’s wickedness. Even when Tartuffe shed his black
jacket, his grey shirt glistened like snakeskin. Harris was pleased with his own idea to leave the table uncovered under which Orgon was hiding, as seen in Figure 24. This added touch in stage direction made it possible for the audience to observe Orgon’s reaction to Tartuffe’s amoral overtures towards Elmire. Years later, in the 2001-02 performance at Odense Teater, the same effect was repeated under Wrede’s direction. In that production, Orgon was seen sneaking out from under the uncovered table and shifting his hiding places to behind a curtain, to behind the sofa and back to the curtain, movements that added energy to the scene.

The four theatre critics agreed that John Hahn-Petersen’s portrayal of Tartuffe in 1962 exuded evil. They praised the scenography but expressed some concern that Tartuffe outshone the remaining cast of actors. In De gode viljer (The Good Intentions), Carl Johan Elmquist reviewed Harris’s production of Tartuffe. He found that Hahn-Petersen’s splendid depiction of Tartuffe, hiding his true persona behind a mask, came as close to Molière’s true Tartuffe as any audience could expect to ever witness, even though Tartuffe’s demonic aura was somewhat weak. Elmquist enjoyed the actress Vigga Bro’s depiction of a touching but ludicrous Mariane. He described her as a human Easter lamb with a bow tied around her neck. Some criticism concerned the young director’s lack of youthfulness in the production, but I question whether their criticism really mattered since, by exposing a man’s hypocrisy, Harris succeeded in depicting a truly evil Tartuffe whose only goal in life was to deprive others of their riches. The name of the play is Tartuffe and Harris zeroed in on that character.

In Et stykke med Tartuffe (A Play with Tartuffe), Knud Schønberg describes how Harris used small tricks to depict Tartuffe’s true self. He emphasizes the importance of a small hand kiss, quick sidelong glances, rapid, side steps and malicious glints in the eyes, which Tartuffe masters turning on and off as he sees fit. Viggo Clausen calls Hahn-Petersen a dangerous Tartuffe in Molière, af- og udvasket (Molière, Cleaned up and Faded). He describes Tartuffe as a pest one must crush under foot before it is too late. Jens Kistrup agrees with these descriptions of an evil and dangerous Tartuffe but, like other theatre critics, he would like to have seen a stronger supporting cast in Bedrag og selvbedrag (Fraud and Deception). He claims the satire lost its sting in an age where Molière’s style remains unfamiliar to the Danish audience.
Harris remains extremely pleased with his first direction of a Molière play, and he has maintained that same interest in Molière throughout his long career as actor, director and managing director. After managing Gladsaxe Teater at the outskirts of Copenhagen for a few years, he became managing director of Folketeatret in Copenhagen from 1971 to 2001. Having been managing director for a total of 43 years, he now enjoys just acting and being able to choose what roles are offered him without having to concern himself with neither the managing nor the directing aspects. Playing the role of Harpagon in the 2003 production of L’Avare is among his favorites, which is understandable. He was superb.

After interviewing Harris, it became clear that of the several dozen theatre practitioners with whom I have been associating in recent years, Harris stands out as the person most involved and familiar with Molière. In each production, Harris immerses himself not only in the acting or directing aspects but also intensely involves himself with the scenographic aspects. As both managing director and director, Harris had the advantage of being able to choose his own scenographers. He explained how he would arrive at the first meeting with the scenographer fully prepared with a vision for the upcoming production but without having divulged any of his ideas ahead of time or having made premature suggestions. His goal was for the two of them to disclose their visions simultaneously, to bounce ideas off each other and then to inspire each other.

Folketeatret 1986

During his tenure at Folketeatret, Harris asked Preben Neergaard, an actor turned director, to direct Tartuffe in 1986. Neergaard called the play Tartuffe ’86, which as the title reads was a production set in the twentieth century with costumes from the 1970s and 1980s. Neergaard used a new translation by Ernst Bruun Olsen, who had made few changes to the original French text except to modernize some outdated words, time conceptions and societal norms. Neergaard did not intend to offer a new interpretation despite the contemporary setting. Bruun Olsen followed the rhyme scheme throughout the play while condensing some of Cléante’s long speeches and shortening the first scene in Act 1.
In *Tartuffe ved hjemmebaren (Tartuffe by the Liquor Cabinet)*, Birthe Johansen describes the stage setting’s nightmarish quality designed by the scenographer Sture Pyk. The stage depicts a modern industrial giant’s palace built in chrome with panoramic windows, and the primary action takes place in the living room near the liquor cabinet. The theatre program reveals that Orgon is a modern businessman dressed in elegant suits with white shirt and tie, as are the other male cast members except for Tartuffe (see fig. 25).

Although Tartuffe as usual does not make his appearance until Act III, Scene II, Johansen describes how the audience spots him during previous scenes, peeking through the curving picture window that surrounds the entrance hall at the family gathered inside.

Johansen suggests that Tartuffe’s pageboy haircut and long, black coat imbue him with a clerical appearance and a look of untrustworthiness. The next photo shows Tartuffe and Elmire with Tartuffe wearing shiny, black, leather pants reminiscent of Harris’s snakelike character in his 1962 *Tartuffe* with Elmire in virginal white (see fig. 26). Later on during the seduction scene, Elmire is dressed in intimate apparel (see fig. 27) and, as explained by Johansen,
she slides back and forth on the table piled high with wedding presents for Orgon’s daughter Mariane’s impending marriage to Tartuffe. Meanwhile, Orgon, played by John Hahn-Petersen, who played Tartuffe in 1962, crawls rapidly in and out from under the table. Tartuffe nearly succeeds in raping Elmire before it finally dawns on Orgon what is happening, and he steps forward to stop Tartuffe. During all this time, Madame Pernelle sits in an electric wheelchair dressed in puritanical black in an outfit that dates back to the early twentieth century (see fig. 28).

In Med mel i munten (With Flour in the Mouth), Bent Mohn suggests that Neergaard’s bringing the seventeenth and twentieth centuries together in Tartuffe ’86 detracts from Molière’s actual intent with the story. Mohn believes that seeing the characters on stage dressed in apparel akin to what the spectators are wearing removes the distance needed to understand Molière’s intention with this play. Although Mohn finds problems with the production, he still praises the direction of this classic play.

Deviating from any of Molière’s plays, where scant scenic directions are provided thereby permitting directors carte blanche to direct their plays as they see fit, Bruun Olsen’s manuscript is filled with extensive and elaborate descriptions about rooms, placement of the staircase, dimensions, props and wall and table decorations. The location of the safety box, containing the box with the incriminating document, is carefully described and Mariane’s choice of music by Julio Eglesia is even mentioned (21).

As the play begins during a dark, fall evening, the family is heard quarreling loudly behind the stage while supposedly seated at the dinner table. Madame Pernelle is the first to appear. As seen in Figure 28, she is seated in a wheelchair due to her suffering from severe arthritis. She is dressed in unrelieved black with a large dinner napkin still tied around her neck. Her attending nurse nervously attempts to remove it, much to Madame Pernelle’s irritation. A happy Elmire arrives followed by an angry Dorine, who

Fig. 28. Marianne Høgsbro as Dorine and Lillian Tillegren as Madame Pernelle © Photo: Klaus Lindewald
sits down on a hassock. The remaining characters arrive one by one, including Cléante holding a glass of red wine and Damis, who brings the bottle along and pours himself another glass of wine. Thus, the stage is set for Act I, Scene I to begin. It is during this scene that Tartuffe is seen peeking through the glass windows, but Johansen fails to mention that Tartuffe actually even enters the living room and boldly walks up the staircase leading to the bedrooms, with all but Madame Pernelle noticing him (3).

As the light dims between Act II and Act III, church bells are heard chiming. Light streams through the skylight above the stage, highlighting a prayer meeting with Tartuffe sitting cross-legged like a guru with his back to the audience. He is wearing a hair shirt and sits with arms spread wide, reaching towards the sky. Orgon, a chauffeur, a servant, a chef, the maid and Laurent surround Tartuffe. Having finished the prayer meeting, Laurent hands out fliers to the servants while Orgon remains sitting on the floor lost in thought. The moment Damis and Dorine arrive from the entrance hall, they watch Tartuffe look lovingly at Orgon, kneel in front of him, take his head between his hands and look him deeply in the eyes before gently kissing him on both cheeks (see fig. 29). Damis, wearing only a bathrobe, wants to confront them while Dorine, also dressed in a bathrobe, attempts to hold him back. Damis races down the stairs, and Act III begins.

During the intermission between Act III and Act IV, the curtain remains open while the servants rearrange the living room. They carry a large table into the living room to accommodate the many wedding presents and floral arrangements. The moment Act IV commences, hysterical weeping is heard from above. Moments later Mariane, dressed in a long, virginal, white wedding dress, rushes down the staircase. She tears the veil off her head, stomps on it and rushes into the dining room. A nattily dressed Tartuffe enters, sporting a carnation in the buttonhole of his tux. He walks to the record player, chooses a
record and moments later, while the wedding march plays, Tartuffe calmly sits down behind Orgon’s desk as if saying, “All this now belongs to me” (see fig. 30).

Although the well-known plot continues throughout, Bruun Olsen provides the play with a powerful ending. As the officer is about to cart Tartuffe off to prison, despite being handcuffed, Tartuffe manages to remove the officer’s pistol from its holder and threatens the gathered family members. Tartuffe is slowly moving backwards towards the exit when he collides with a civilian officer holding a handcuffed Laurent. As Tartuffe points the gun at the officer, the officer shoots him, mortally wounding him in the heart, shocking them all. Just before all lights are extinguished, the police commissioner arrives and accusingly holds out the murder weapon towards Orgon, who has collapsed on the floor totally unaware of what is happening around him. Instead of being reunited with Valère, Mariane seeks comfort from Dorine, and the audience is left to wonder what is going to happen to Orgon and this dysfunctional family.

**Betty Nansen Teatret 1989-90**

A few years later, in 1989, Peter Langdal requested that Jesper Kjær translate a new version of *Tartuffe* to be used for his direction at *Betty Nansen Teatret*, the theatre where Langdal has currently been the managing director together with Henrik Hartmann since 1992. The play premiered on December 30, 1989. During our March 2005 interview, Jesper Kjær explained how he first examined Alfred Flinch’s translation, dating from 1870, to see if it could be updated, but he quickly realized that a new version was sorely needed. His translation is a carefully rhymed, contemporary script using everyday Danish terminology, which is easy to follow and understand. Kjær and Langdal frequently conferred in order to attain Langdal’s unique style complemented by Karin Betz’s beautiful costumes and set design.
During September and October 2005 interviews, Betz described the symbolism and effect she wished to achieve in Tartuffe. She provided me with drawings -- some of which are included in this chapter -- to illustrate the reasons for her choice of colors and costumes. Betz created a stage with slanted floorboards that lead from the proscenium to the back wall, leaving the rear wall just high enough to permit three doors. She explained that the slanted stage dates back to the baroque period to create perspective. Her three doors were meant for specific cast members. Orgon’s room was in the center, with the servant Dorine arriving from the right door while Tartuffe consistently entered from the one on the left. Betz felt that this little detail created a certain order during the play even though the cast members were in constant motion throughout the performance.

The stage was swathed in dark velvet. The actors appeared to enter from a dark box, which created the play-within-a-play atmosphere. The light shone directly upon the entering cast members -- also dressed in velvet. In general, Betz chose to use warm earth tones, golden, red and orange, for most of the actors. Elmire wore a beautiful long, rust-colored dress meant to evoke the eroticism that is part of Tartuffe. Her long, curly wig was made of the finest natural hair. Her posture was regal as well as inviting (see figs. 31 and 32). She was the total opposite of Orgon, played by Morten Grunwald, the managing theatre director of Betty Nansen Teatret in 1989. Being a distinguished actor with many successes, Grunwald had cast himself in this role. Grunwald, dressed in black velvet with large black boots and a huge black belt, simply did not fit Orgon’s character (see fig. 33 below). In Den kødelige hykler (The Carnal Hypocrite), Bettina Heltberg asks if this man
can possibly be Elmire’s husband, a man who stumbles around like a bull in a china shop. However, in my opinion, Grunwald’s depiction of a bumbling Orgon made it far easier for Tartuffe to approach Elmire and get her attention because Orgon was so easily fooled.

In *Tartuffe som den kyniske fornuft* (*Tartuffe as the Cynical Common Sense*), Mogens Damgaard writes that Orgon was a catastrophe. He played the role so dismissively that he completely missed the point. In *Klogest er dog kvinden* (*The Woman Is After All the Cleverest*), Elin Rask paints Grunwald as an extremely clumsy man and criticizes his choice to play Orgon. Despite these criticisms, *Tartuffe* received high praise as an excellent portrayal of a classic play with Rask describing it as “a charming and well prepared performance depicting an old comedy in Karin Betz’s nearly classically clean scenography.”

According to Betz, when Tartuffe finally entered the stage in Act III, Scene II, he was not yet fully dressed. He was carrying his jacket and finished getting dressed on stage. Betz explained that if an actor arrives fully dressed, the character is complete, leaving little to the spectator’s imagination. She emphasized the costumes’ extreme importance. They play a vital role to make the actors come alive: they are designed to help tell a story and to invite the audience’s participation.

Betz carefully described Tartuffe’s apparel (see figs. 33 and 34). His first jacket was made of purple velvet, and he wore his hair gathered into seven tight braids adorned with numerous small purple bows as seen where Tartuffe is kneeling with Orgon above. The purple color was meant to emphasize his clerical,
papal nature while his braided hair was reminiscent of the whip the audience heard him use to flagellate himself behind closed doors before he finally entered the stage. This occurred the moment Tartuffe told his servant, “Laurent, serrez ma haire avec ma discipline …” (101). Later, Tartuffe is dressed totally in black to indicate his evil nature.

Bettina Heltberg writes that Jørgen Reenberg portrays a truly evil Tartuffe, demonic like a seductive Lucifer. These are strong words. Betz mentioned how Reenberg excels in acting and that he is a fantastic theatre personality. He is charismatic with a strong will coupled with tremendous knowledge, so when directors and scenographers work with him, Reenberg makes the final decisions. As an example, Reenberg suggested that Tartuffe’s shoes have patent leather heels to remind the spectator of the Devil’s red heels. Betz appreciated those kinds of detail-oriented suggestions and designed the shoes as Reenberg proposed.

Reenberg is a revered actor who had played Valère in Tartuffe many years earlier in 1948 at Det Kongelige Teater. As mentioned in the Preface, Reenberg insisted upon using his own script from the earlier performance, using far longer passages for his Tartuffe while the other actors used Kjær’s briefer paragraphs specifically written for the 1989-90 production. This behavior caused Peter Langdal numerous headaches during the rehearsals. However, the changing dialogue appeared to have gone unnoticed by critics and audience alike. Mogens Damgaard comments that Reenberg “adds a wonderfully controlled rhetoric, which is never forced by the constraint of the text.” I suggest that the old-fashioned dialogue might well have created an interesting contrast, which served to emphasize how Tartuffe remained outside the norm. In another review in Tartuffe iblandt os (Tartuffe Among Us), Jens Kistrup calls Reenberg the perfect Tartuffe whose danger is incarnate in the authority the actor brings to the role.

Although known for his unique stage direction, with Tartuffe, Langdal presented his audience with a surprisingly traditional Molière. Damgaard writes:

It would not satisfy Peter Langdal’s ambition to simply present the text within a satisfactory framework. Although -- this is almost what this reluctant, virile theatre tamer has done. Gone are the external and impudent gags that fill the audience with delight. Left is a clear idea
framed by Karin Betz’s strong panoptical scenography and lit by Mark Pritchard’s incredibly beautiful lighting design.

Langdal moves the focus from Molière’s criticism of the pious hypocrite to an emphasis on Cléante’s cynical common sense. He does so by portraying Cléante, Elmire’s brother, not as the usual raisonneur but as a more unusual persona. Cléante is dressed in wrinkled, dark orange velvet with a large, frilly ascot and wearing a long, curly wig (see figs. 35 and 36). He bumbles about and generally presents a ludicrous figure. With Orgon played by a Swede, he speaks a mixture of Swedish and Danish.

Damgaard writes that by using the relaxed Swedish actor Johan Rabaeus, Langdal brings the profane, down-to-earth, sensible Cléante onto center stage. In the October
2005 interview, Langdal explained that he finds the *raisonneur* often relegated to depicting a boring personality. He believes that a neighbor, in this case a man from neighboring Sweden, might be better able to gauge the problems in this dysfunctional family. Betz emphasized Cléante’s weird personality with a costume that looks as if it is about to fall apart. She said that Rabaeus is a terrific actor who really understood how to strengthen this otherwise rather boring role.

To round off the discussion of this *Tartuffe* production, I have added a few more drawings to show Karin Betz’s colorful and distinctive costumes. Valère looks like a Spanish toreador, Damis is all dressed in red, and Mariane wears a voluminous black and orange creation (see fig. 37 above).

**Théâtre du Soleil 1996**

In 1996, Langdal’s *Tartuffe* was followed by two unusual productions presented to the Danish audience. In July, Ariane Mnouchkine brought her touring company *Théâtre du Soleil* to Torpedohallen in Copenhagen where she presented a couple of performances of her one-year-old, French-speaking production of *Tartuffe*. Mnouchkine transformed her Tartuffe character into a Muslim Tartuffe.

The theatre critic Me Lund describes the production in *Molières sataniske vers* (*Molière’s Satanic Verses*). The patriarch Orgon is dressed in black and wears a fez in perfect Islamic tradition. He resides in a Mediterranean villa in an Islamic country with the courtyard enclosed by a high, bougainvillea-covered wrought-iron fence. Turkish rugs cover the courtyard with servants seen kneeling on them. Even so, a new age has arrived. The women no longer appear veiled and loud music blares from loudspeakers. Tartuffe belongs to a clerical brotherhood. He presents the worst type of a powerful, cynical man. Mnouchkine adds a rather unpleasant but comical suggestion about the Islamic fundamentalist priesthood by depicting a rotund Tartuffe utterly transformed at the sight of Elmire. Mnouchkine delivers a true hypocrite to the world stage.

In her interview with Mnouchkine, Merete Reinholdt in *Instruktør med idealer* (*Director with Ideals*) asks the director to divulge the reason for this extreme change of direction of a popular, classic play. Mnouchkine said that she wanted to shake us out of our comfortable habits and do something about the fundamentalism and intolerance that
have arisen around the globe. She relates how Tartuffe’s fanaticism and dangerous fundamental attitudes cause a bloody and violent war. Although the action has been moved to a contemporary Islamic country in the Mediterranean, the attacks against intolerance, power hunger and fundamentalism are no different from the time period when Molière criticized the hypocrisy in France during the seventeenth century. Mnouchkine believes that Molière discusses something quite simple and forever a reality. She finds Tartuffe an immensely exciting production that deals with all types of religious hypocrisy. She emphasizes how we unfortunately live in a hypocritical time period whether in regard to religion, politics or economics, but she finds that religious hypocrisy is the worst possible kind. Where Mnouchkine’s Tartuffe was a success during its global tour in the mid-1990s, it would be inadvisable to produce the same play in the twenty-first century with all the problems encountered in the Islamic world after 9/11.

**Aalborg Teater 1996**

The second out-of-the-ordinary production of Tartuffe opened in September 1996 at *Aalborg Teater* in Aalborg, a large town in northern Jutland. The director Emil Hansen used Jesper Kjær’s translation adapted by Peter Langdal for his production at *Betty Nansen Teatret* in 1989-90. Hansen further adapted the play, transforming it to make it almost unrecognizable with modern costumes and stage design. The sometimes discourteous language and Orgon’s constant curses in Langdal’s version set the standard for a lower social class than described by Molière, but upon examining the scenography, it suits the mood in this contemporary production.

In the February 2006 interview, Hansen explained how he transformed his characters to fit an ultra-modern stage. He pointed out that the scenographer Maja Ravn used strong, primary colors for the general costumes that contrasted well with the black-clad Tartuffe we generally meet in Tartuffe productions. Although Hansen did not modify Kjær’s words, he simply cut part of the monologues and even omitted entire dialogues while essentially keeping the story line and the rhyme scheme intact. Hansen shortened many of the monologues in Act I particularly where Madame Pernelle and Dorine do most of the talking. The shortened script moved the play along at a faster pace, which suited the sparse stage decorations.
During the interview, Hansen described one of the many changes that took place in his Tartuffe. He explained how he at first entirely cut Cléante’s long monologues from the play. When the actors complained, he instead created a humorous diversion spanning across the intermission. He compiled the shortened monologues into one enormous one. He had Cléante begin his lengthy oration as the lights went up before the curtain fell at the end of Act III. When the curtain rose twenty minutes later, Cléante was still walking back and forth across the stage, pontificating as if he had been orating during the entire intermission.

Hansen described an addition he attached to the opening act: a kind of mute Prologue not included in the typed script. As the play is about to begin, Tartuffe is introduced to the audience when Orgon meets him outside the church, followed by Orgon motioning Tartuffe to follow him home. Thus the audience is aware of Tartuffe even if he does not appear until Act III, Scene II.

Uffe Adelørn comments in Hykler på slap linie (Hypocrite on a Slackrope) that nutty tricks and incidents occur throughout the play, incidents that have nothing to do with Molière’s particular style. Hansen himself described how at one point there is a long break in the action while the cast members sit with their legs dangling over the edge of the floorboards as if seated on a dock (see fig. 38). In this scene, depicted in the theatre
program, Orgon wears a T-shirt and rolled-up trousers, Elmire has stripped down to a slip, and Madame Pernelle sits in a weird contraption of a chair.

The final act undergoes a drastic transformation when Hansen adds his own grand finale. After M. Loyal has spoken and Tartuffe reenters the stage, instead of Tartuffe being arrested by the king’s man, an avenging angel descends from above. The angel speaks directly to Tartuffe, telling him that God judges from above and that “God can examine everything with a learned eye and judge everything completely and exactly. The good person can look forward to the day of salvation while the impostor can expect purgatory and torture” (80). Greatly to Tartuffe’s surprise, the angel bids Tartuffe follow him, telling him that here is his punishment. Tartuffe then disappears in flames the same way Don Juan disappears at the end of Molière’s Dom Juan. Additionally, according to Peter Kirkegaard in Symphathy for the Devil, at the time of his unmasking, Tartuffe wears horns and has cloven feet -- symbolic of the devil he really is, according to Hansen’s depiction of the Tartuffe character.

The stage design was a simple one. It consisted of one narrow set of wooden boards with four doors at the back, giving the appearance of a hotel corridor with the players moving in and out of the doors in constant motion as referred to in a footnote written in Madame Pernelle’s script that I was given as reference for this chapter on Tartuffe. Hansen explained that the floorboards were slanting. As the play progressed, the floor slanted even further until the walls fell and the house was destroyed. As the house collapsed, the blood-red backdrop was highlighted, pointing to the end -- that is the flames of hell -- for one of the characters. The destruction of the house symbolized the destruction of this dysfunctional family. In lieu of a table, the steeply slanted floorboards served as cover for hiding Orgon during the famous unmasking scene (interview Feb. 2006).

According to several theatre critics, Tartuffe appears close to raping Elmire right on stage. Bent Mohn writes in Skamløs Forfører (Shameless Seducer) that we witness a dramatic nerve-wracking and erotic scene between Elmire and Tartuffe. Maja Ravn portrays Elmire as a young, sex-deprived woman, who in this famous scene with Tartuffe wears a long, clinging, low-cut dress slit nearly to the waist. As seen in the photo below, it is obvious she relishes Tartuffe’s amorous advances. Tartuffe is dressed in black slinky
leather pants topped with a long, white silk shirt, and his black hair is long, stringy and greasy (see fig. 39). According to the critics, he looks more like a rock idol than the devout man he attempts to impersonate.

Upon scrutinizing Orgon, the spectator wonders why Elmire married this pathetic man. It may be due to the fact that in the seventeenth and ensuing centuries a daughter had to obey her father’s wishes, so Elmire might well have been forced to enter into an arranged marriage as the wealthy Orgon’s second wife. Orgon is an elderly man ludicrously dressed with small, round, red sunglasses (see fig. 40). Per Theil mentions in Familie i flammer (A Family in Flames) that Damis is only six years old. Played by an adult, Damis is an unattractive, fat little boy with a red clown nose and a sword in his hand. Meanwhile his sister Mariane is portrayed as a childish young woman dressed in a baby-doll dress (see fig. 41) and carrying a large, colorful lollypop and a jump rope. When forced to marry Tartuffe, Mariane prefers to die and tries to
strangle herself after having attached the jump rope to the chandelier hanging from the ceiling.

In *En djævelsk Tartuffe (A Devilish Tartuffe)*, Ninette Mulvad comments that the entire group of actors delivered a strong comedy with grotesque overtones, while the theatre critics in general enjoyed the performance. However, it is pretty clear that Emil Hansen directed a play à la Molière rather than a play by Molière. Hansen used Molière’s words translated into Danish by Jesper Kjær, including the careful rhyme scheme, but he filled the play with gags that might make the spectator wonder what the director and scenographer meant to portray with this production.

**Odense Teater 2001-02**

A few years later, Vibeke Wrede directed a more traditional *Tartuffe* at *Odense Teater*. She also used Kjær’s translation for her production by the *Odense Teater Touring Company* during the fall of 2001 but without making significant changes to the manuscript. The two-month tour was followed by a month-long production at *Odense Teater* during the 2002 winter season. During the March 2005 interview, Kasper Wilton mentioned how he was pleased with the production of *Tartuffe*, the first Molière play produced under his tenure at the theatre. However, he would have preferred to see the higher attendance that is common whenever plays by Ludvig Holberg are performed.

Wrede explained how she wanted her *Tartuffe* to be as close to a French production as possible. She is familiar with the French language and examined both French and English versions of the play to avoid misunderstandings. She emphasized how crucial it is to pay particular attention to every detail. She pointed out how she had Tartuffe stand by the piano and place his hand on top of the five-candled candelabra without evincing any sign of getting burned to indicate his coldness, harshness and callousness. As mentioned in the Preface, Wrede emphasized that she wanted her characters in perpetual motion to avoid stagnation and to steer clear of performances such as the one given by Gérard Depardieu as Tartuffe in Paris in 1984. Depardieu’s fellow actors had remained seated during most of the performance, and Wrede became so bored she left the theatre at intermission.
In our March 2005 interview, Wrede mentioned how she loves to work with a character like Tartuffe. She mused why there is a need for such a Tartuffe in Orgon’s family and pointed out how Tartuffe searches for cracks and weaknesses in the family structure. He enlarges the problems, and then he pounces. In this case, Tartuffe discovers that Elmire has an appetite for life that Orgon cannot fulfill and uses this need as a means to satisfy his own cruel aspirations.

After having been asked by Wilton if she would present Tartuffe both for the touring company and at the theatre in Odense, Wrede contacted Louise Beck, a young scenographer, educated as a painter and artist at the Wimbledon School of Art in London in 1994. Beck arrived with suggestions for Tartuffe. The two worked well together. They discussed the set design and costumes in great detail, which resulted in a light and airy stage meant to resemble a summerhouse.

In the October 2005 interview, Beck outlined how she designed a proscenium and painted a special curtain for this particular play. She realized the need for designing a set that could be utilized in each of the eleven locations visited on tour before the company returned to Odense Teater to finish the production in January and February 2002. She essentially designed a box that could be lowered into place in each location. The box worked whether the play was to be shown to a large audience in the huge conference auditorium in Herning in central Jutland or to a select few in the small local theatre in a town on the island of Bornholm (the Danish island across from southern Sweden). Beck felt inspired by this new challenge and designed the various set decorations to descend from the ceiling within the box while the rear of the stage appeared as if it remained open to the elements with clouds and trees painted on the backdrop. Beck explained that by transporting their own set, essentially in the form of a box, the actors felt better able to perform in these different locations. By knowing the various theatre dimensions, Beck was able to design a box where certain changes were possible to either enlarge or lessen the space.

The problems with the vast size differences at the various venues did create some problems. In the March 2005 interview, Wrede explained that the stage set and props were at times incomplete or improperly positioned, creating confusion for the actors and in turn for the audience. For instance, the two-tiered stage was not always available,
causing difficulties in properly seeing the actors. Additionally, as is the usual arrangement, the touring company performed only one night in each provincial town.

After Wrede finished directing Tartuffe, she was not required to travel with the company so was unavailable to make last-minute changes should they have been required. Instead, Wrede kept up with progress from afar both during the tour and later at Odense Teater in case she was needed to step in with advice and suggestions. Wrede checked periodically with the theatre management to request the exact timing of each act during a specific evening performance. If the production followed the designated amount of minutes per act, she knew the performance remained on target. As opposed to Wrede, Beck paid an occasional visit while the play was on tour and later helped set up the permanent stage at Odense Teater. She wanted to ensure that the set decorations remained intact and to be certain that the costumes were in proper order, in part due to the fact that some actors like to alter their costumes (see fig. 42).

![Fig. 42. Rear: William Rosenberg as Police Commissioner, Eddie Karnil as Cléante, Maria Wilton as Dorine, Henrik Weel as Orgon, Henrik Larsen as Tartuffe, Steffen Eriksen as Valère, Jesper Bull Petersen as Loyal, Rita Angela as Madame Pernelle, Peder Dahlgaard as Damis. Front: Betty Glosted as Elmire and Natali Vallespir Sand as Mariane © Photo: Reklamefotograferne](image.png)
Beck described the wallpaper and props to draw attention to what I saw in the dimly lit video filmed from the rear of the theatre. She gave the wallpaper an Oriental design. As seen in the photo above with the entire cast, she painted spare trees and branches with minimalist leaves, flowers and birds. Two large doors stood open at the rear of the stage as entry for the actors and to expose the backdrop, making it appear that the summerhouse was located in the middle of a park. Bouquets of flowers, boxes of chocolates and bowls of fruits were scattered about the interior. The setting was meant to resemble a horn of plenty, showing a prosperous family whose members play music, sing and dance, drink wine and, in general, enjoy life without a care in the world. Beck explained Wrede’s wish to deviate from the general version of Tartuffe, which usually takes place within the confines of a dull and stodgy middle-class family. She wanted instead to create a light-hearted mood to show a happy, carefree and unconcerned family, whose members enjoyed life and whose universe was purely a game.

To emphasize the game, a billiard table was placed at the rear of the stage with a spinet placed next to an old-fashioned record player along the wall. The billiard table served numerous functions in Orgon’s household and showed the audience a fun-loving family. Besides being used to play billiards by family members and by Tartuffe, Orgon hid under the table when Elmire wanted to expose Tartuffe’s hypocrisy, and as the curtain fell after the final scene, Damis and Dorine played badminton across the table. The billiard table had no front cloth cover. Instead -- during the unmasking scene in Act IV, Scenes IV and V -- Elmire shielded Orgon from view behind her huge dress. To keep the action moving, Orgon moved from place to place. He crept out from under the table and hid behind the drapes. He then hid behind the couch and kissed Elmire the moment Tartuffe turned his back on her before returning once more to his hiding place behind the drapes.

Wrede utilizes this type of technique to emphasize her wish for perpetual motion and action as background for her story instead of presenting the audience with a monotonous, static shell. This technique becomes evident from the moment the curtain rises. Orgon’s son Damis stands on a ladder painting parts of the unfinished wallpaper. It is morning, following upon an evening’s pleasure, when Orgon, the master of the house, was absent from home. Elmire flutters about in a flowing pink negligee with hot pink
ostrich feathers (see fig. 43). Valère is lying on top of and is kissing a partly dressed Mariane while the usually pompous raisonneur Cléante skips about. Valère’s jacket is placed on the piano bench with Mariane’s remaining clothing tossed on top of the piano. Madame Pernelle arrives in a ludicrous costume bringing humor to her diatribe against the various family members (see fig. 44). The other actors’ light, flowing apparel adds to the carefree mood. The constant movement, the fanciful costumes and Damis painting the unfinished wallpaper create action and set the tone for the evening’s performance.

Beck prefers her actors to wear costumes that add to the performance. The actors must live up to the story they are telling. She finds it adds excitement to make the actors develop their characters as the play unfolds, and she likes the audience to not know the true identity of the characters until the moment they appear. This type of hidden agenda is difficult for some actors, who feel more comfortable with costumes that follow the story as it unfolds. Furthermore,
whenever possible Beck tries to remain within a play’s time period in order to avoid confusion and to aid in telling the story.

In Act II, Scene I, the family members have finished getting dressed with Elmire having changed from the pink negligee to a beautiful and voluminous, peach-colored satin dress (see figs. 43 and 45 above). All the costumes are light, frilly and frivolous with baroque overtones. In Act III, Scene II, Tartuffe finally enters this lively home, a home filled with sexual allusions. As seen in Figures 45, 46 and 47, he is dressed in white, deviating from Tartuffe’s generally austere apparel. Beck explained her wish to emphasize Tartuffe’s hypocrisy. Beck wanted the audience to discover how evil and hypocritical Tartuffe really is without giving it away as he enters the stage. With white usually depicting a good person, Tartuffe is more difficult to read by the uninitiated even if his virtue or rather lack thereof has been discussed at great length before he finally makes his appearance.

Henrik Larsen, who portrayed Tartuffe, found it difficult to play the role dressed in white. He wanted something stronger and more masculine. When Tartuffe reenters the stage in Act V, he is therefore dressed in black and shows what a devil he really is (see drawing in fig. 46). Here he shows his true colors. As seen in Figure 47, Beck adds a nice touch to the Tartuffe persona taken directly from the French text.
in Act II, Scene III and translated by Jesper Kjær. Here Dorine criticizes Tartuffe and says, “Il a l’oreille rouge et le teint bien fleuri” (85), which Kjær translates to: “Have you noticed his red ear and that his cheek is on fire?” (30). This remark refers to Tartuffe’s red birthmark, which is a sign of the Devil. Beck has her Tartuffe sport a vivid, scarlet birthmark on his right cheek and ear to leave no doubt among the audience that although dressed in pristine white, Tartuffe is not the persona he attempts to portray.

According to Kasper Wilton, the production of Tartuffe at Odense Teater was well received. Although some newspaper reports vary in their praise, or lack thereof, for the touring production of Tartuffe, the reviewers gave high praise to the production at Odense Teater. Marianne Kjær wrote the review for Fyns Amts Avis in Svendborg, a town south of Odense. She impressed me with her intuitive and thorough description in Tartuffisering på nysseligste versefødder (Tartuffery on the Daintiest Versified Feet).

In her review, Kjær comments that the audience immediately feels lighthearted and happy at the sight of the linen curtain where Beck’s fat, pink cherubs flutter across white, cushiony clouds superimposed upon a blue sky. She describes how only one cherub sits motionless, looking superior. This angel’s insinuating, oily smile and horn in its brow refer to the devilish Tartuffe. Kjær fills her paragraphs with such scenic imagery, attention to detail and symbolic references. Kjær catches the gist of the plot while describing costumes and giving tiny insights to each actor’s performance. She calls the costumes, as well as the moral in the story, timeless and writes that this play could depict any given time in history. She enjoys Wrede’s and Beck’s clever details as well as their colorful stage design, and she also praises the freshness and humor Wrede has brought to this production.

When discussing the article with her during a telephone interview in January 2006, she explained that she is a journalist with a theatre background. Marianne Kjær both acts and directs at Svendborg Fritidsteater, an amateur theatre in town. She has been involved with acting, writing and directing for years and is also interested in scenography. These various facets in her background explain the highly descriptive review of Tartuffe.

Lene Kryger carries the pleasure theme in Tartuffe a step further. She compares Orgon’s house to Eden with Tartuffe injecting himself into the household. In Tartuffe er
slangen i Paradis (Tartuffe is the Snake in Paradise), Kryger writes that Tartuffe is the tempter, whom everybody knows they must avoid. Even then they cannot help but let themselves be seduced by Henrik Larsen’s snake-like Tartuffe. He is a tall, slender, elegant man with slow, sinuous, gliding movements. Although Jens Kistrup does not consider Henrik Larsen the most sophisticated Tartuffe, in Rovdyrets smil (The Predator’s Smile), he points out that this man exudes the brutal power and authority -- the predator that shows its teeth -- which in part explains why Tartuffe, with his false devoutness, is capable of exerting such influence over Orgon’s family.

While on tour, Tartuffe visited Skive Teater in central Jutland on the first real winter day of the season. Ole Tang comments that although the audience members had to use ice scrapers to clear their cars before heading to the theatre, they came to see this excellent play. In Guldkorn til de spidse Ører (Golden Nuggets for Sharp Ears), Tang praises the performance. He admires the presentation by the four women and gives high praise to Odense Teater’s spectacular scenography. He is particularly impressed by the sharpness inherent in the text with its perfect versification. He only wishes that in a town of 60,000 inhabitants that at least three hundred people might have wanted to attend this terrific performance.

The tour went as far south as Slesvig in northern Germany, an area, which was formerly a part of Denmark. There, one still encounters a number of inhabitants with Danish ancestors where many keep up their spoken Danish. The spectators filled the theatre to bursting point, and the audience appreciated the performance, according to Hans Christian Davidsen in Fornøjeligt hykleri i teatret i Slesvig (Delightful Hypocrisy in the Theatre in Slesvig).

Lene Kryger wrote another article as Tartuffe opened at Odense Teater in January 2002 after having finished its two-month tour. The article is called Hykleri går aldrig af mode (Hypocrisy is Never Outmoded). Kryger comments upon interviews she conducted with the director Vibeke Wrede as well as with the main characters in Tartuffe.

She tells how Wrede emphasized the play’s biting, satirical and timeless attack against sanctimoniousness and hypocrisy, conditions that can be found everywhere and that will always be relevant. Wrede explained how the actresses wore powdered wigs and huge gowns while a portable gramophone stood on a table, a musical object, which
certainly did not exist when Molière was alive. By having the scenographer Louise Beck mix the time periods, Wrede could stress how her Tartuffe did not take place in the 1660s. Wrede explained that this blending of time periods allowed her to emphasize that the story line and the issue of hypocrisy would remain forever timeless.

In their interview, Betty Glosted (Elmire) and Henrik Larsen (Tartuffe) commented upon the difficulties encountered when dealing with lines written in alexandrines. Glosted pointed out how the rhyme scheme was at times found within the sentence, adding to the difficulty in learning the words. However, Glosted noted that as soon as the rhythm had been established, the lines took on a musical sound. Larsen found that the audience needed at least ten minutes to adjust to the verse and rhyme scheme. Glosted finished her part of the interview by commenting that “To move into Molière’s text is comparable to exploring Versailles. New, beautiful rooms are found behind each door.”

After having read her three reviews, I requested an interview with Lene Kryger in her office at Fyens Stiftstidende in Odense. This took place on September 26, 2006. Kryger is a full-time journalist with no formal training in theatre. She covers theatre, classical music, ballet and dance on the entire island of Funen. When requesting time to interview her about her articles on L’Avare and Tartuffe, she in turn requested permission to interview me for her newspaper. During this discussion, she pointed out that I have been meeting with the foremost theatre practitioners knowledgeable about Molière, adding that some of them have been working in their respective fields for as much as thirty years or even longer. She added how fascinating it would be to write an article about each of these interviews, regretting that there is neither time nor enough space in any newspaper to go into such depth as I have succeeded in doing during the past several years.

Where some newspapers provide dramaturgical education for their theatre critics, Kryger is purely a journalist. She has critiqued theatre for years and has attended an immense amount of theatre performances ever since the age of five. This has provided her with an extraordinarily wide base upon which to base her critiques. She writes directly to her audience, omitting the analytical element preferred by some critics. She believes that her readers are more interested in and have better use of straightforward
writing. Her articles are easy to read and filled with interesting tidbits. She has a magical way with words and paints pictures with them. This makes it possible to visualize the play while excellent photos or illustrations help provide additional insight. She also strives to provide brief positive items about all or at least about the leading actors to entice the readers to attend the play.

Kryger’s articles focus on positive aspects of each production. In considering her audience of ordinary folk, not theatre professionals, she provides forthright descriptions and attempts to cover a variety of aspects as long as she finds them worthy of being mentioned. She generally covers scenography unless it lacks substance. After hearing about my interviews with scenographers, Kryger wishes that she had an opportunity to interview them and might attempt to do so in the future.

The Next Tartuffe?

To finish the chapter on Tartuffe, it is clear from the discussion and from the theatre reviews that Tartuffe can be presented in quite a variety of ways. Costumes and sets vary from traditional to ultra-modern, and the scripts range from carefully translated and rhymed ones to versions freely adapted to the contemporary stage. It will be therefore be interesting to see how the next director will approach a production of this classic play.

With Odense Teater having presented both Tartuffe and L’Avare in recent years, I asked Kasper Wilton during our March 2005 interview which Molière play he planned to produce next. Wilton explained how Danish theatre managers are required by the Danish state to show a variety of entertainment every season such as modern and classical stage productions, opera and dance, experimental and older Danish drama, making it difficult for him and other managing directors to, for example, choose to produce Molière every season. Upon taking over the post as managing director of Odense Teater in 2000, he realized that Molière had been woefully underrepresented and therefore has since staged Tartuffe and L’Avare. With Ludvig Holberg’s and Hans Christian Andersen’s major anniversaries having to a certain degree pre-empted the works of other authors during the 2004 and 2005 seasons, Wilton remains uncertain how soon he will be able to stage another Molière production but he definitely plans to produce Molière as soon as possible. He could, however, not comment upon which comedy he would choose partly
because the theatres keep their future productions unknown to the public until the upcoming season is announced every spring.

*Det Kongelige Teater* management has requested that Ulla Gjedde Palmgren provide them with a new translation of *Tartuffe* (interview Feb. 2006). The play is scheduled for opening on September 14, 2007. The director, scenographer and actors have been chosen for the performance but nothing else will be known until the actual performance takes place.
The discussion in Chapter Three focuses on four translations and several recent productions of *L’École des Femmes* with particular attention paid to the symbolic costumes and set designs from the 2000-01 performance at *Det Kongelige Teater* in Copenhagen. *L’École des Femmes* was first performed in Paris on December 26, 1662. It is believed that Molière wrote this play as a result of problems in his recent marriage to Armande Béjart, a young woman twenty years his junior. She could have been his daughter and was known for her liaisons with other male friends.

*L’École des Femmes* was first performed in Danish at *Lille Grønnegadeteatret* in Copenhagen in 1724. As with *L’Avare* and *Tartuffe*, the play is included in Eiler Nystrøm’s *Den Danske Komedies Oprindelse*. Diderich Seckman translated *L’École des femmes* into prose directly for *Lille Grønnegadeteatret*. He made some major changes, which immediately strike the reader in the list of characters. In this early translation, most of the actors have typical old-fashioned Danish names. As explained in the Preface, Arnolphe, otherwise known as M. de la Souche, is called Peder Andersen, otherwise known as M. Hyldgaard; the servants Alain and Georgette are called Ole and Kirsten; and Chrysalde is called Hieronimus. Peder Andersen is a common Danish country name. Peder is an old-fashioned name generally changed to Peter in contemporary Denmark. Hyldgaard refers to a farm surrounded by blooming elderberry bushes. In French, the name Agnès refers to agneau, the symbol of the innocent lamb getting ready for slaughter similarly to the way Arnolphe has asked the nuns in the convent school to prepare this innocent and naïve child to become his perfect wife. In Danish, she is called Agnete. The symbolic reference to a lamb is lost in the translation even if the two names Agnès and Agnete are similar in appearance and stem from the same root.

The other translations, researched for this chapter, are written by Peter Hansen in 1885 and reprinted in Kristen D. Spanggaard’s book *Molière - Komedier* in 1964, by Pastor Johannes Møllehave in 1988 and by Ulla Gjedde Palmgren in 2000. Where the 1990 and 2000 theatre productions keep the characters’ French names intact, in the book
titled Møllehave gendigter Molière -- Misantropen -- Omskoling af Kvinder (Møllehave Recreates Molière -- Le Misanthrope -- The Re-Education of Women [L’École des femmes]), published in 1988, Møllehave calls Arnolphe M. de la Stubbe. Arnolphe’s appellations all refer to the countryside, and all three names described below have a common denominator. Souche refers to a tree stump as does stub or stubbe. Souche also means stock as in a vine stock. As mentioned earlier, hyld refers to elderberry, which is used to produce elderberry wine, while stub refers both to a tree stump or to the stubble left after the grain field has been mowed.

A second example of how Seckman locates the play within the Danish context is shown in Act I, Scene IV, when Arnolphe and Horace first meet. Horace is bringing a letter from his father Oronte, one of Arnolphe’s dearest friends. The discussion centers upon a friend about to return to his homeland with great wealth after having spent fourteen years in America (42). Where in the French text, “America” might refer to either the Caribbean islands or to the North American colonies, Seckman changes the location to “the man coming from the West Indies” (116). This change refers directly to the fact that the Virgin Islands belonged to the Danish empire from 1666 until they were sold to the United States in 1917. The Danes would have understood the reference to Danish land holdings far better than a reference to America.

References to France and to Frenchmen generally change in the various translations. As noted in previous chapters, the translations from Danish into English are mine with an effort made to convert the Danish proverbs to contemporary English expressions.

Towards the end of the play in the French text in Act V, Scene IX, we read: « Et de retour en France, il a cherché d’abord, celle à qui de sa fille il confia la sort » (100). Seckman translates this sentence to: “And when he returned to this country, he immediately sought the person to whom he had entrusted his young daughter” (191). Hansen writes: “As soon as he returned, he immediately went to the farmer’s wife, but the child no longer lived there” (82). Møllehave changes his text to: “After a lot of hardships, Enrique has returned from the country over there to…” (100), while in 2000 Palmgren deviates from the previous translations and writes: “As soon as he stepped foot onto French soil, he sought his daughter who was staying with her foster mother” (81).
Act III, Scene III, Molière writes, « Voilà de nos Français » (64) whereas Seckman refers to young “junkere,” meaning young gentlemen (145). Hansen singularizes the plural and simply calls the Frenchman a “fellow” (38) whereas Møllehave refers both to the French people and specifically to a Frenchman (75), and Palmgren does the same (41).

In Act II, Scene IV, as he attempts to calm down, Arnolphe tells Agnès, Alain and Georgette that a certain Greek told Emperor Augustus that « Nous devons, avant tout, dire notre alphabet, afin que dans ce temps la bile se tempère, et qu’on ne fasse rien que l’on ne doive faire » (50). Hansen’s Peder Andersen explains it in a similar fashion when saying “that one ought to read the ABC so the gall [the anger] has a chance to settle down” (125). Where both Hansen and Møllehave refer to reciting the alphabet, Palmgren changes Arnolphe’s dialogue to a more contemporary expression by having him say: “If one’s anger is about to boil over, one ought to stop and immediately count to ten” and finishes the sentence with a wise saying: “By putting the lid on one’s inner pot, one avoids doing something one will later regret” (24).

Les Maximes du Mariage

In regard to the wifely maxims or directives recited by Agnès in Act III, Scene II, each author changes them to suit his or her own purpose. Molière has Agnès recite the ten maxims about how she must listen and obey her husband. Among other directives, he says that if the husband prefers his wife to be an ugly wife that is his prerogative, she is never to dress up for the benefit of others and definitely not be taught to read and write.

#1. Celle qu’un lien honnête
   Fait entrer au lit d’autrui,
   Doit se mettre dans la tête,
   Malgré le train d’aujourd’hui.
   Que l’homme qui la prend, ne la prend que pour lui.

#2. Elle ne se doit parer
   Qu’autant que peut désirer
   Le mari qui la possède :
   C’est lui que touche seul le soin de sa beauté ;
Et pour rien doit être compté
Que les autres la trouvent laide.

#3. Loin ces études d’œillades,
Ces eaux, ces blancs, ces pommades,
Et mille ingrédients qui font des teints fleuris :
A l’honneur tous les jours ce sont drogues mortelles ;
Et les soins de paraître belles
Se prennent peu pour les maris.

#4. Sous sa coiffe, en sortant, comme l’honneur l’ordonne,
Il faut que de ses yeux elle étouffe les coups,
Car pour bien plaire à son époux,
Elle ne doit plaire à personne.

#5. Hors ceux dont au mari la visite se rend,
La bonne règle défend
De recevoir aucune âme :
Ceux qui, de galante humeur,
N’ont affaire qu’à Madame,
N’accommodent pas Monsieur.

#6. Il faut des présents des hommes
Qu’elle se défende bien ;
Car dans le siècle où nous sommes,
On ne donne rien pour rien.

#7. Dans ses meubles, dût-elle en avoir de l’ennui,
Il ne faut écritoire, encre, papier, ni plumes :
Le mari doit, dans les bonnes coutumes,
Écrire tout ce qui s’écrit chez lui.
#8. Ces sociétés déréglées
Qu’on nomme belles assemblées
Des femmes tous les jours corrompent les esprits :
En bonne politique on les doit interdire ;
Car c’est là que l’on conspire
Contre les pauvres maris.

#9. Toute femme qui veut à l’honneur se vouer
Doit se défendre de jouer,
Comme d’une chose funeste :
Car le jeu, fort décevant,
Pousse une femme souvent
A jouer de tout son reste.

#10. Des promenades du temps,
Ou repas qu’on donne aux champs,
Il ne faut point qu’elle essaye :
Selon les prudents cerveaux,
Le mari, dans ces cadeaux,
Est toujours celui qui paye. (62-63)

Seckman included five of the maxims -- numbers one through four as well as number seven. He then added a sixth maxim of his own:

#6. A wife, like the farmer’s dog,
Feels most secure when chained at home,
No decent wife ought to consider
Fridrichsdal and Gyldenlund.
To whomever the money is paid
The husband incurs the majority of the expenses. (143)
The reference to Fridrichsdal and Gyldenlund locates the play in Denmark. Anne E. Jensen recites a sentence written by Ludvig Holberg in his play *Mascarade* where he refers to Gyldenlund and Fridrichsdal, two estates located in Charlottenlund, which is now part of northern Copenhagen: “To travel to Gyldenlund or Friderichsdal [with slightly altered spelling] during the summer is considered a noble pastime, but what they do there is better known by my brother who works as coachman” (*Lille Grønnegade* 95-96).

Hansen translates Maxims one through six in their entirety but omits number seven through ten. At the end of number six, when Molière writes, « On ne donne rien pour rien » (63), Hansen uses an old-fashioned adage and writes, “In our time nobody gives away an apple except to receive a pear” (37) whereas Palmgren simply writes, “Nobody gives anything away without getting something in return” (39).

Møllehave rewrites and blends the maxims while omitting several of them. A few examples follow below:

#4. She may do handwork and keep her husband’s collars stiff. She is not permitted to spell and certainly not permitted to write. She may give good advice about diet but must let her husband open the mail.

#5. She lets her husband speak and raptly listens to his words. Heaven will recommend this to every wife and to every mother, because when a woman’s happiness is small then the home’s happiness is large. (74)

Møllehave’s Arnolphe adds an additional maxim in the following scene:

#6. Remember it is beneficial and unifying when your opinion is the same as that of your husband. Remember that love shackles so think the way he thinks! (74)

**Translation Examples**

After examining the previous examples as well as those that follow, it is clear that it is difficult for translators to follow Molière’s exact words in part due to the fact that Molière wrote his *L’École des femmes* in verse. When translating, it is challenging to
keep the rhyme scheme intact, which may well be the reason the early eighteenth-century translators changed their works into prose as Seckman did with L’École des femmes and other plays. Hansen and Palmgren keep the rhyme scheme intact in their translations even though some of those sentences appear somewhat contrived. Although at first sight, Møllehave’s translation appears written in prose, upon closer examination, it becomes clear that he cleverly rhymes within the sentences, with the length of the rhyming scheme varying from sentence to sentence and within each sentence in order to fit his words.

In order to demonstrate the technique used by the four translators, I will highlight a couple of paragraphs from Act I, Scene I where Arnolphe speaks to Chrysalde:

Mon Dieu, notre ami, ne vous tourmentez point:
Bien huppé qui pourra m’attraper sur ce point.
Je sais les tours rusés et les subtiles trames
Dont pour nous en planter savent user les femmes,
Et comme on est dupé par leurs dextérités.
Contre cet incident j’ai pris mes sûretés;
Et celle que j’épouse a toute l’innocence
Qui peut sauver mon front de maligne influence. (33)
À ce bel argument, à ce discours profond,
Ce que Pantagruel à Panurge répond:
Pressez-moi de me joindre à femme autre que sotte,
Prêchez, patrocinez jusqu’à la Pentecôte;
Vous serez ébahi, quand vous serez au bout,
Que vous ne m’aurez rien persuadé du tout. (34)

In 1724, Seckman translates Peder Andersen’s responses to Hieronimus with:

But do not worry dear friend. There is no danger. The person needs to arise early to tie something like that onto my sleeve [to fool me]. I can count the tricks and schemes on my fingers that our good women use to get us men going. I have taken precautions since it is their brains and their speed that fool us the most. The little girl I am going to marry is so innocent and simple that my forehead has no reason to fear any accidents from her [he is not afraid of being cuckolded]. (103-04)
My dear good friend, my answer to your important and profound argument is to tell you in a few words that even if you speak, reason and preach from here until Easter, you will never make me take a wife other than a simple and stupid one. So now do whatever you wish. (105-06)

In 1885, Hansen shortens many of the paragraphs and occasionally omits an entire one including the second paragraph used in this particular example. Arnolphe says:

I know exactly all the tricks and wiles,
That women use when they consider deception,
I know what snares they place at our feet,
I have therefore wanted to safeguard me against them ahead of time,
Look, I have therefore chosen such an innocent girl,
That she cannot even guess what those things mean. (2)

In 1988, Møllehave rewrites the paragraphs to:

My dear friend, you speak informatively and knowledgably. I forgive you your tone of voice -- since I trust your friendship. Save your worry. I am familiar with what women know. I know their tricks in regard to stupidity and nastiness. I know more about women than others knew before me, and in regard to a woman’s wiles -- nobody can outwit me.
And the one I have chosen -- she will never fall into the water [will never stray]. She is as innocent as God’s word from the country [she is guileless and without a clue about life]. (50)

You are certainly talking, but you talk out in the blue [you are talking at random]. I am telling you that I want somebody who is not intelligent. I have attempted to show you my motives behind it. I have made up my mind -- as quickly as it is sound. (51)

In 2000, Palmgren adds her translation to the previous ones:

Take it easy my friend, it will work out.
One must rise early to try to get me down.
I know a woman’s wiles,
I know how they cheat us men and how they think.
Women are able to get men to eat it all raw,
But in this case I have prepared myself very well.
Because the one I am marrying is so innocent,
That all discussion about unfaithfulness is unimportant. (5)
With your rhetoric and knowledge you apparently believe
That you can convince me with your duel of words.
Feel free to use your oratorical talent,
To convince me to take an intelligent wife,
But you will see that your arguments are lost on me,
And that you will leave without having achieved your goal. (7)

After studying these examples, it is evident that the gist of the sentences remains
the same in each translation. It is the method used by the translators as well as the
prevailing language expressions popular during the different time periods that make the
actual difference. Seckman’s heavy use of sayings and proverbs would make it difficult
for the contemporary audience to follow. Where Møllehave kept the story line despite the
name of his book **Møllehave gendigter Molière** (**Møllehave recreates Molière**), he
changed the play to two long acts, shortened numerous paragraphs and combined lines.
Møllehave furthermore changed many of the sentences and, as the curtain fell, added his
own brief ending saying, “Goodnight, our comedy is hereby finished” (100).

**Betty Nansen Teatret 1983**

According to an e-mail message from Morten Grunwald, the former managing
director of **Betty Nansen Teatret**, the theatre management requested that Møllehave
translate **L’École des femmes** for their production in 1983 (5 May 2006). Møllehave
rewrote the title to suit his translation, and the Swede Allan Edwall directed **Omskoling
af Kvinder** (**The Re-Education of Women**) and cast Ove Sprogøe in Arnolphe’s role.
Sprogøe is the actor who imbued Harpagon with a clown-like appearance at **Folketeatret**
in 1974. Looking at the 1983 photos and drawings in the theatre reviews, Edwall’s
Arnolphe (Sprogøe) once again resembled a clown in **Omskoling af Kvinder**. The choice
of the clown motif has an interesting background. During an interview with Jesper
Langberg in February 2006 about his role as Arnolphe in **Jørgen Blaksted Turneen** in
1990 and his role as Harpagon at **Nørrebros Teater** in 1996, he mentioned that Molière
had originally cast himself as Arnolphe in a clown costume. Sprogøe was the ideal actor to choose to play the role when presented in that fashion (see figs. 48 and 49).

Several theatre critics both praised and critiqued the production. In *Den gamle mand vil giftes* (*The Old Man Wants to Get Married*), Jens Kistrup emphasizes the clown aspect as he begins his review by commenting that “Ove Sprogøe looks like a clown -- a bad-tempered and complacent citizen from the Biedermeier period towards the middle of the last century [the mid-nineteenth century], at a time when the citizenry had supplanted the big revolution while other revolutions are waiting to pounce.” Kistrup praises Møllehave’s rhyming translation filled with contemporary and at times rather vulgar sayings. Kistrup mentions that Møllehave transformed the role of Arnolphe by emphasizing the complete and utter male chauvinist. He meanwhile forced Arnolphe’s other trait into the background, namely the trait that displayed the jealous and wounded lover disqualified because of his incorrect and outdated opinions. Kistrup points out “that Arnolphe is simply quite an old man, which makes him unacceptable as husband for the young Agnès.” Kistrup also describes Horace “as a bumbling fool, who stumbles over everything on stage” and adds “that Horace’s advantage over Arnolphe is simply his age. He is young while Arnolphe is an aging sourpuss who makes it difficult for the spectators to empathize with him.”
The theatre critic Bent Mohn enjoyed the play as did Kistrup, but in *Fransk uden tårer* (*French Without Tears*) Mohn states that he would have preferred to see Sprogøe portray a different rendition of Arnolphe. At the beginning, Sprogøe presents the audience with a self-satisfied, authoritative, sarcastic figure who, when shocked into action, instantly devises new tactics to continue to mold Agnès into his perfect wife. The problem expands as the play unfolds. Sprogøe becomes furious, confused and passionate as he realizes the inevitability of being cuckolded. As the play ends and Arnolphe experiences his final downfall, he grimaces bitterly. He is, unfortunately, not sufficiently able to sway the audience to make them feel sorry for him (see fig. 50). Mohn finds this aspect missing from an otherwise excellent production using Møllehave’s new translation.

**Jørgen Blakstad Tournée 1990**

A few years later in 1990, the audience empathized far better with Jesper Langberg when he portrayed Arnolphe in *L’École des femmes* in *Jørgen Blaksted Tournéen* (*The Jørgen Blakstad Touring Company*). The play toured Denmark for six months, entertaining Danes in dozens of venues all across the country. The costumes designed for this production of *L’École des femmes* were quite a mix, according to Jesper Langberg (interview 7 Feb. 2006), and the theatre critics agree with his assessment. The costumes were colorful without belonging to a certain time period, and they lacked any apparent pattern or symbolism. Langberg was unimpressed with some of the suggestions made by the Swedish director Gun Jönsson. According to Langberg, Jönsson was actually dismissed a few days before the play went on tour. Her direction had fortunately reached a point where the actors themselves were able to put the finishing touches on the play.
The photos in the theatre program provide evidence of the strange mix of costumes created for this play. In Act III, Scene II, while reciting the marriage maxims, Agnès sits on Arnolphe’s lap. She is wearing a long, black robe adorned with the white ruff worn by Lutheran ministers, and a tight black cap partly covers her hair (see fig. 51). She presents the demure appearance of an innocent and devout young woman recently returned from the convent school where she has spent her formative years. In *Den evige tragikomedie* (*The Eternal Tragicomedy*), Jens Kistrup says he believes this might be the first time ever in the history of the play that Agnès actually sits on Arnolphe’s lap.

According to Kistrup, Arnolphe rather shamelessly pats her during the recitation but his discretion covers what could be an uncomfortable moment. Agnès has nothing to fear from him since there is no way she would fall in love with Arnolphe (see fig. 52).

In a later scene, Agnès wears a negligee while Horace sleeps with his head in her lap (see fig. 53). Horace is dressed in red leather pants with a patterned Thai silk shirt opened almost to the waist. In the last act in Act V, Scene III, Agnès looks cheap with long, disheveled flowing
curls and a dress with a low-cut bodice. This costume contrasts drastically with her earlier prim and proper appearance. It is clear that Agnès has undergone a complete transformation both emotionally and psychologically. The photo captures the moment when Arnolphe attempts to draw Agnès away from Horace after Horace has asked Arnolphe to protect her for a while (see fig. 54). As we know, Arnolphe eventually fails and loses the woman he has come to love so deeply and sincerely. As the play ends, all Arnolphe says is “oh.”

As Bettina Heltberg comments in *En usædvanligt blid tyrant* (*An Unusually Gentle Tyrant*), “Langberg radiates an innocence and warmth.” She says she almost wrote that Langberg could have been the one portraying the innocent Agnès. During the interview with Langberg, this gentleness and kindness became immediately apparent to me. As with his portrayal of Harpagon in 1996, he brought this same innate gentleness to his portrayal of Arnolphe. Jönsson used those character traits to imbue the play with another dimension, turning Arnolphe into a tragic figure rather than the usual tyrant. His greed for power came from his love for that young girl. He simply did not realize that his way was so very wrong.

According to Elin Rask in *Letløbende og lidenskabsløst* (*Smooth-Running and Dispassionate*), she believes Jönsson attempted to illustrate modern-day Denmark by using an old text in a contemporary context but that she did not succeed very well. Rask finds that after having removed the pain, poetry and intelligence from the original text, only the farce remained. Rask studied the outer trappings such as the barren set decorations rather than commenting upon the individual acting.

As mentioned in previous chapters, problems with the set design are frequently encountered with these traveling troupes because the set has to fit such a variety of venues. Additionally, there is rarely enough time to construct elaborate sets in each
location. Rask mentions that there is only the slightest hint of a house and balcony, which reach no higher than the first floor. In her article, Heltberg makes similar criticisms about the costumes and set decorations.

**Det Kongelige Teater 2000-01**

Upon researching the scenography and direction of the most recent production of *L’École des femmes* performed at *Det Kongelige Teater* in Copenhagen during the 2000-01 season, it immediately became clear that this production was far superior to the 1990 *Jørgen Blaksted Tourné*. The director Alexa Ther chose a superb cast for the various roles. She and the scenographer Rikke Juellund had the advantage of producing a play for a permanent stage rather than for a touring company, and Juellund praised the luxury of working with a well-stocked wardrobe division.

The well-known elderly actor Jørgen Reenberg, who played the title role in *Tartuffe* at *Betty Nansen Teatret* in 1989-90 and played Horace in *L’École des femmes* at *Det Kongelige Teater* in 1952, played Arnolphe, and the beautiful Sidse Babett Knudsen played Agnès. Despite their vast age difference, Reenberg and Babett Knudsen complemented each other. Their approach to the text and their acting techniques were comparable and far more important than their age difference. Babett Knudsen imbued Agnès’s character with a delightful innocence and growing knowledge as she matured, and Juellund created costumes and stage decorations to follow the text as it evolved around those two actors. According to the various theatre critics, Ther directed them superbly against each other, reaping ample praise for this particular rendition of a classic play.

During the February 2006 interview, Ther stressed that she considers Arnolphe’s role to be among the greatest roles in European theatre. Reenberg’s knowledge, both scenic and linguistic, is immense, so both Ther and Juellund adjusted their work to his wishes and created a universe to center upon him. Two weeks before opening night, he insisted upon making changes to some of the lines in the script. In a May 2006 e-mail message, Ther explained that although Reenberg mostly changed his own lines, he also suggested some beneficial changes for the other actors.
Juellund devoted a great deal of time and attention to symbolism as she designed the costumes and sets for the play. She created an outdoor setting with fall colors. She used the pattern and fall colors in the leafy hedge across from her studio to influence her color scheme and set decorations. At the end of the performance, two tall central gates opened at the rear of the stage to reveal falling snow. A forlorn, beaten Arnolphe left the stage and walked through those gates into the winter of his life. Juellund and Juellund created a powerful ending to this play. They succeeded in having the audience empathize with Arnolphe despite his intense chauvinism because he truly had developed a passionate love for Agnès.

Juellund explained how she used soft velour fabric to emphasize the red, orange, brown and golden fall colors for Arnolphe’s apparel (see figs. 55 and 56). She utilized the same fall color palette for the set decorations to help indicate that Arnolphe had arrived at the fall of his life. During the February 2006 interview, Juellund told me how she located and then divided an old French pattern to use for several of the costumes. In the final act, she dressed Arnolphe in a blue coat (see fig 57) with his grey unkempt
hair standing on end. Where a neatly dressed Arnolphe first exudes confidence, at the end after quietly and hopelessly exclaiming “oh,” he leaves the stage looking old and beaten.

At first, Agnès is dressed in a cream-colored little-girl dress with ruffles, wearing Mary Janes with ankle socks with one sock curled around the ankle (see fig. 58). The pale, virginal dress imbues her with a youthful appearance of innocence and virtue. Her hair is dressed with ribbons in her long, corkscrew curls. She sits demurely next to Arnolphe while he explains life to her before she stands up to read the wifely maxims aloud to him (see figs. 59 and 60).

Horace wears blue, in part to emphasize Juellund’s wish to portray him as an outsider (see figs. 61 and 62 below). As seen in Figures 57 and 62, as Agnès prepares to leave with Horace, she wears a jacket in the same blue color, an indication that she now belongs to Horace and no longer to Arnolphe.
The servants Georgette and Alain wear costumes reminiscent of the time period when Molière wrote the play. The illustration and photos included here show their peculiar headdresses. They add to the sense of these two characters’ dim-wittedness (see figs. 63 and 64).

Juellund took many such details into consideration when creating the costumes and set designs. She also mentioned that large hats are more effective since small hats are difficult to see from the rear of the theatre. She had Agnès as well as the other actors wear modern shoes in order to create a bridge to the present. Alexa Ther later pointed out that Juellund broke with tradition by designing a shorter dress for Agnès than was normally worn in the seventeenth century. Ther felt that breaking with tradition gave the audience a chance to be part of the story line and that it removed the museum-like

![Fig. 61. Jens Jacob Tychsen as Horace © Rigmor Mydtskov www.mydtskov.dk](image1)

![Fig. 63. Georgette’s costume © Rikke Juellund](image2)

![Fig. 64. Peter Gilsfort as Alain and Jannie Faurschou as Georgette © Photo: Rigmor Mydtskov www.mydtskov.dk](image3)
feeling.

Juellund used the revolving stage for the three rooms with some additional changes added to the décor as the play progressed. She added perspective to the set design by enabling the audience to look through the windows from one room to the next. Reenberg walked through the doors from room to room while the creaking stage turned. Although still extremely agile and mobile, Reenberg always wanted a seat in each area whether a rock in the garden, some boxes on the street or a desk in his and Agnès’s rooms. Sitting, rising and generally moving about added energy and life to the production. Juellund placed a rocking horse in Agnès’s room, which together with the light colors and airy feel further emphasized her extreme youth. When her chamber was converted to Arnolphe’s den, the rocking horse was exchanged for the front half of a stuffed rhinoceros (see fig. 65). This trophy was meant to refer to Agnès as belonging to Arnolphe as well as to emphasize this thick-skinned, shortsighted individual with the stubbornness and tunnel vision of a rhinoceros.

Juellund mentioned that moments before Arnolphe hid in the dark on the street in preparation for walking into the winter of his life, Agnès angrily destroyed the furniture in her chamber. This addition does not appear in the script and is an example of a detail that added life to the production to help create a memorable evening for the audience.

Several theatre critics have explored this production. In Erotik for næsehorn (Eroticism for a Rhinoceros), Alette Scavenius opens her review with a thorough description of the rhinoceros, describing how a huge rhinoceros stands over in the corner -- a large, heavy, stupid and stubborn animal, while its human likeness stomps angrily about in front of it -- a man in love but also filled with self-glorification.
By mentioning the garden gate, Scavenius points out an additional interesting symbolic point in the scenography. She comments that Arnolphe’s wrought-iron gate casts long prison-like shadows comparable to his ever-growing insanity. She compares the blood-red vine that creeps up the garden wall to the jealousy creeping into the house, eating away the walls and undermining the foundations of his house. Scavenius praises Juellund’s scenography as being exceptionally poetic and in such tune with the play as not often encountered in today’s theatre. She additionally gives high praise to Ulla Gjedde Palmgren for her excellent translation, which combines classic language with a cheerful and contemporary tone.

Scavenius considers this production of L’École des femmes to be one of the 73-year-old Reenberg’s best performances in his many decades of acting. She praises Reenberg for opting to not play the role of Arnolphe, as is common, as an old, scrawny man in a moth-eaten bathrobe. Instead he is a trim man of the world with an erotic gleam in the eye. Scavenius points out that under Ther’s direction, the intrigue develops apace in this tragicomedy with Arnolphe and Agnès undergoing a metamorphosis in opposite directions. Where Arnolphe changes into a beaten, old man, Agnès turns into a proud and mature woman with life and love ahead of her.

In Næsehornet og lammeleggen (The Rhinoceros and the Lamb Roast), Per Theil goes a step further than Scavenius. In the opening paragraph, he dedicates his critique to a discussion of Reenberg as a wild animal: “It is not every theatre that is lucky enough to have a big, old predator running around on stage.” He emphasizes that Reenberg needs considerable care and extra rest and concludes that he belongs to a rare, royal pedigree.

As with other theatre critics, Theil mentions the rhinoceros but with an added twist as he compares the rhino’s horn to the cuckolded man growing a horn on his forehead. He then carries the simile further to Agnès, who is brought up in a convent to remain utterly ignorant in preparation for becoming “a wife with a forehead without a brain.” Theil makes another interesting observation. He mentions that Juellund has practically transformed the garden into Eden where the old man, Arnolphe, hands Agnès an apple. Although Theil emphasizes her innocence and comments upon her apparel, which is reminiscent of a little white doll, he omits any further reference to the “lamb
roast.” It is obviously a reference to Agnès = agneau but that part remains missing in the theatre review.

Theil discusses another interesting dimension to the play. He mentions that when Agnès reads the maxims, spelling her way through the words, Arnolphe corrects and encourages her the way a teacher corrects his pupil. Theil correlates this comparison to the revered, elderly actor who is teaching the very young Babett Knudsen the art of acting.

Theil finishes his review with an emphasis on how the deathly wounded Reenberg mutely disappears into his life’s winter while Babett Knudsen emerges from the doll’s pupa into her life’s spring. He adds: “It cannot get better than this. He [Reenberg] gives us everything he possibly can. She [Babett Knudsen] has just had her royal [at the Royal Theatre] breakthrough.”

In Frydefuldt samspil (Joyful Teamwork), Rikke Rottensten compares Agnès to a small doll dressed in white with bows carefully placed in her long, corkscrew curls. She writes that “Never has a man been so categorically refused, so sweetly, so sensibly and so deadly the way Agnès does it dressed in her school uniform.” Rottensten praises the “joyful teamwork” between the two generations and the theatre tradition that Det Kongelige Teater presents to its public with L’École des femmes. Rottensten bestows high praise upon actors, director and scenographer alike in this excellent production.

After reading her review, I asked Rottensten for an interview in September 2006 to discuss her role as a theatre critic. She works part-time for Kristeligt Dagblad (The Christian Daily News), a national paper published in Copenhagen. Rottensten is a freelance journalist, educated with a degree in Danish literature. She is editor of Teater 1, a literary magazine, published five times a year, which deals with all types of performances such as drama, opera, musicals and ballet. The magazine includes in-depth articles and interviews with theatre practitioners in the afore-mentioned fields.

Rottensten has always been interested in theatre and took the required theatre history course in college. However, she has never had ambitions towards becoming an actress. When attending any type of theatre performance, she focuses primarily upon what she sees rather than upon what she hears. In that respect, she considers herself more
a journalist than an actual theatre critic, and she does not analyze the entire performance as the theatre critic Me Lund does in her many reviews.

In response to whether prior knowledge of a play is needed or required before attending a performance, she admitted that although familiar with a vast number of plays, she generally lacked time for conducting previous research into unknown plays. She added that major national papers like Berlingske Tidende and Politiken employ their theatre critics full-time. Even so, she is aware that they too are unable to thoroughly research every performance they cover. Rottensten added that the performance day matters a great deal. Attending the premiere versus a Monday with half-empty seats makes quite a difference in how the actors react to their audience.

Although the theatre critics primarily emphasize the roles of Arnolphe and Agnès, they also bestow praise on the other actors including the ones who play Horace, Alain and Georgette as well as on Chrysalde. It is rare to receive such high praise for the entire cast. The accolades are directed at Alexa Ther for her superb direction, paired with Rikke Juellund’s unique set design and costumes and coupled with Ulla Gjedde Palmgren’s excellent translation complete with alexandrines including male and female endings. Palmgren wanted the translation to glide as smoothly as possible so that even her own children could follow along when listening in the theatre (interview Sept. 2006). With that said, L’École des femmes turns into a masterpiece presenting Molière at his very best. It is rare to attend a better presentation than this one at Det Kongelige Teater where the various facets succeed in coming together as a whole. Any future production of this popular play is bound, for years, to be compared to the 2000-01 presentation.
CHAPTER 4
LE BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME

The discussion in this chapter focuses on the first performance of Le Bourgeois gentilhomme presented in Denmark at Lille Grønnegadeteatret in 1723, translated by an unknown person, as well as on three productions from the 1990s that all used the same translation by Jens Smærup Sørensen requested by the management at Aarhus Teater for their 1994 season.

At the request of Louis XIV, Molière and the composer Lully cooperated to produce Le Bourgeois gentilhomme to be performed at Chambord Palace in the Loire Valley in October 1670. It was presented at Palais Royal in Paris the following month on November 23. After being translated into Danish, it was first performed for King Frederik IV at Copenhagen Palace on January 15, 1723, before becoming a part of the regular repertoire at Lille Grønnegadeteatret (Jensen Europæisk Drama 100).

When examining the variety of Danish titles given to Le Bourgeois gentilhomme during the past centuries, it quickly becomes evident that the translators cannot agree on a title that best describes what Molière wanted to tell his audience with this particular comedy. When presented to the Danish king in January 1723, the play was called Den høj-adelige Borger-Mand (The Most Noble Bourgeois). The identical name appeared in the printed translation from 1725. The 1727 playbill from Lille Grønnegadeteatret changed the title to Den borgerlige Adelsmand (The Bourgeois Nobleman), the closest the title has ever come to Le Bourgeois gentilhomme. When B. J. Lodde translated the play in 1748, to be produced at the new Copenhagen stage, he reversed the title to Den adelige Borger (The Noble Bourgeois). In 1779, it was called Adelige Borger (Noble Bourgeois). Thomas Overskou translated the play anew in 1846, calling it Den Adelsgale Borger (The Bourgeois Who Is Crazy about Nobility) and condensed it to three acts. In the 1960s, Jens Kruuse made a new translation for the stage, calling it Den Fine Mand (The Elegant Man). Preben Harris used this translation for his direction of Den Fine Mand (The Elegant Man) at Aarhus Teater in 1966. When, almost thirty years later, Smærup Sørensen was asked to translate the play for another production at Aarhus Teater
in 1994, he wanted to call it Den Kultiverede Forretningsmand (The Cultured Businessman) in an attempt to guide the director towards the hopeless snobbishness evidenced by today’s nouveau riche Danes. Because Aarhus Teater had already begun to advertise the new production, calling it Den Fine Mand (The Elegant Man), the earlier title from 1966, it was too late to change the title to the one suggested by Smærup Sørensen (Smærup Sørensen e-mail 23 June 2006). Three years later in 1997, Pernille Grumme and Smærup Sørensen adapted his translation to better suit an amateur production at the outdoor summer theatre in Ringsted in Central Zealand, calling the play Den Adelsgale Borger (The Bourgeois Who Is Crazy about Nobility) as Overschou had called it in 1846. The following year during the summer of 1998 at Grønnegårdsteatret in Copenhagen, the Norwegian director Catrine Telle called the play Den Adelsglade Borger (The Bourgeois in Love with Nobility) while also using Smærup Sørensen’s translation.

Because the Danes have rather relaxed opinions in regard to class differences and social structure, Smærup Sørensen believes it may be difficult for a Dane to understand the meaning behind a play entitled The Bourgeois Nobleman. With each country having its own cultural differences, it is a challenge for translators to arrive at a finished product that reaches out to the entire audience. When asked about his translation, Smærup Sørensen explained that although he followed the original French version as closely as possible, he still attempted to bring the words and situations up to date (e-mail 23 June 2006). Each of the contemporary directors from 1994, 1997 and 1998 have gone a step or two further to make their version accentuate the actual meaning of the play, namely that of snobbishness, which will be explained in more detail during the discussion of each performance.

**Translation Examples**

As previously noted in L’Avare, families tend to move down a notch in social class ranking in the first Danish translations of several of Molière’s plays. The same occurs in Le Bourgeois gentilhomme. Here the Jourdain family resides in Copenhagen in a lower class milieu than the French M. Jourdain does in Paris.
If listening carefully to the dialogue, the audience will notice this downward move in Act III, Scene XII when Madame Jourdain bemoans her husband’s choice of a spouse for their daughter Lucile. Madame Jourdain is aware of and comfortable with her station in life. She is appalled at her husband’s *nouveau riche* behavior. She wants a son-in-law who is at ease with his new family and who is not ashamed of his in-laws. Madame Jourdain does not want her neighbors pointing fingers at her and her family.

In French, Madame Jourdain says:

Voyez-vous, dirait-on, cette Madame la Marquise qui fait tant la glorieuse? C’est la fille de M. Jourdain qui était trop heureuse, étant petite, de jouer à la madame avec nous. Elle n’a pas toujours été si relevée que la voilà, et ses deux grands-pères vendaient du drap auprès de la porte Saint-Innocent. (151)

In 1725, these sentences were translated to:

They would say how courageous Madame Countess has become. That is M. Jourdain’s daughter. When she was young, we would hardly ever play with her. She is not born to those who sit so high on top of the straw [who belong to the upper class] as she does now. Her parents had a second-hand booth by Nørreport [a main gate into Copenhagen in 1725]. (370)

In 1994, Smærup Sørensen translates it to: “Have you seen how pretentious the Marquise is? That is M. Jourdain’s daughter. Both her grandparents sold rags on the square” (54). Smærup Sørensen omits any mention of either Paris or Copenhagen. Where Telle includes the entire paragraph (63), Grumme shortens it to: “Have you seen how pretentious the Marquise is? That is M. Jourdain’s daughter. Both her grandparents sold rags on the square” (47). In 1725, the translator even changed the meaning from the French original. He said that the others would not play with the young girl whereas Smærup Sørensen correctly writes that they were playing with her.

Another change is noted in the 1725 translation where all discussion about logic, morals and physics has been removed, and the philosopher instead becomes the “Language Master” as shown in the following excerpt:
MAÎTRE DE PHILOSOPHIE. Ce sentiment est raisonnable: *Nam sine doctrina vita est quasi mortis imago*. Vous entendez cela, et vous savez le latin sans doute.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN. Qui, mais faites comme si je ne le savais pas: expliquez-moi ce que cela veut dire.

MAÎTRE DE PHILOSOPHIE. Cela veut dire que sans la science, la vie est presque une image de la mort.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN. Ce latin-là a raison.

MAÎTRE DE PHILOSOPHIE. N’avez-vous point quelques principes, quelques commencements des sciences?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN. Oh ! oui, je sais lire et écrire. (63)

In 1725, these lines change to:

SPROGMESTEREN (THE LANGUAGE MASTER). You are correct.

*Car qui ne sait parler, ne sait pas vivre.* You do understand this, correct? Do you not know French?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN. Yes, but just pretend I do not understand it. Explain what it means.

SPROGMESTEREN. It means that *if one cannot speak, it is not worth living*.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN. The French wording surpasses anything.

SPROGMESTEREN. Have you not yet begun to study your grammar?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN. I can read and write. (317-318)

In 1994, Smærup Sørensen reverts to the Philosopher:

THE PHILOSOPHY PROFESSOR, You have good reason for that. *Nam sine doctrinae vita est quasi mortis imago*. Do you understand it? Yes, you undoubtedly understand Latin?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN. Yes, but let us pretend I cannot. Explain what it means.

THE PHILOSOPHY PROFESSOR. It means *that without knowledge, life is almost like a picture of death*.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN. The Latin is not that crazy.
THE PHILOSOPHY PROFESSOR. Do you not have any background in science? Have you never even taken the first steps into scientific knowledge?

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN. Oh certainly! I can read and write. (19)

Both Grumme in 1997 (18) and Telle in 1998 (21) keep Smærup Sørensen’s dialogue. However Grumme omits the talk about logic while keeping morals and physics intact. In 1725, the anonymous translator thoroughly mixes the lines in that whole scene without losing the point of the exercise, which is to show how little M. Jourdain actually knows and how he is too childishly delighted to absorb even a minute grain of knowledge. Jensen suggests that the translator’s use of a French expression, as opposed to Molière’s own Latin one, is an additional way for him to emphasize M. Jourdain’s snobbishness at a time where everything French was important to many Danes (Europæisk Drama 112). The citation in French instead of Latin also locates the play outside of France.

Following the discussion about what subjects M. Jourdain would like to be taught, in Act II, Scene IV, the philosopher rattles off the five French vowels and begins the hilarious dialogue with M. Jourdain (68). Although the Danish language has four extra vowels, in 1725, the language master simply states that they will begin with the five vowels, omitting the Danish y, æ, ø and å. In Smærup Sørensen’s translation from 1994, the philosopher mentions that there are nine vowels and proceeds to teach the vowels the way they were taught in French. He uses the pronunciation explicitly given for the “u” to explain how the Danish “y” is pronounced. He leaves out the actual “u” as well as explanations of how to pronounce the Danish æ, ø and å (21).

An additional example of the change in social classes from bourgeois to working class becomes apparent when one looks at particular turns of phrase. The 1725 translator imbues his Danish characters with a coarser language. His servants address their masters in a language at times quite unsuitable for them to address their bourgeois masters, and the masters reply in kind. M. Jourdain regularly addresses Nicole quite rudely, and in Act III, Scene VIII, Covielle uses some incredible expletives when speaking to Nicole. The same happens when he discusses Nicole with Cléante and also when he and Cléante discuss the two women in the parallel scene that follows in Scene IX. In Smærup
Sørensen’s translation, M. Jourdain is particularly fond of saying “shut up” and other such expressions, which lowers his social status. Under Grumme’s 1997 direction, the various expletives are refined to some degree, while in 1998 Telle keeps all Smærup Sørensen’s expletives intact.

Although the names of the characters in Le Bourgeois gentilhomme remain French, an interesting lapse occurs in the 1725 translation where M. Jourdain in a single instance calls Nicole “Kirsten,” a typical Danish name, which the reader previously encounters in the first L’École des femmes. In Act II, Scene IV, discussing verse versus prose, M. Jourdain says, « Quoi? quand je dis : « Nicole, apportez-moi mes pantoufles, et me donnez mon bonnet de nuit », c’est de la prose ? » (74). In 1725 this changes to, “What? When I say: ‘Kirsten fetch my slippers and my night cap’ is that then prose?” (323).

The combination of acting coupled with music and dancing in Le Bourgeois gentilhomme belonged to the type of comedy known as a comédie-ballet. This type of entertainment began at the French court. It combined verse and prose comedies, singing, musicians and ballet. This called for a large amount of expensive décor with Lully’s famous string orchestra, royal singers and dancers sharing the stage with Molière’s troupe (Jensen Lille Grønnegade 49). The comédie-ballet not only required a larger space than most theatres could accommodate, it also required numerous musicians and dancers, particularly for the concluding part of the production such as the Ballet des nations in Le Bourgeois gentilhomme. Just as Molière was unable to afford to produce such an elaborate play at his own theatre in Paris, this type of entertainment was too large, too extravagant and too costly for a theatre the size of Lille Grønnegadeteatret, making it necessary for the theatre management to adapt the play. The contemporary directors, who worked with the three plays covered in this chapter, found it equally necessary to adapt their productions. Although Smærup Sørensen included the Ballet des nations in his translation, much to his regret it was not part of either one of those three Danish productions from 1994, 1997 and 1998 (e-mail 23 June 2006).

Where Molière included few stage directions for the actors in his plays, equally little is known about how much music, singing and dancing took place at Lille Grønnegadeteatret. We know that there was at least one musician. On the page listing the
characters, it states that the opening of the theatre occurs with a concert of instruments, and that the music master’s student sits in the middle of the stage (296). Although Lully composed the music for the French production, his name is not mentioned in the 1725 translation. In this translation in Act I, Scene II, the music master chants a melancholic sounding verse.

Molière writes:

Je languis nuit et jour, et mon mal est extrême,
Depuis qu’à vos rigueurs vos beaux yeux m’ont soumis ;
Si vous traitez ainsi, belle Iris, qui vous aime,
Hélas ! que pourriez-vous faire à vos ennemis ? (33)

In 1725, the verse changes drastically to:

A nobleman must embellish
Intellect and virtue
One might mention the social status
Happily inherited from his father. (302)

In 1994, Smærup Sørensen translates the verse to:

I languish night and day. I am close to death,
When you revert your beautiful eyes from me.
If, my lovely one, this is how you treat the one you love
How might you treat your enemies? (7)

Later in Act I, Scene II (French version 40-43), in the 1725 translation, the entire *Dialogue en musique*, song by three musicians, has been omitted with a brief note stating that a musical dialogue is presented at this point. Between Act I and Act II, there is a brief reference to four dancers who must have presented some type of interlude. There is no mention of the two later interludes, and in Act IV, Scene IV, the two drinking songs from the French version (167-69) become a single four-lined verse (379). In the last scene in Act V, Scene VI, or *Scène dernière* as it is called in the French text, Dorante says, « Tandis qu’il viendra [le notaire], et qu’il dressera les contrats, voyons notre ballet, et donnons-en le divertissement à Son Altesse Turque » (212). In 1725 Dorante says, “However let him [the notary] arrive and prepare the wedding contracts. Then we will enjoy our ball and while away the time with His Turkish Highness” (406). Jensen
suggests that the ball refers to a masked ball as a *mascarade*, which was a favorite pastime at the time the play was translated into Danish. She writes that in Ludvig Holberg’s prologue, written for the 1725 production, he used the term *mascarade*, the title he later used for one of his most famous comedies (*Europæisk Drama* 102). These examples, together with the previously translated areas, provide the reader with an idea of how the 1725 translation, specifically made for *Lille Grønnegadeteatret*, in many ways differs both from the original and from the contemporary versions discussed next.

**Aarhus Teater 1994**

When Smærup Sørensen was asked to translate *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* for the spring 1994 production at *Aarhus Teater*, he wanted the play titled *Den Kultiverede Forretningsmand* (*The Cultured Businessman*) but had to settle for the previous title *Den Fine Mand* (*The Elegant Man*) from *Aarhus Teater*’s 1966 production. Smærup Sørensen wrote me in an e-mail message that he translated the play as closely as possible to the original French text. He was sorry to see certain scenes omitted by the director, not only in the 1994 production, but also in the next two, because he felt that every scene should have been included in order to get the full effect of what Molière wanted to tell his audience (23 June 2006).

The theatre critics are complimentary in their descriptions of the 1994 production of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* at *Aarhus Teater*. They provide helpful examples of Lars Juhl’s elaborate scenography. They describe how the central decoration consisted of a massive, white bust of the Sun King Louis XIV, and that the costumes were elaborately sewn in silks and brocades with styles dating back to the seventeenth century (see fig. 66).

In his article *Snobbens komedie* (*The Snobbish Comedy*), Jens Kistrup comments upon the excellent direction at *Aarhus Teater* combined with Lars Juhl’s luxurious and
stylish scenography. However, he also mentions the thematic weakness in this comedy, maintaining that the background for M. Jordain’s snobbishness is his insecurity and inferiority complex. Kistrup does not believe that this particular subject had much meaning for Molière. Kistrup adds that he does not believe that Molière has written another play with so many mediocre characters. These suggestions fit the comments made by various directors after they worked with Le Bourgeois gentilhomme -- namely how very difficult it was to direct the play to their complete satisfaction.

In Overdådig billedbog (The Lavishly Decorated Picture Book), Claus Grymer reacts to the huge bust of King Louis XIV. He describes the nightmarish and grotesque dimensions and postulates that this godlike creature is watching over the actors (see fig. 67). I however propose that Juhl’s sumptuous decorations symbolize the nouveau riche milieu. In Ved Solkongens bord -- den adelsgale borger (At the Sun King’s Table -- The Bourgeois Who Is Crazy about Nobility), Michael Bonnensen is confused by the appearance of a bag lady who briefly enters the stage not to be seen again until outside the theatre after the play is over. He adds that upon her arrival, the audience is shown an unfinished stage with scaffolding around an enormous object. As she departs, the object is unveiled, displaying the Sun King’s bust. As previously discussed, this unfinished stage setting emphasizes that a play, and not reality, is about to begin.

Neither Grymer nor Bonnesen understands the reason behind the inclusion of the bag lady. Where both critics appear puzzled about the bag lady, I suggest that her appearance is a symbolic representation of the Jourdain family’s merchant background. By appearing as the play opens and again after the curtain has dropped, the director might well be attempting to convey the message to the audience that M. Jourdain, despite his
newly acquired wealth, will never really leave his lower class status however hard he tries. As mentioned earlier, in the French version, Molière wrote that Lucile’s grandparents sold cloth by the Saint-Innocent Gate [in Paris]. The 1725 translator wrote that Lucile’s parents had a second-hand booth by Nørreport [in Copenhagen], while Smærup Sørensen simply wrote that the grandparents sold rags on the square. The symbolism is fascinating but difficult to detect unless the spectator or reader is thoroughly familiar with the play.

Bonnesen writes that instead of using Lully’s original score, composed for Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, Johannessen chose music by Fuzzy, a twentieth-century Danish composer. Furthermore, as the tailor arrives with M. Jourdain’s new apparel, a gavotte by Fuzzy is being played on a harpsichord. The music then changes abruptly to “The Sting” by Scott Joplin. Bonnesen suggests that the mix of modernity and tradition symbolizes M. Jourdain’s determination to move up the social ladder.

The mix of modernity and tradition was shown in a variety of ways in this production. In a telephone interview, Euðun Johannessen, the Faroese director, referred to the inclusion of the bag lady as an anachronism that came about because there was no proper role for the elderly actress employed by Aarhus Teater. She actually already appeared in front of the theatre as the play began, as well as off and on during the performance as seen in Figure 68, during the intermission and then outside after the play was finished. Johannessen had the actress place a tape recorder in her bag to record what the spectators were saying as they entered the theatre. From some who recognized the actress, there were statements such as, “Imagine that she has fallen that low,” ”Is that how the theatre treats one of their own,” “Might this be a protest against the theatre?” or from others who did not recognize the

![Fig. 68. Louis XIV bust and Ruth Maisie as the Bag Lady to the far right © Photo: Rolf Linder](image)
actress, “Look at that poor woman standing there” and “Oh, that poor woman” (12 Sept. 2006).

In our September 2006 interview, Lars Juhl explained how he wanted to blend the centuries in his elaborate scenography. One example was a framed Picasso on stage together with those of several classical painters. The bag lady was also a part of this modernity. Juhl constructed the huge bust of Louis XIV to indicate how the Sun King dominated life during the seventeenth century. The bust remained symbolically within the scaffolding throughout the play with the unveiling actually not taking place until just before intermission. Juhl meant the scaffolding to indicate that M. Jourdain never did succeed in escaping his lower class status -- he was never finished being built the way the bust was never finished. As mentioned above by Bonnesen, the music specifically composed for this production by Fuzzy was another collage meant to bridge the gap from classical to modern times.

Juhl explained another collage vision he brought to fruition in this play. He designed the baroque floor with black and white squares. The squares moved from symmetry to being spread out and even heading up the walls (see fig. 69). Juhl called it an exploding baroque with the explosion symbolizing how M. Jourdain wanted power and status but to no avail. He attempted to learn from various instructors but did not succeed and essentially drowned in the floor opening below him. Juhl also wanted to indicate that as the tiles spread, we left the seventeenth century. The squares would otherwise have remained together (interview Sept. 2006).

Juhl has retired now from his profession as scenographer, after working with set designs, costumes and even with lighting for more than 200 different productions. Juhl, Johannessen and Fuzzy have worked together for decades and have all three been

Fig. 69. Spreading tiles with Kim Veisgaard as M. Jourdain in the background behind the belly dancers © Photo: Rolf Linder
knighted by the Danish queen for their work in the world of theatre. Juhl explained how they enjoyed working at Aarhus Teater where funding was not an issue. The accompanying illustrations from the program and of Juhl’s illustrations clearly indicate how that was indeed the case (see figs. 70, 71 and 72).

When I was discussing the above newspaper reviews with Juhl, he emphasized that my type of analysis will be extremely helpful to future researchers when examining historical material on how Molière has been presented in Denmark during the past several decades. Juhl emphasized how little information theatre critics are able to convey in their articles. He also pointed out that some critics simply comment upon the quality of acting while barely touching upon symbolism, costumes and set designs. Juhl stressed how fortunate I am to have met with so many top professionals in their field. By providing in-depth descriptions of a variety of productions, they enable me to better illustrate how Molière is being presented though the years.

Fig. 70. Dorante’s costume © Lars Juhl

Fig. 71. Dorimène’s costume © Lars Juhl

Fig. 72. M. Jourdain’s Turkish costume © Lars Juhl
Ringsted 1997

Serving as a contrast to Johannessen’s classic 1994 production of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* at *Aarhus Teater*, Pernille Grumme directed an amateur production of the same play in Ringsted in August 1997. This production took place at the yearly outside venue in the monastery gardens of this provincial town west-south-west of Copenhagen. Grumme called it *Den Adelsgale Borger* (*The Bourgeois Who Is Crazy about Nobility*), the title which, in my opinion, best suits the play as M. Jourdain’s behavior borders on insanity in his wish to become part of the nobility. The play was well received and, although still a classic production in regard to costumes and set design, drastic changes and cuts were made to the translated version in part due to the much reduced funding as compared to the well-funded *Aarhus Teater* (see fig. 73 with the entire cast).

![Fig. 73. Entire cast. Ringsted Kommune’s Summer Theatre 1997 © Photo: Tony Holmstrøm Larsen](image)

During our March 2005 interview, Grumme explained that she had directed other plays for the Ringsted venue including *The Marriage of Figaro* by Beaumarchais in 1995 and *Henrik and Pernille* by Ludvig Holberg in 1996. She was pleased that the Ringsted Amateur Theatre Association once again asked her to find and direct a play for those ten days in August 1997. During her search for a play that would both amuse and impart some meaning, she discovered that *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* had neither been performed in Copenhagen nor had it been performed on the entire island of Zealand,
where Copenhagen is situated, for the past 100 years. She located Smærup Sørensen’s translation from the 1994 production at Aarhus Teater and adapted the play together with him to fit the Ringsted amateur summer production. The actors were trades and business people with the local blacksmith playing M. Jourdain. Being working people, they only had time to practice a few times a week for several months until the last intense weeks before opening night.

The play was considerably shortened in certain places, references to music and dancing were carefully deleted, a new ceremony was written by Smærup Sørensen as a substitute for the Turkish part and the Ballet des nations omitted from this comédie-ballet. In two March 2005 interviews, Grumme explained her reason for omitting the Turkish part. With Turkish culture -- decorative Turkish carriages, Turkish apparel and other Turkish objects -- being extremely popular with the nobility in France during the seventeenth century, Molière had chosen this obsession to demonstrate M. Jourdain’s extreme desire for social climbing. However in twentieth and twenty-first-century Danish society, it would not be right to ridicule the Turks, and Grumme felt these comparisons might not even be understood. The large Turkish contingent of foreign workers and immigrants in present-day Denmark is generally poor. These Turks are definitely not people who would suggest pretentiousness.

With snobbishness being a universal vice spanning the centuries, Grumme opted instead to highlight affectations, obsession with fine wines and social climbing to stress M. Jourdain’s character flaw. She had him play a balalaika, which is not a classical instrument. These are just a few examples of how Grumme demonstrated M. Jourdain’s complete and utter lack of knowledge of culture and etiquette.

Grumme not only gave me an insightful interview and lent me her video of the actual production, she also gave me a copy of her own manuscript with stage directions and comments. These works all show Grumme’s remarkable attention to every little detail, a factor that contributed to the play’s success. These details included being mindful of space limitations as well as the problems associated with directing a play outdoors. For example, being familiar with the space at Ringsted outdoor theatre, Grumme knew that the dancing had to be omitted. She carefully adapted the script to reflect that change. Also being mindful of her amateur actors, she shortened some of the
paragraphs. This made the lines easier to remember and project as well as easier for the audience to understand.

Grumme reduced *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* to three acts, which worked well in an outdoor setting, where the spectators wandered among the booths for refreshments before the play and during the two intermissions. She combined Act I and II, thereby avoiding the musical interlude. Grumme also omitted Act III, Scene VIII-X. These are the long, humorous scenes where Cléonte and Covielle refuse to speak with Lucile and Nicole while discussing the women in remarkably rude terms. As Grumme’s Act II ends, Nicole says, “I am delighted to leave. You could not give me better news.” Moments later she returns and tells the audience, “It will be a little while before we return so please take a break” (director’s copy 45).

As Grumme’s final Act III begins, M. Jourdain is heard practicing his vowels until Madame Jourdain and Cléonte arrive. Cléonte intends to plead his case with M. Jourdain to ask for Lucile’s hand in marriage. Moments later, in preparation for serving the grand feast, servants arrive. They carry tables, food and wine while candelabras descend from the ceiling. Wine is poured liberally and continuously; the characters toast and drink and toast once more. Meanwhile, musicians are heard playing Lully’s music from a balcony while the servants wander back and forth with plenty of food and wine. Where in Molière’s Act IV, Scene I, Dorante carries on at great length about quite a variety of gastronomic delights (163-65), Grumme shortens this paragraph considerably, omitting the actual description of the specific delicacies (director’s copy 54).

As previously mentioned, Grumme considered it improper in contemporary Denmark to satirize the Turks, so she sought different ways to accentuate M. Jourdain’s snobbery. Whereas seventeenth-century French citizens revered anything Turkish at the time Molière wrote this comedy, Grumme chose to emphasize the fascination with wines that was and still is currently “in” in contemporary Denmark. With this suggestion in mind, Smærup Sørensen rewrote the entire Turkish dialogue, which Grumme then adapted further (e-mail 26 June 2006). Thus the two created a play à la Molière instead of explicitly directing a play by Molière.

In this new ceremony, Coville enters the stage in disguise and tells M. Jourdain that he is a close friend of M. Jourdain’s father. He fibs and says that M. Jourdain’s father
was a highborn nobleman thereby fulfilling M. Jourdain’s dearest aspiration to attain the status of becoming a nobleman. Covielle proceeds to explain that he is there on behalf of one of his friends Count Charlatan de sufflé colaps Grand Cru Mis en Bouteille au Chateau [collapsed soufflé -- good vintage bottled at the castle] who has fallen in love with Lucile, M. Jourdain’s daughter. He explains that Count Charlatan will be arriving shortly to request Lucile’s hand in marriage, but that in order for M. Jourdain to be worthy of becoming his father-in-law, Count Charlatan will appoint M. Jourdain Markis fadaise de royale pladasque. Count Charlatan’s names pretty much speak for themselves whereas M. Jourdain’s names need some translating. Markis fadaise de royale pladasque means a blundering marquis who falls flat on his face. The name indicates the inevitable end result: M. Jourdain becomes a laughing stock in his attempt to behave like a nobleman.

According to Grumme’s manuscript, Covielle haughtily picks grapes from a bowl, spits out the seeds, grabs a glass of wine and drinks while he confers the title of Markis fadaise de royale pladasque upon M. Jourdain. A totally rewritten naming ceremony follows beginning with Covielle knocking three times on the floor with his cane. The entourage follows suit and stomps three times on the floor after which Covielle says, “Highly honored Parisian brother! Prepare yourself for the most exceptional, unique and unusual -- and -- distinctive event!” (director’s copy 62). As the naming ceremony continues, the men strip M. Jourdain of his jacket, turn it inside out and dress him again. They add a scarf to resemble a sash meant for medals, attach a piece of cloth to his collar to resemble a cape, and pour a glass of wine over him. Covielle passes the cane to Nicole, who beats M. Jourdain, and everybody then curtsies and bows. Nicole passes the cane to the next person in line, and this ritual continues in the same manner with all attendees beating the poor man. Covielle ties four knots in his handkerchief to resemble a jester’s cap and places it on M. Jourdain’s head. The naming ceremony continues in this vein, with Covielle making a complete and utter fool of M. Jourdain while the music keeps playing. Four men then form a chair with their hands [called “a golden stool” in Danish] and carry M. Jourdain around the stage until Madame Jourdain’s sudden arrival. The music then stops abruptly, causing the men to drop M. Jourdain onto the floor after which they hurriedly leave the stage.
During this ceremony, M. Jourdain is so taken with his own importance, he is utterly incapable of understanding what a fool he has made of himself. Encouraged by Dorante and Dorimène, he continues to treat his wife arrogantly while they laugh at him behind his back. In true Molière form, the play quickly reaches its happy ending with Lucile and Cléonte being permitted to marry while M. Jourdain remains overwhelmed with himself and his new title. As with the other Danish productions of Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, the play ends with the omission of the Ballet des nations.

As Henrik Lyding writes in Svær komedie gøres til flot underholdning (A Difficult Comedy Transformed to Elegant Entertainment), Grumme and her scenographer provide the audience with wonderful entertainment. He discusses how difficult this play is to produce and how rarely it has been performed during the past several centuries. He also praises the humorous touches Grumme has added to make this play a professional production. He praises the scenographer Ianke Firing’s sophisticated and elegant golden stage design with the classically slanting floor and golden filigree walls surrounded by the green trees in the monastery park. Lyding ends his critique by describing how the stage looked more beautiful as the evening grew darker. The photos from the theatre program (see figs. 74 and 75) emphasize Lyding’s description of Firing’s elaborate and classical costumes.
Grønnegårdsteatret 1998

The following summer, Le Bourgeois gentilhomme was performed during July and August 1998 at Grønnegårdsteatret, a summer theatre based in the middle of Kunst og Industrimuseet (The Art and Industry Museum) in downtown Copenhagen. Klaus Bondam, the managing director at Grønnegårdsteatret from 1996 to fall 2003, has been consistently helpful during the past several years with explanations and with suggestions of people to contact. He was also the person who unwittingly inspired me to research how Molière is portrayed in theatres in contemporary Denmark.

I conducted a telephone interview with Bondam in July 2003 about his theatre’s production of Le Bourgeois gentilhomme where he related his troubles with the production of this particular play. He said he realized the adaptation of the play was a flop and outlined his reasons for why he believed it happened. He explained that during a visit to Paris in 1996, he had attended a performance of Jérôme Savary’s production of Le Bourgeois gentilhomme at Théâtre National de Chaillot and decided to adapt this play to the Danish stage. Not being especially well versed with Molière’s comedies, tradition and wit, Bondam gave his choice of director, the Norwegian Catrine Telle, carte blanche to direct the play as she preferred.

Like Grumme, Telle chose to adapt Smærup Sørensen’s translation made for Aarhus Teater in 1994. This time the play was given the title Den Adelsglade Borger (The Bourgeois in Love with Nobility), a title criticized by people well versed in Molière but one that Telle actually accidentally renamed from the intended title Den Adelsgale Borger (The Bourgeois Who Is Crazy about Nobility) (e-mail 31 July 2006). However insanely M. Jourdain wanted to be a part of the nobility, she sympathized with this man, who quite happily agreed to all the ludicrous suggestions made to him by the various so-called masters. In an effort to reproduce the French version to suit the Danish summer theatre audience, Telle selected a camper as base for Monsieur Jourdain’s humble abode. She let the actors use poetic license in words and actions to fit the camper scene. According to an October 2005 interview with Lars Knutzon, who played M. Jourdain, some of the actors changed their dialogue from performance to performance, diverging from the actual script and thereby inadvertently altering significant moments. With the outdoor stage permitting few changes between scenes, Telle opted to have the play
performed in one single, long act, partly to keep the action going and partly, as Bondam
suggested, to prevent the audience from leaving during intermission.

However, in a June 2005 telephone interview with Telle in Oslo, Norway, she
explained that after Grønnegårdsteatret had presented a poorly received Pierre
Corneille’s Le Cid in 1997, Bondam wanted to ensure better audience attendance so
asked Telle to direct a humorous Le Bourgeois gentilhomme. As mentioned in the
Preface, Both Bondam and Telle acknowledge and regret that the play was poorly
received. Was this because of the novel and unusual production of an old play? Was it
because of a strange blend of actors, who in 1998, except for Lars Knutzon, were fairly
unknown to the audience and also, according to Knutzon, were unfamiliar with the
Molière tradition? Or was it simply because this particular play does not appeal to Danes?
Knutzon believes it was in part caused by lack of sufficient direction, which in turn
permitted the actors, unused to Molière, too much carte blanche. He also believes another
reason was simply the problems that are associated with directing a play outdoors
(Knutzon Oct. 2005).

In ongoing July 2005 telephone interviews with Telle and via e-mail, she outlined
her vision for the play, regretting its failed reception by the Danish audience. In her July
2006 e-mail, she repeated how she felt sympathetic toward M. Jourdain. In the play, the
audience was presented with a nouveau riche M. Jourdain, whose wife and daughter had
no other interests other than spending his money to buy new clothes and material
possessions while he attempted to garner some class and spiritual nourishment. She also
explained that the aim was to depict someone attempting to become somebody other than
what he really was while surrounded by people who were out to fleece him.

The theatre program best describes Telle’s vision for the Jourdain family:

The Jourdain family lives in a campground, one of the better ones, with
a permanent trailer and a view towards the rabble in the tent area. They
have money, they are *nouveau riche*, they have their own flagpole and the
cute little fence stands where it is supposed to stand. It is the same with the
flower boxes, the grill and the porch furniture.

The Jourdain family is…yes, the Jourdain family is the Jourdain family,
but they are deeply human. M. Jourdain is the only one with ambitions to
acquire more knowledge. With that goal in mind, he has built a small platform on which he can learn the classical disciplines. He invites baroque masters to tutor him in dancing, fencing and philosophy.

M. Jourdain’s daughter is crazy about the Spice Girls, platform shoes and a guy who drives a taxi and talks and talks. Madame Jourdain thinks it is a good idea for her daughter to marry the talkative guy, but M. Jourdain thinks otherwise. His daughter must marry some nobleman. And with this said, all the intrigues can begin in the Jourdain family’s camping life. (14)

The contemporary nature of the production, described by Telle in the theatre program, led to a number of problems. In fact, one prime example of what proved to be an unfortunate directorial and scenographic judgment is Telle’s conversion of the wealthy Jourdain family’s apartment to a camper situated in a campground. In so doing, she gave the family such a low-class background that it failed to interest the audience. When we discussed her choice of camper, Telle explained that she wanted it to serve as focal point in order to emphasize the Danish camping culture, calling it the “Danish baroque camping period” (see fig. 76).

Telle’s novel ideas might well have worked but instead unintentionally offended some of the Danish spectators. Knutzon told me he begged Bondam to interfere and remove the camper but Bondam declined to intervene. The camper remained, and the use of this stage prop is the object mentioned by every single managing director and almost every theatre practitioner I have interviewed.
Despite having some sympathy for M. Jourdain’s aspirations, Telle nonetheless stressed his excessive snobbery. To demonstrate his apparent knowledge of stylish cuisine, at the banquet M. Jourdain served Dorimène red hot dogs just like the popular ones Danes purchase from carts and eat while standing by the cart in the street (see fig. 77). Her choice of food was intended as a caricature of plain Danish food to stress M. Jourdain’s utter lack of culture. Due to the changed banquet cuisine, Dorante’s long monologue about gastronomical delights in Act IV, Scene I was cut from the script. Instead Telle wrote her own speech for Dorante, which praised the outstanding qualities of foot-long, red, hot dogs (e-mail 5 July 2006).

Nina Flagstad, the scenographer, provided Lucile and Cléonte with a small, yellow, plastic beach buggy. They loved the beach, and pop music blared from the camper when anybody opened the door. Bird music sounds were piped in to further emphasize the outdoor motif. Telle wrote that nobody appeared to notice that birds continued to chirp throughout the evening even after dusk settled over the city. She emphasized how Madame Jourdain loved to shop, and instead of wearing period costume, she wore a pastel colored suit from the 1960s (see fig. 78). The Turkish scene
was included in the play, and the other actors mostly wore period costumes and huge, tall wigs, which all added to the confusion (e-mail 5 July 2006). According to both Telle and Knutzon, the entire performance continued in the same vein. In our October 2005 interview, Knutzon added that although usually dressed in period costume, at one point, when exiting the camper to meet his fencing instructor, he was wearing a colorful Hawaiian shirt with rings on all his fingers.

As with the production in Ringsted in 1997, there were both space limitations to consider when playing outdoors as well as the inevitable distractions that occur in an outdoors environment. The lack of space did not allow dancing or the ballet at either venue. The Turkish ceremony was elaborate at Grønnegårdsteatret in 1998, whereas the actors simply made a reference to the upcoming ball, which was to happen after the play was finished. Although few changes were made to the dialogue, Telle omitted a number of areas including the interludes with dancers, singers and musicians and also all references to musical dialogues [as did Grumme in 1997]. Lully’s music was heard, as was music by Bach together with the previously mentioned modern pop music. The mélange of music bridged the gap to modern times and so did the plastic buggy and Hawaiian shirt.

Despite the important role music played in the French original of Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, Telle dropped all reference to music except in one place in Act I, Scene II. Here the music master tells M. Jourdain that you need song and dance for culture but that it is expensive to hire a particularly young and beautiful singer. M. Jourdain is ready to pay any expense as long as he might acquire some polish and culture. The scene ends with the music and dancing masters quoting a few of the lines from a Danish translation of Molière’s musical dialogue.

Another example of Telle’s adaptation of Le Bourgeois gentilhomme occurs in Act III, Scene I at the moment Nicole arrives upon the stage and cannot stop laughing whenever she looks at M. Jourdain in his ridiculous apparel. Telle opted to cut this long scene considerably. Where Grumme entirely omitted the long, humorous scenes where Cléonte and Covielle not only refuse to speak with Lucile and Nicole but also discuss the women in remarkably rude terms in Act III, Scene VIII-X (49-61), Telle included this part in her rendition of the play. However, instead of the young people remaining on
stage, she directed them to chase each other through the garden among the audience while speaking their quick repartees (e-mail 5 July 2006). In regard to word choices, Telle kept the play’s expletives intact, and M. Jourdain is particularly fond of saying “shut up.” That type of language suited the camping environment that Telle chose to emphasize in her version of the play.

In his review *Molière med pølsebord* (*Molière with a Table with Hot Dogs*), Henrik Dannemand elaborates upon Telle’s comments. He explains how M. Jourdain carefully filled the hot dogs with ketchup and crisply fried onions while the dancing waiters sang about “super burgers, pølser i svøb [hot dogs in buns] and rinse down that trash with beer,” with the reference to beer serving to emphasize M. Jourdain’s total lack of understanding of what to serve at an upper-class dinner. When Madame Jourdain suddenly appeared, M. Jourdain was overheard saying “that damned bitch,” an expression that certainly should not have been uttered by a nobleman. Dannemand mirrors Telle’s comments about snobbery and suggests that she created oppositions to emphasize the Jourdain family’s utter lack of culture. He also suggests that she made the family so crude and vulgar that she seems to have lost her audience. Telle sent me an additional comment about how she had actually wanted the camper setting to be even trashier than it turned out to be (e-mail 5 July 2006).

**Future Molière Productions**

When I asked Bondam in September 2004 if he intended to produce another Molière play, this time at *Folketeatret* (his venue from fall 2003 to spring 2005), he said that he did not wish to attempt to produce a play by Molière for the next several years. His reason was financial. Having just taken over the position as managing director of the failing Copenhagen *Folketeatret*, being mindful of the audience’s reaction to *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* in 1998, he could not afford to produce a show by Molière until he felt fairly certain that it would appeal to the Danish audience. In February 2005, Bondam resigned from the world of theatre to entirely devote himself to the political scene and therefore now defers my questions to other theatre practitioners.

I later asked Lars Knutzon if he has plans to direct a play by Molière in the near future. In our August 2005 telephone interview, he told me that he has been given the
green light to direct Le Bourgeois gentilhomme during winter and spring 2008 at Det Danske Teater, the Danish touring company mentioned in previous chapters. Knutzon plans to resume the role of M. Jourdain. Since he saw Jérôme Savary’s 1982 version of Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, not at Théâtre National de Chaillot in Paris but while that production was on tour in Copenhagen, he has felt inspired to produce a traditional version to be shown to the Danish audience throughout the country. He believes the Turkish ceremony should be included. He explained that the use of turbans provides excellent opportunities for stressing M. Jourdain’s snobbishness without, in his opinion, insulting the Turkish population in present-day Danish society.

During the October 2005 interview, Knutzon outlined some ideas for his production. His foremost objective is that the comedy must provide entertainment. He plans to include a number of contemporary, satirical expressions comparable to those that appeared in the original version when presented by Molière in 1670. He assured me that there would be plenty of epithets to emphasize M. Jourdain’s lack of culture. Besides keeping the Turkish ceremony, he plans to incorporate contemporary references to serve as a bridge to the twenty-first century. Knutzon mused that it might entail a young man who has become extremely wealthy by selling his Danish company to the United States, or it could be a man who has won millions in the lottery. Where these are simply suggestions, what really matters is that snobbery will remain the primary target. Knutzon believes that the underlying reason for the play is not simply to critique snobbishness, but that the premise for the play is to show how people swarm around the nouveau riche M. Jourdain to sponge off him.

What title to give the new presentation most likely will not be decided until shortly before the program is broadcast to the various theatre venues throughout the country. Since the play is being prepared for a touring company, the title needs to be decided upon by late fall 2006. Den Fine Mand (The Elegant Man) and Den Rige Mand (The Rich Man) both seem too tame to Knutzon. Ebbe Knudsen, who will be translating from the original French text, also finds Den Fine Mand (The Elegant Man) too innocent a title. Den Adelsglade Borger (The Bourgeois in Love with Nobility) shows a man fond of the nobility whereas Den Adelsgale Borger (The Bourgeois Who Is Crazy about...
Nobility) shows a man who is close to insanity in his wish to be accepted and become a part of the nobility.

Ebbe Knudsen is an author, translator and instructor. He teaches opera at the Opera School in Copenhagen. He explained in the October 2005 telephone interview that when working with a foreign text, he first translates it as closely as possible to the original text. He then alters the manuscript to reflect contemporary Danish usage. After Knudsen has come this far, he and Knutzon will closely scrutinize and further adapt the text to suit their final vision for the production. Knudsen explained that to make the translation as linguistically correct as possible, it is best not to look at or be influenced by a previous translation such as the one Smærup Sørensen did in 1994. Knudsen likes to create contrasts in his work, and he likes to play with an older language in part to create more of a distance from reality. The principal motif must be kept in order not to lose the story’s crux, in this case the subject of snobbishness. Knudsen tells me that, following the scandal that occurred in February 2006 after Jyllandsposten [a major Danish newspaper] had published twelve cartoons depicting Muhammad, if he and Knutzon do include the Turkish ceremony, it will need to be done circumspectly to avoid any backlash from the Muslim community in Denmark (telephone interview 14 Aug. 2006). The furor, created in great part by imams living in Denmark caused the Muslims to set fire to the Danish embassies in Syria and Lebanon and to boycott Danish goods for several months. It will therefore be interesting to see how Knutzon and Knudsen solve these issues to create a play to be performed in such a variety of venues across the country.

By January 2007, the play has been given the title Den Adelsgale Borger (The Bourgeois Who Is Crazy about Nobility) (Milla Kær e-mail 23 Jan. 2007). According to Det Danske Teater’s website, Molière’s comedy will be touring throughout Denmark during the winter and early spring 2008. The theatre advertises the production with Lars Knutzon as director as well as in the role of M. Jourdain. Music and dance will be included but only time will show whether it will be a play by Molière or à la Molière.
CHAPTER 5

LES FOURBERIES DE SCAPIN

This chapter focuses on two recent versions of Les Fourberies de Scapin. Both are titled Scapins Rævestreger (Scapin’s Tricks). The first play was directed by Lars Knutzon and presented in 2002 by Det Danske Teater, the Danish Theatre Touring Company. The second was performed in March 2005. As of January 2007, that production remains the most recent Molière play to have been produced in Denmark. The play was directed and performed by the fourth-year students at Statens Teaterskole (The National Theatre School) located in Copenhagen. The Norwegian Frede Snippen Gulbrandsen directed the play to fulfill his final examination requirement.

Les Fourberies de Scapin was one of Molière’s later prose plays written in 1671. It was translated into Danish to be performed during the 1722-23 season at Lille Grønnegadeteatret. Although neither the eighteenth-century manuscript nor printed text remains, according to Anne E. Jensen the comedy was definitely performed at the theatre (Europæisk Drama Notes 43). Ida Poulsen verified this statement (e-mail 10 Aug. 2006). She is the curator at the Theatre Archives located in Hofteatret (the Court Theatre) located in Christiansborg Slot, which houses the Danish Parliament. In her book Teatret i Lille Grønnegade 1722-1728, Jensen explains that in a diary written by Carl Gustav Coyet, a Swedish nobleman, a written log exists that lists plays performed at Lille Grønnegadeteatret during the first few seasons beginning with September 1722.

Coyet had literary interests and filled numerous notebooks, now kept at the Royal Library in Copenhagen. He wrote while being kept as political prisoner in Kastellet, a fortress -- still in use -- built by King Christian IV in 1626 as part of the northern edge of the fortifications surrounding Copenhagen. (Kastellet is close to where The Little Mermaid sits looking out over the harbor.) Coyet commented upon the Molière plays he had seen at Lille Grønnegadeteatret before becoming imprisoned and included the Molière plays performed after his incarceration on March 22, 1723. He remained in Kastellet until his death in prison in 1730. This log is described in Christian Behrend’s article from 1929 titled “Judged by a Contemporary.” Behrend writes that Les Fourberies de Scapin was among one of six Molière plays Coyet saw presented during the theatre’s
first season. He makes brief comments about six translations including L’Avaré, L’École des femmes and Le bourgeois gentilhomme, agreeing with Jensen that no knowledge exists as to the translator of L’Avaré. Behrend also writes that L’École des femmes, which he considers extremely well translated, was performed during Coyet’s incarceration (107-10).

Jensen gives another reason for postulating that Les Fourberies de Scapin was included in the repertoire for the first season at Lille Grønnegade teatret. She explains that Nicolaj Ulsøe and Henrik Wegner, actors at the theatre, both wrote poems to be presented to Queen Anna Sophie for her birthday in April 1723. Jensen writes that Wegner’s poem is filled with references to Scapin taken directly from Les Fourberies de Scapin. Although a poster exists from the December 16, 1726, performance of Les Fourberies de Scapin at Lille Grønnegade teatret (Lille Grønne-gade 213), and Jensen states in her notes that the play was performed in Copenhagen in 1748, no actual manuscript has been located (see fig. 79). The earliest known translation is one created by B. J. Lodde in 1787 (Europæisk Drama Notes 43).

**Det Danske Teater 2002**

Directing Les Fourberies de Scapin requires special talent to keep the audience laughing, entertained and able to identify characters and family members that belong together. Lars Knutzon is such a director. He played M. Jourdain in Le Bourgeois gentilhomme at Grønne-gårdsteatret in 1998 and requested permission to direct Les Fourberies de Scapin for Det Danske Teater to be performed in 38 cities throughout Denmark during the winter and spring of 2002. According to the positive theatre reviews, the play was well received even if several critics have wondered whether the play they saw was actually written by Molière or rather written to look like a Molière production. The title explains this better: Scapins Rævestreger -- I en bearbejdet oversættelse af Lars...
Knutzon og Ebbe Knudsen (Les Fourberies de Scapin -- In an Adapted Translation by Lars Knutzon and Ebbe Knudsen).

The original Les Fourberies de Scapin is a farce, and it became even more farcical in the translation adapted by Knudsen in 2001 and then further adapted in cooperation with Knutzon for Det Danske Teater. As explained in the previous chapter about his translation of Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, Knudsen begins by researching historical events at the time the play was written. He then proceeds to study current events that could be incorporated into the play to serve as a bridge from the seventeenth century to the present.

Knudsen and Knutzon collaborated further to arrive at Knutzon’s own vision for the comedy and were aptly aided by scenographer Nina Schiøttz. An important goal was to produce a play that would move along at a rapid pace while keeping the spectators entertained throughout the evening. The end product was a play à la Molière instead of an exact rendition of Molière’s own play.

This fact quickly becomes apparent when studying Knutzon’s own manuscript. It is filled with additional, elaborate and explicit directions for each scene, as opposed to Molière’s French version where directions rarely exist. Indeed, in order to assist the audience in following and understanding the complicated and extremely weak plot, Knudsen has provided additional background material. He has added some new scenes while omitting others, and he has mixed the dialogue while taking care to keep the actual storyline intact. By shortening many of the existing paragraphs, Knudsen has added a fast, furious pace to the play. I will elaborate further on this statement by giving examples of changes that have occurred.

In Les Fourberies de Scapin, it is important to be able to determine which father, son, daughter and servant belong together. Where Scapin is obviously the main character, Knudsen gives enough new lines to each of the other characters to help the audience keep the major players apart. Apart from calling Hyacinte “Giacinta,” the names remain the same except for slightly altered endings. I will add the French names in parentheses the first time they appear.

In 1671, Molière opens the play with Ottavio (Octave) worriedly announcing to his servant Sylvestro (Sylvestre) that his father is returning to Naples and wants him to
marry Géronte’s unknown daughter. In an attempt to untangle the threads in this confusing comedy, Knudsen leads the story more slowly into Ottavio’s predicament. In his opening scene, Ottavio is hiding in a basket in the attic of his father Argante’s house. He loudly bemoans his fate the moment Sylvestro climbs the attic stairs and finds his master. Ottavio is dreading the fact that his father is about to return from a business trip and wants him to marry said unknown daughter of one of his closest friends. Since Ottavio has recently married his beloved Giacinta without his father’s permission, problems are about to multiply.

In the added second scene, Knudsen continues his untangling by introducing Leander (Léandre) and his betrothed, the lovely gypsy Zerbinetta (Zerbinette). The two are talking on the beach in the Bay of Naples. Although betrothed, they cannot marry until Leander purchases Zerbinetta from the gypsies for 1,500 scudis. In Molière’s French version, Zerbinetta’s price is not mentioned until later in the play. As the young people converse, Leander praises Zerbinetta, saying, “My little dove. Let us remain close together. I miss you desperately if you so much as turn around the corner. The day you are gone, my heart will turn into a cobblestone [to stone], and I will sink to the bottom of the deep ocean of despair” (5). He continues, “You have the most beautiful face, the most wonderful eyes, your mouth is like a ripe strawberry, the curve of your chin looks carved in ivory and your breasts are small mounds of whipping cream topped with cherries in the middle” (6). The lines become shorter and quicker with Leander finishing the dialogue with yet another addition to the play:

LEANDER. Tell my fortune.
ZERBINETTA. Not again. I did it yesterday.
LEANDER. Use the other hand. What do you see?
ZERBINETTA. A great danger is drawing closer from the sea. It is threatening to choke our love.
LEANDER. Nothing can threaten our love.
ZERBINETTA. My little macho amore.
LEANDER. What does it say on my arm?
ZERBINETTA. One cannot tell the fortune on an arm.
LEANDER. You can do it on mine.

144
ZERBINETTA. It says you love a girl with brown eyes.
LEANDER. What does it say on my shoulder?
ZERBINETTA. It says you are soon going to be married.
LEANDER. On my neck?
ZERBINETTA. You will have many children.
LEANDER. My chin?
ZERBINETTA. You are strong.
LEANDER. My eyes?
ZERBINETTA. Your beloved will never fail you.
LEANDER. My lips?
ZERBINETTA. You will soon experience something incredibly beautiful.

(7-9)

The scene continues in the same vein until Scapin appears. At this point, when Molière’s trickster simply elaborates upon how he is endowed with a special talent for ingenious intrigues (25), Knudsen’s Scapin explains:

Not to brag, but when I was young there was not a job I could not manage -- plots, intrigues, cunning tricks, schemes and ingenious brain work. My business was called "Dirty Hands & Company” and it was known throughout Italy. My motto was “If you have problems in your bed, then come to Scapin. If you find yourself in deep water, you will be Scapin’s best costumer.” Slander, debt, unfaithfulness. My clients were kings, emperors and princes. I have even acted on the grandest stages. “Scapin -- Master of Intrigue.” What a wonderful experience to have two thousand people fighting with each other without them knowing the reason why they are doing it. (10)

The last example of Knudsen’s rapid repartees describes Giacinta’s fearfulness of losing Ottavio:

GIACINTA. My heart has already been broken once. I will not survive if it breaks again.
SCAPIN. Hush little Signora. Who says he will marry a girl he has never seen?
SYLVESTRO. His father says so.

OTTAVIO. It is impossible to save our love.

GIACINTA. I will poison myself.

OTTAVIO. I will join the galleys if you die.

GIACINTA. I will enter a convent.

SYLVESTRO. It is too late. Only a virgin can be Christ’s bride.

GIACINTA. Then I will throw myself into an abyss.

OTTAVIO. I will hang myself.

GIACINTA. I will let wild dogs tear me apart.

OTTAVIO. I will drink myself to death.

SYLVESTRO. I am going crazy.

SCAPIN. Stop. I will help you. (15-16)

This rapid scene continues until a ship arrives in the port of Naples with the two fathers, Argante and Géronte, disembarking.

In the last scene in Act I -- Scene IV in the French edition and Scene VI in Knudsen’s adaptation -- Scapin discusses Ottavio’s dalliance with Giacinta. Scapin tries to convince Argante that surely this is nothing unusual. He says it is simply tingeling ogbummelum (25), two utterly nonsensical words that from now on are repeated throughout the play and are referred to in several of the theatre reviews. Although the words appear suggestive in this particular scene, they occur in such varied places that the words make absolutely no sense. Knudsen verified my statement during a telephone interview (12 Aug. 2006). He clarified that the two words tingeling og bummelum used together or separately, as seen in some places in the play, are part of the Danish language. Those two words have no hidden meaning. They refer to utter nonsense. These words fit Scapin perfectly since he tells nonsensical tales to convince Argante and Géronte to part with their money.

In Act II, Knudsen adds another scene with Leander and Zerbinetta at the beach. Zerbinetta tells Leander that she has found an oyster. He wants her to open it to see if there might be a pearl inside, which he calls a mermaid tear. He calls Zerbinetta his beloved mermaid and wants to dive with her once more. He tells her how beautiful she is when swimming among the sea anemones, conches and sunken galleys. Leander suggests
they catch an octopus with their bare hands and then lie in the sand, looking up at the sky to count the stars that look like rows of pearls on the black velvet sky (47-48). I suggest Knudsen has created this scene to add both a humorous as well as a romantic touch and to demonstrate Leander’s naïveté. This young man has no knowledge of life other than enjoying himself. Knudsen has verified this hypothesis in a telephone interview while commenting that the extra scenes add coherence to the comedy (14 Aug. 2006).

The following scenes are the high points in the play. In Act II, Scenes VIII-XI, Scapin adeptly manages to part the fathers from their money to pay the gypsy ransom for Zerbinetta and to pay for Giacinta’s mother’s memorial stone. In Act II, Scene VIII, Knudsen places a disguised Scapin in a church where he tries to get the ransom money from Argante by holding out a collection box on a long stick in front of Argante’s nose (62). Scapin naturally does not succeed in wresting money from Argante until he changes tactics and talks about the extensive and expensive legal processes Argante will need to follow in order to dissolve Ottavio’s hasty marriage. Scapin speaks rapidly as if calling a horse race the moment the horses are approaching the finish line. He calls out all nouns as if names of competing horses (63-68).

Knutzon’s 2002 production continues with additional scenes and short, rapid lines until the surprise ending when Argante and Géronte discover that Zerbinetta and Giacinta are actually their long lost daughters. It is now perfectly acceptable for the young men and women to marry and live happily ever after. However, the play cannot end without some retribution to Scapin for his intrigue making. Here Knutzon follows Molière’s original version. His Scapin arrives on stage badly injured, wanting to confess all in order to receive forgiveness before he dies. Scapin obviously survives what appears to have been a fatal blow to his skull. Knudsen has Sylvestro bring the news about Scapin before he himself collapses in a drunken stupor at the front of the stage the moment the curtain falls.

In order to properly understand this production, it is essential to analyze scenographic explanations and to describe the extensive preparations needed to ensure the play’s success when presented across the country. The vast variety of venues includes small local theatres in the Copenhagen area, small country theatres and large conference facilities. In a June 2005 telephone interview, Knutzon explained that during the planning
stage for a touring company, the director and scenographer must adapt the production, and specifically the set design, to fit the smallest stage before they are ready to travel. In an October 2005 interview, Knutzon clarified how *Det Danske Teater* keeps exact measurements of the various stages across the country in order for the scenographic team to do their job. The stage is then built at their studio at *Grøndals Centret* in Copenhagen. The varying size stages can at times present a problem if one stage is huge and another is tiny. This is one of several issues the director must deal with up front. With these objectives in mind, Knutzon and his scenographer Nina Schiøttz met months in advance to plan the stage design as well as the costumes. They built a stage with several levels with tracks in between the levels to facilitate moving the props in and out of the stage.

Knutzon explained that after the premiere, he travels to some of the venues to ensure that his play is on track and that the actors have not made changes in their dialogue along the way. This is particularly important with a play like *Les Fourberies de Scapin* where the actors are tempted to improvise, as Molière did when he played Scapin. Knutzon’s perspective is that the dialogue should be finished and ought to remain unchanged throughout the duration of the tour even if stage corrections may become necessary along the way.

Schiøttz explained in our February 2006 interview that Knutzon wanted her to create a fantasy world about Naples. With that in mind, she designed a backdrop with the bay and harbor of Naples with Mount Vesuvius in the background. She searched the Royal Library archives to find an old painting of Naples to create as realistic a backdrop as possible. She used theatre tulle for the backdrop to be folded and refolded every day without damaging the design. The thinness of the cloth allowed lighting to shine from behind. This made it possible to turn the backdrop redder and darker to make it look as if Mount Vesuvius was erupting as the play neared its sudden conclusion.

The stage design was fairly simple in part because Schiøttz believes that only a few props are necessary to outline a scene. It is also far easier to put together and dismantle a minimalist set night after night. Schiøttz discussed how, for instance, she added a small fountain to show the piazzetta, topping it with a sculpture of Eros to indicate the young lovers. She hung a sign with *The Dead Cock* to announce the tavern, added some screaming gulls on the horizon, a few wooden posts to anchor the ships and
some crates to show the harbor. She placed a rowboat upside down together with a beach umbrella to indicate the beach. To indicate that Scapin and Argante were inside a church, she designed a flat grey pillar, painted to appear round and to show Argante’s luxurious living room, she provided a fancy chair, a curtain and a flat candelabra.

Schiøttz finds it unnecessary to use elaborate décor. She emphasized how important it is for the scenographer to provide hints for the audience to engage their thought processes and be able to follow the story. She has been designing stage sets for the past forty years with around four per year for a total of 170 productions since 1965. She is an artist and trained as an ad designer. Scenography was not taught as a separate unit until four years after Statens Teaterskole opened in 1968. For each production, Schiøttz generally works for about 1 1/2 months to create designs for stage and costumes. Producing the final products with the professionals at the theatres takes another 1 1/2 months. She heaps great praise upon the team at Det Danske Teater. The crew and seamstresses work diligently to create her designs.

Schiøttz begins her planning by concentrating upon the play and the history that took place at the time the play was written. She deems it extremely important not to cheat the audience so aims at creating a world that matches the time period as closely as possible while adding vitality and life to her creations. She begins by constructing a stage and props scaled down to 1:20 of the normal size, making the stage look like a puppet theatre. She can then move her props around this miniature stage set to see what will work the best. The preliminary work is time-consuming but well worth it. With so much preparation and pre-planning, the final product is far easier to create. To give an example, Schiøttz asked a basket maker to weave a tiny basket 1:20 and then later to weave the real basket that Ottavio was hiding in as the play opened in Act I, Scene I.

Schiøttz confers regularly with the director, in this case Lars Knutzon, to ensure they remain in agreement about the scenography. In our February 2006 interview, she explained that Knutzon prefers traditional costumes to fit the time period of the play. He believes it is important for the audience to distance themselves from the actors, an outcome that is more difficult to achieve if the actors are dressed in contemporary clothes. Knutzon also likes going to extremes so Schiøttz followed the Italian commedia dell’arte style when designing the costumes for the two fathers. She made Argante look
like a clown with his huge collar and ludicrously long nose and added a similarly long nose to Géronte. She wanted a skinny Géronte to emphasize his miserliness while Argante was somewhat heavier. Schiøttz’s accompanying illustrations together with the photo from the program add to my description of these characters (see figs. 80, 81 and 82).

The Danish state provides millions of Danish kroner ($1 equals approximately 6 kroner) to support the arts including the many state-sponsored theatres. This funding enables *Det Danske Teater* to produce their shows each season. Theatre associations around the country purchase these plays a year in advance at a tune of 30,000 to 40,000 kroner per production. This pays covers the costs incurred in each town such as moving, setting up and dismantling the stage set as well as housing and feeding the staff and actors (Knudsen telephone interview 12 Aug. 2006).

With this time limit in mind, the scenographer must furnish the theatre with fairly accurate descriptions of the set design and costumes long before the costumes have been
completed. With changes invariably occurring along the way, the poster for Les Fourberies de Scapin therefore shows slight variations from the actual production (see fig. 83). The poster shows a black-haired Zerbinetta wearing a brilliant red suede costume to fit her gypsy upbringing while the redhead Giacinta is wearing a pale, gauze-like dress topped with a leather vest (see figs. 84 and 85).

Even if the illustrations show Zerbinetta with black hair to match her white-clad lover Leander (see fig. 86), Schiøttz switched the girls’ wigs shortly before opening night (see figs. 87 and 88). Both Ottavio and Sylvestro look like the gentle weaklings they portray in the play (see figs. 89 and 90) while Scapin looks old, untidy and worn out and not at all like the way he looks on the poster (see fig. 91 and 92). Knutzon wanted Scapin’s hair even longer but Schiøttz felt that long, unkempt hair removed Scapin’s vitality. She designed his new hair, and Schiøttz and Knutzon then compromised on the final version of Scapin. His hair was shorter but mussed up as if he had just risen from bed, and he wore a red bathrobe sewn from an old, worn velour blanket (see fig. 93).

The beautiful classical costumes were highly praised in many of the sixteen theatre reviews handed to me by Lone Sams, the secretary at Det Danske Teater. The production of Les Fourberies de Scapin received a warm welcome wherever it played around Denmark. In
Tingeling og Bummelum [the two nonsensical words said by Scapin to Ottavio to make light of Leander’s peccadilloes beginning in Act I, Scene VI and continued throughout the play], Bettina Heltberg praises Lars Knutzon’s talent for directing this fast moving play. She does not consider it a true Molière production but asks if that really matters. She enjoyed the play with its row of quick repartees, complications, confusions and Neapolitan intrigues, which mostly deal with Scapin’s attempt to relieve the old misers of their money. In a second article also titled Tingeling og Bummelum! Birgitte Grue suggests that Lars Knutzon might have gone a little overboard with this farce. She praises the actors, who played with body and soul to animate the confusing mélange.

Henrik Lyding wonders what happened to...
Scapin in *Scapin uden Scapin* (*Scapin Without Scapin*). He suggests that the spectators ought to forget all about Molière, because only the title and some of the lines resemble the actual *Les Fourberies de Scapin*. He points out how Knudsen and Knutzon have happily embroidered on Molière’s story and packed the play with literary suggestions and side stories, succeeding in producing a refreshing play filled with vitality. He describes Schiøttz’s puppet theatre scenography where props move rapidly along tracks into and out of the stage.

Although Lyding critiques the fact that only the name of the play resembles the original, he nevertheless states that this production is so humorous that Molière most likely would have wished that he himself had written it.

The theatre critics continue in the same vein with great praise for the production while discussing the adaptation and additions that have changed this comedy from a play by Molière to a play à la Molière. In *Fuld fart på galejen* (*Full Speed Ahead by the Galley*), Knud Cornelius comments upon the use of such words as *jihad* and *euro*, words which bridge the gap from the seventeenth to the twenty-first centuries. The *euro* is not mentioned in Knutzon’s manuscript.

With some actors tending to improvise during a tour, this must have occurred in Act II,
Scene VII where Géronte repeatedly laments, « Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère? ». Where Molière’s Scapin wants Géronte to pay 500 scudis, Knudsen’s amount is 1,500 scudis and Géronte says, “1,500 scudis. That is 500 franc. That is 50 pistols. That is 200 dollars. 400 rigsdaler [an old Danish coin]” (77). Judging by a similar comment made by Annelene Vestergaard, the euro must have been added here. In Rablende morsom Molière (Raving Mad and Fun Molière), Vestergaard writes, “While the seagulls cry loudly above the Italian harbor, Scapin succeeds in tricking lots of money from the fathers with amounts translated into euro.”

Many of the theatre reviews were written directly after the pre-premiere, held in Grøndals Centret, before the actual tour began. When Les Fourberies de Scapin arrived in Skive in Jutland, Merete Just wrote in Romantiske Rævestreger (Romantic Tricks [Fourberies]) that she was amazed how it was possible to adapt a comedy from 1671, to relate it to contemporary Denmark and for it to simultaneously be so entertaining. In Rævestreger i flot opsætning (Tricks in an Elegant Production), an unknown critic cited Torben Jensen, the amateur actor who played Scapin in Ringsted’s summer production of Les Fourberies de Scapin in 1993. Jensen remarked that in 1993, their director had removed the worst swearwords, the same way Grumme had removed them in 1997 from Le Bourgeois gentilhomme. According to the anonymous critic, the Ringsted spectators were divided into three camps: those who thought the play was incredibly humorous, those who had difficulties catching all the specific lines and those who totally disliked the crude language despite the fact that Molière wrote it that way. Annette Haugaard from Statens Teaterskole (The National Theatre School) commented upon the wise removal of swearwords in amateur productions and explained that where professional actors can get away with crude language, amateurs might be accused of being uneducated (interview Sept. 2006).
In March 2005, I was invited to attend a special performance of Les Fourberies de Scapin at Statens Teaterskole. The school accepts only eight acting students each year for the four-year degree together with two students each for scenography, directing, lighting, sound, stage management and production technique. The school is extremely exclusive and hires top professionals to teach these students. The school was established in 1968 to educate actors. Divisions for directors and scenographers were established in 1972. The technical aspect of theatre training was added in 1992, followed by dance in 1995 and dance pedagogy and choreography in 2002 and 2003 respectively. The training is intense and produces the very best of Danish theatre.

Les Fourberies de Scapin was directed by the Norwegian Frede Snippen Gulbrandsen to fulfill his final examination requirement. In a January, 2006 e-mail, he wrote that he was the first student to use a comedy as material for the final. Gulbrandsen began directing several years before entering Statens Teaterskole. By March 2005, he had already directed more than twenty amateur and semi-professional productions. His prior experience provided him with a solid background to work with such an unusually big exam production. Since his graduation in spring 2005, he has continued to direct a number of productions both in Denmark and Norway.

Gulbrandsen’s choice of play was a good one. With its confusing scenes and constantly changing venues, Les Fourberies de Scapin is not an easy play to produce, but it is a perfect play for a student director to show his talents. It is also a good choice for the graduating class to provide the students with a wealth of different situations to deal with and to solve before entering the real world of theatre.

Statens Teaterskole sent me the translation used for the project. It was translated by Christian Ludvigsen in 1964 and follows the French original with only minor changes. It is included in the collection of Molière plays compiled by Kristen D. Spanggaard, titled Molière - Komedier II. During our February 2006 interview, Gulbrandsen explained that the actors generally followed the script’s exact wording with Gulbrandsen’s direction being the crucial and deciding factor.

With this goal in mind, he drastically changed the setting from seventeenth-century Naples, Italy, to a modern department store in Copenhagen, Denmark. Clothing
racks were moved about as props to emphasize the store environment. During the interview, Gulbrandsen explained that he wanted the setting to emphasize money and power. He wanted to show contemporary Copenhagen similarly to the way Molière undoubtedly wanted to show a contemporary setting from 1671. Gulbrandsen later wrote in an e-mail that he would have preferred the setting to be a modern outdoor marketplace but that the professional scenographer Marie í Dali suggested they move the play inside the department store. An outdoors environment would have been too complicated and have presented too many challenges. Gulbrandsen agreed since in reality the department store environment represented his idea of an outdoor marketplace (e-mail 17 July 2006).

In the February interview, we discussed his reason for selecting a female Scapin. He explained that he felt a woman could just as easily play the role as a man and possibly even better. He stressed how it is the manner in which Scapin fools the older men that matters, not whether Scapin is played by a man or by a woman. Gulbrandsen emphasized that Scapin’s role is huge and therefore needed a person filled with vitality and energy. He said he considers Scapin an artist, who through his -- or in this case her -- art can read the other characters’ souls and thereby might add some human warmth to the mercantile society. The female Scapin was superb. She rapidly moved around the stage dispensing advice to Ottavio and Leander and to their fathers, and her vitality and facial expressions brought forth lots of laughter (see figs. 94 and 95).
When Scapin seeks to swindle money from Géronte, he fabricates the story about how Ottavio has been taken prisoner on a galley. During this quick exchange, Géronte utters the well-known adage spoken in response to Scapin’s charade. Géronte repeatedly laments, « Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère? » (“What the devil was he doing on that galley?”). Each repetition brought forth laughter from the audience of family, friends and theatre professionals present to see the end result of the graduating senior class. The last repetition was said in a quiet voice to indicate Géronte’s final acceptance of what had supposedly happened to his son Ottavio.

Whereas in French « Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère? » actually means “Why on earth did he get involved in that mess?” in Danish, Géronte’s question -- similarly originating from Les Fourberies de Scapin -- has become part of the language, exemplifying a person who has acted foolishly. Although an old-fashioned adage not in general use among the younger generation, the phrase can still occasionally be heard on the streets of Denmark. As mentioned in the Preface, upon leaving a grocery store in downtown Copenhagen in October 2005, I overheard an elderly lady telling her husband “What a galley I got you onto,” which was another way to say how foolish and inconsiderate she had been to drag him along on such a useless errand. This is an example of how languages borrow from another.

As mentioned above, Gulbrandsen was guided by the professional scenographer Marie í Dali as he prepared the production. Dali received her scenographic training in London in 1995. She has since worked with 38 productions primarily in Denmark. Dali entered the picture when the original scenographer broke an arm ten days before the project was to have been turned in to the theatre school management in early January 2005 at a time when the majority of the preparations had
taken place. Working with two scenographers created some original confusion, but Gulbrandsen met the challenge, and he and Dali produced a terrific result.

In a March, 2006 e-mail, Dali emphasized that she collaborates with the theatre students and backed Gulbrandsen’s ideas. It was his vision that mattered while she provided support and advice. The two worked together the same way directors and scenographers work in real life to cooperate with each other on the final concept and bring it to fruition.

Although Les Fourberies de Scapin has three acts, Gulbrandsen chose to have only one long act. This meant the need for constant movement to change from scene to scene without benefit of curtain or intermissions. The large empty space presented quite a challenge to Gulbrandsen in his attempt to provide as naturalistic a production as possible. With minimal funding, creativity was a necessity, and it was not feasible to have facades and showrooms within the stage area. As seen in the photos, banners decorated the walls and a bar stood in one corner tended by Sylvestre, played by an Icelandic actress, whose energy and vitality matched that of Scapin (see fig. 96 above).

The costumes represented contemporary Denmark with, for example, the messenger Carlo entering on a bicycle dressed in black
and green Spandex the way messengers are seen racing through downtown Copenhagen to make their express deliveries (see fig. 97 above). Dali explained the necessity for exact details when presenting a contemporary production. With that in mind, she and Zerbinette searched the shops to find the exact colors and new fashions to emphasize the contemporary aspect of the production (see fig. 98). This is exemplified by Zerbinette’s choice of blue jeans and T-shirt that had to be replicas of what Britney Spears might currently be wearing in the United States. Dali added padding to the fathers’ and sons’ clothing, making them look more mature, and the supposedly mortally wounded Scapin entered the stage in a wheel chair as the play reached its finale (see fig. 99). As the performance ended, the young actors were greeted with loud and enthusiastic applause. The graduating students were now ready to begin their search for jobs in the real world of theatre.
CHAPTER 6

LE MISANTHROPE

*Le Misanthrope* was first presented in 1666 at Molière’s theatre in Paris. It has since then been translated and produced on the Danish stage at various times during the past several centuries. Among a variety of productions, two are especially noteworthy. They are the highly praised traditional version performed at *Det Kongelige Teater* (The Royal Theatre) in Copenhagen in 1973, directed by Ingmar Bergman, and the experimental production at *Betty Nansen Teatret* in Copenhagen during fall 2002 and winter 2003-04 directed by Peter Langdal with an all-female cast.

*Le Misanthrope* is the only Molière play treated in this dissertation that was not originally performed during the few years that *Lille Grønnegadeteatret* existed. It was not presented in Denmark until 1751 at the newly opened theatre known as *Den Danske Skueplads* (The Danish Theatre or The Danish Stage). Six translations of the play -- five of them translated from French into Danish and the sixth from French through German into Danish -- are considered in this chapter. The first, titled *Le Misantrope*, is translated by an author only known as A. L. and printed in 1749. The book is printed in Gothic script and, according to Anne E. Jensen, was not intended for a stage production (*Europæisk Drama* 293). The translation, written in verse, follows Molière’s French verse and language with some Danish references.

The second translation, by P. Falck, is titled *Menneskehaderen* (*The People Hater*), which is the definition of a misanthrope. It is a prose work. Although that manuscript no longer exists, a handwritten prompt book, dated November 17, 1751, is kept at the Theatre Archives in the old Court Theatre in Copenhagen. Ida Poulsen verified my statement that the original manuscript has yet to be located (e-mail 13 Aug. 2006). The old prompt book is an interesting oeuvre, which shows how the play was performed on opening night with Danish names replacing the French ones. In this play, we meet:

- Alceste as Theodor
- Philinte as Leander

160
Oronte as Hilleberg
Célimène as Mariane
Éliante as Leonore
Arsinoé as Caroline
Acaste as Reinhard
Clitandre as Knagemann
Basque as Bertel
Du Bois as Springfeldt
Un garde as a guard

Arthur Aumont and Edgar Collin also mention these names on page 75 in their five-volume set about dramas, opera and ballet that were performed on the National Stage, Det Kongelige Teater, from 1748-1889.

Poulsen explains in her article Molières komedie Misantropen i danske opførelser (Molière’s Comedy Le Misanthrope in Danish Productions) that during the six years following the premiere in 1751, the play was performed only four times, after which it lay dormant in Denmark until the 1879-80 season when a new translation by Peter Hansen was used at Det Kongelige Teater. Poulsen included her article in the theatre program she helped prepare for Ingmar Bergman’s direction of Le Misanthrope in 1973. Hansen’s highly praised translation has been in continual use for more than a century, including for numerous productions at Det Kongelige Teater, some of which are discussed below.

Several other translators have tried their hand at this comedy during recent decades. Pastor Johannes Møllehave included the play in his book titled Møllehave gendigter Molière -- Misantropen -- Omskoling af Kvinder (Møllehave Recreates Molière -- Le Misanthrope -- The Re-Education of Women [L’École des femmes]). It was published in 1988, the year after Omskoling af Kvinder was performed at Aveny Teatret in Copenhagen. Møllehave shortened the lengthy dialogues considerably and left out occasional lines, producing a fast moving play. This translation is a free-form text written in paragraphs with rhymes within the sentences. Some years later, in 2001, Niels Brunse translated the play directly from a German translation made by Botho Strauß in 1991. Brunse’s translation was intended for a production at Husets Teater (The House Theatre).
in Copenhagen. Strauß ignored the alexandrines and wrote his version in prose. Brunse translated directly from German into Danish, causing the translation to seem rather stilted at times. The following year, in 2002, Peter Langdal -- the managing director, as well as drama director, at Betty Nansen Teatret in Copenhagen -- asked Jesper Kjær to translate the play into verse for their production. As with Kjær’s other translations, his *Le Misanthrope* is easy to follow while filled with contemporary language, epithets and expressions.

Except for the Danish character names in the prompt book from 1751, the characters retain their French names throughout the translations discussed in this chapter. According to Jensen, part of Iver Als’s job as managing director at the new theatre, *Den Danske Skueplads*, was to edit manuscripts for language, decency and grammar, as noted in *Menneskehaderen*’s prompt book (*Europæisk Drama* 238). The Danish names are crossed out and replaced with the original French ones. It is unknown whether or not the corrected version was used in one or more of the later productions in the 1750s. According to Poulsen, there is no reference to the names whether in French or in Danish until *Le Misanthrope* was performed at *Det Kongelige Teater* in 1879 (e-mail 14 Aug. 2006).

Although cast members keep their French names in the various translations, references to outside characters might change to Danish names. Such a reference occurs in Act I, Scene I where Philinte is arguing with Alceste and exclaims, « Quoi ? vous iriez dire à la vieille Émilie qu’à son âge il sied mal de faire la jolie, et que le blanc qu’elle a scandalise chacun ? » and continues, « À Dorilas, qu’il est trop importun, et qu’il n’est, à la cour, oreille qu’il ne lasse à conter sa bravoure et l’éclat de sa race ? » (38). In 1749, A. L.’s Philinte says, “Are you then going to say to old Miss Dorthe that her beauty has long since disappeared and that using make-up only makes her look like a freak?” and continues, “Will you then say to Junker Hans that everybody at court is tired of him because he constantly boasts about his manhood as well as about his ancestors?” (6).

Except for Kjær, the other translators generally keep the names intact with some changes within the lines. In 1879, Peter Hansen translates these lines to, “Are you for instance going to say to Émilie that in her attempt to act young, although she is an old girl, her heavy make-up disgusts everybody?” and continues, “And are you telling
Dorilas that he is a nuisance and fills all ears at court with bragging and boasting, which nobody is interested in listening to?” (5-6). In his book from 1988, Møllehave writes, “Are you going to tell Émilie that she is too old to wear the youthful clothing that she prefers?” and continues, “And to Dorilas, that everybody hates his empty boasting and foolish bragging?” (8).

The translation from the German Strauß in 1991 reads as follows: “Ach! So würden Sie der welken Emilia freimütig sagen: zu ihrem Alter stünde es schlecht, noch immer die Coquette zu spielen, und abstoßend fände jeder ihre dicke Schminke?” and continues, “Und Dorilas? Daß er nur lästig fällt, wenn er bei Hof von seinen Heldentaten prahlt und seinen hochberühmten Ahnen?” (216-17). Brunse translates directly from Strauß, “Well, would you quite freely tell the faded Emilia that it suits her age poorly to continue playing coquettish and that everybody is repulsed by her heavy make-up?” and continues, “And Dorilas? That he is simply a nuisance when he boasts at court about his heroic deeds and his famous ancestors?” (4).

Kjær’s 2002 translation of those simple lines appears in two separate manuscripts, with the second one humorously adapted for the stage by Langdal. Kjær first writes, “Are you then going to tell the aging Annett that she looks foolish when she is coquettish, and that her make-up is too heavy and her wig askew?,” which in the actual play changes to, “Are you then going to tell the moth-eaten Annett that she is making a laughing stock of herself when she plays coquettish, that her make-up is too heavy and her wig askew?” In the next line we read, “What about Dorilas, who is so unintelligent that not a single person at court can stand him, that he makes everybody nauseous and his bragging causes goose pimples?,” which Langdal changes to, “What about Dorilas, who is so unintelligent that nobody at court can stand the woman [this is the play with an all-female cast] that she makes everybody nauseous and even causes goose pimples?” (6).

These examples are included to emphasize the language used in different centuries and to help indicate some of the differences noted in the Danish translations. Each translation continues in the same vein, whether following a proper rhyme scheme or in free form, and they all retain the story line throughout the play. Where A. L. Hansen, Strauß and Brunse remain close to the original, Møllehave considerably shortens his lines. As noted in previous chapters about his translations of Tartuffe and L’Avare,
Kjær’s language is direct and easy to follow, using expressions and epithets to suit a contemporary audience.

The second example shows interesting and at times rather humorous changes in the same part of Act I, Scene I where Philinte continues his altercation with Alceste:

Ce chagrin philosoph e est un peu trop sauvage,
Je ris des noirs accès où je vous envisage,
Et crois voir en nous deux, sous mêmes soins nourris,
Ces deux frères que peint L’École des maris,
Don t… (39-40)

A. L. writes:
I find I laugh at their philosophizing.
I am laughing at it, because it reminds me
Of the two brothers who when described
Look like us and originate from a certain comedy. (7)

Hansen translates it to:
Such philosophical anger seems a little too harsh for me;
Yes, excuse me for smiling at your dark whims.
We are reminded of -- because we studied with the same man --
The well-known brothers from The School of Marriage [L’École des_
maries],
Well… (6)

Møllehave omits this paragraph, whereas Strauß writes:
Jetzt scheint der Kummerphilosoph mir etwas wildgeworden. Die Welt
wird sich durch Ihr Bemühen schwerlich ändern. Und da Sie doch von
Offenheit so schwärmen, erkläre ich nun frei und offen: die Krankheit, die
Sie haben, ist sehr komisch. Der hohe Zorn auf unseren Zeitgeschmack
macht Sie bei vielen Leuten lächerlich. (217)

Following Strauß’s lead, Brunse translates this prose paragraph, with both translators omitting any mention of an earlier play such as L’École des femmes:
I now believe the spiteful philosopher is running amok. I doubt the world
will change because of your efforts. And since you are fond of openness, I
hereby declare freely and openly: the illness you are suffering from is very comical. Your extreme anger against today’s customs causes many to find you ridiculous. (5)

Kjær makes some changes that, as noted in the previous quotes, were further adapted by Langdal:

That philosophy is too strict for my style,
And you must forgive a single, small smile.
We are similar to Molière’s A Course for Husbands,
With the two nervous brothers, who work so poorly together
And who... (7)

With the all-women cast, Langdal changes this to:
That hot-tempered idea is too wild for me,
And when I hear you, I must laugh.
We are like Chekhov’s sisters who wanted to go to Moscow,
But as far as I know that travel never materialized.
We were fighting all the time... (7)

Quote from Hvem ejer Shakespeare?

Le Misanthrope is not an easy play to perform. In Hvem ejer Shakespeare? (Who Owns Shakespeare?), authors Lars Liebst and Professor Erik A. Nielsen explain how the play can be produced in opposing ways. I quote part of two passages to aid the reader in understanding how directors might approach this difficult play. They write:

Le Misanthrope is an unusually difficult text because it does not meet the audience’s bias, the wish to side with one person while siding against the other. When presenting the comedy, the director can of course choose sides in favor of the main character Alceste’s fiancée. The lovely and much-admired worldly lady Célimène converses freely and, with her charming manner, pleases high society. Looking at it from that angle, the hero, the people hater Alceste, turns into a slave of both his choleric and melancholic temperament. His biting analyses of the superficial life at
court revert to him as a reaction to his sulky and jealous temperament. Thus a misanthrope played Le Misanthrope.

The director can also choose the opposite side, interpret the title ironically and play Le Misanthrope as a witness to truth. In that case, Célimène will be seen through Alceste’s eyes. The audience will see through her and discover an immature and flirting coquette, who drifts with the current while Alceste swims against it with the waves getting ever larger. At that point, the play will reveal a clear-cut revelation of hypocrisy and opportunism within the higher and highest social classes.

(94-95)

Det Kongelige Teater 1963

As previously mentioned, Le Misanthrope has been translated several times and has been performed numerous times during the past many decades. Det Kongelige Teater (The Royal Theatre) presented Le Misanthrope on New Year’s Eve, 1963, using Peter Hansen’s excellent verse translation from 1879. The play continued throughout the 1964 winter season. Jørgen Reenberg, who played Tartuffe in Tartuffe in 1990 and Arnolphe in L’École des femmes in 2001, portrayed Alceste dressed in an elegant suit and wearing large horn-rimmed glasses from the 1960s. In Misantropen 1964, Harald Engberg discussed the costumes. He explained that Alceste entered the stage dressed with elegant simplicity in a contemporary gray suit accompanied by his conservatively dressed friend Philinte. Célimène wore a Parisian designer gown, while Oronte looked like a conceited fellow ludicrously dressed in an outfit sewn from brightly colored materials with an outrageous design.

Engberg suggested that, freed from the restraints of a historical costume, Célimène was closer to the contemporary audience, which helped the spectators sympathize with her. The director Sam Besekow showed the audience a sympathetic Alceste, and Engberg praised the director’s choice of an excellent cast. He finished his review with an interesting detail, stating that “the play was framed by an unusual, explosive, electrical music by Edgar Varèse, which felt pleasant both when it played and when it stopped.” Ida Poulsen disagreed with Engberg’s hypothesis about the
contemporary costumes. Although not intended pejoratively, she wrote “that having actors dressed in contemporary clothing made the comedy unrealistic and possibly even absurd” (1973 Det Kongelige Teater’s theatre program). Liebst and Nielsen added that “Reenberg played Alceste with as much suffering pathos as the comedy could withstand, and that Alceste might well have succeeded in convincing the audience that misanthropy is the right way to exist in this world” (95).

**Det Kongelige Teater 1973**

World-renowned Swedish director Ingmar Bergman crossed the Sound from Sweden to Denmark to direct Le Misanthrope at Det Kongelige Teater in 1973, also using Peter Hansen’s translation from 1879. As previously mentioned, Klaus Hoffmeyer, formerly the managing director of the drama division at Det Kongelige Teater; Jesper Kjær, the translator of L’Avare, Tartuffe and Le Misanthrope; and John Pedersen, a retired French professor at the University of Copenhagen, all highly praised this production. According to Pedersen, Bergman’s objective was to direct the play the way he believed it had happened in France centuries ago when first performed in 1666. Furthermore according to Pedersen, Bergman emphasized the French Molière tradition in speech and apparel as well as in scenography. Bergman insisted upon keeping the curtain open throughout the performance while the actors sat in the wings, visible to the audience, waiting for their cues to enter the stage (interview 15 Mar. 2005).

Henrik Lundgren explains in Alceste, Bergman og -- Célimène that Bergman had his scenographer Kerstin Hedeby repeat the set design from the time of Louis XIV, which they had prepared for their joint production in Malmö, Sweden, in 1957. Lundgren describes the simple, stylized, baroque interior, which extended the stage floor into the front rows, making it appear as if the spectators were among the visitors about to enter Célimène’s luxurious house (see fig.100).
The low lighting on stage and in the theatre during the intermissions further helped break down the barrier between the stage and the audience.

The stage had eight chandeliers and only one settee. The furniture remained sparse, and the servants moved the settee around the open stage between acts. As explained by Svend Kragh-Jacobsen in *Ingmar Bergman bar Ghita Nørby til triumf* (*Ingmar Bergman Carried Ghita Nørby in Triumph*), the walls were painted with delicate black trees, and birds appeared as if alive on a golden background. These decorations changed in the final act. The trees now looked withered and dead on the grey walls as if to symbolize Célimène’s banishment together with Alceste’s hasty departure from Paris to his chosen, lonesome exile.

Lundgren feels that the grey walls create a perfect background for the lavish and colorful costumes that capture the seventeenth-century style. These costumes exemplify the characters such as the three vain marquis, the ascetic black-clad Alceste and the lovers Eliante and Philinte, who are both dressed in harmonious pale blue. The sumptuous colors were evident throughout the play as seen in the video especially produced for television in May 1974, the year following the successful season at *Det Kongelige Teater*. Instead of filming from the back of the theatre, as had been done with the other videos I have seen, this close-up video made it possible to see the actors’ facial expressions.

In the video, Célimène was first seen entering the stage in a lovely blue dress with a beaded bodice (see fig. 101 and 102). Later she changed to a gorgeous dark orange-red
robe that matched her red curls. The overdress was partly covered with white lace and colorful ribbons as seen in Figure 100 above. The dress matched her awakened passionate nature. In the final act, Célimène entered in subdued grey silk, carrying yellow roses, which she put into a vase. The symbolism was complete. Alceste stood out among the colorful peacocks in his unrelieved black clothes, with only white lace ruffles and ascot to counteract the severe black. This color suited Alceste perfectly. It supported the notion of this serious nobleman, a man totally uninterested in life at court.

Hedebý’s scenography was superb as was the entire cast. The scenography successfully achieved Bergman’s goal of keeping this play as true as possible to Molière’s original French production. Ghita Nørby portrayed Célimène. Nørby has subsequently become one of Denmark’s most popular character actresses. Thirty years later, Nørby played a terrific older Alceste in Le Misanthrope at Betty Nansen Teatret, with the cast consisting solely of female players. I will elaborate upon that statement towards the end of the chapter.

Film critics claim that Bergman was more astute at dealing with female actors, as emphasized by Svend Erichsen in Bergman, kom tilbage, vi har brug for dig (Bergman, Please Return. We Need You). Erichsen describes how Nørby portrayed the adorable but spoiled 20-year-old widow Célimène to utter perfection. This characterization has been judged to be her best role to date. Her outstanding performance might well have contributed to her future success in Danish film and theatre.

As Célimène, Nørby exhibited the pain and despair over being unable to change her chosen path. She loved Alceste but could not tolerate his childish moralizing. Although Alceste might well have been the only person Célimène actually cared for, she was simply too young to leave the recently discovered world of pleasure in order to spend her life buried in the country. Henning Moritzen played a melancholic Alceste whose love for Célimène was hopeless (see fig. 103). He behaved like a sulky schoolboy, was
unpleasant and grumpy, and his hangdog appearance made it extremely difficult to feel sorry for him. He was incapable of understanding that he needed to change in order to keep Célimène, and he was unwilling to listen to his friend Philinte, charmingly and matter-of-factly played by Holger Juul Hansen. Thus Bergman turned the comedy into a tragedy, and as Erichsen writes about the director, “Only a genius can do that!” Other well-known actors and actresses supported the cast, and together they presented the Danish audience with an unforgettable performance.

Ghita Nørby

Having portrayed both Célimène and Alceste, Ghita Nørby added some fascinating input about working with Ingmar Bergman as well as with Peter Langdal during our September 2006 interview in her home north of Copenhagen. She explained how Henning Moritzen, who played Alceste, and Bergman were close friends after filming together in Sweden. Although Bergman had previously shown little interest in coming to Denmark, Moritzen convinced him to produce Le Misanthrope at Det Kongelige Teater in 1973. Nørby explained that people at the theatre were awestruck upon hearing that Bergman had agreed to come to Denmark.

As previously mentioned, Bergman brought along his own scenographer Kerstin Hedeby, who repeated her scenography from the 1957 Malmö, Sweden production. The managing theatre director Peer Gregaard gave Bergman free rein to choose his cast. He naturally chose Moritzen to play Alceste. According to Nørby, it came as a complete shock to Bergman to discover that Moritzen was unable to portray Alceste as a lover. Where I described his melancholic, hangdog look, shown in the photo in Figure 103 from the theatre program, Nørby explained that however excellent an actor Moritzen was, he was simply then, and over the years continued to be, unable to portray that type of role. Moritzen’s inability to play a lover did not detract from the overall success of the play. Instead it switched the focus to Nørby’s Célimène, thereby giving her the leading role.

In 1973, Nørby was a comparatively new actress at Det Kongelige Teater. After seeing her perform at Stærekassen (The Starling Box), Det Kongelige Teater’s second stage, Bergman went to Nørby’s dressing room to meet her. He afterwards told Gregaard that he wanted Nørby to play Célimène based upon the way she shook hands with him.
Playing Célimène under Bergman became a dream role. Nørby confided in me that however difficult every single role is, the role as Célimène is most likely the easiest one she had ever played during these past fifty-one years she had acted in theatre and film. She stated that Bergman was able to get the optimal work out of each actor by believing himself infallible in his choice of actors. After Bergman had chosen whom he considered the best and fully believing in them, the actors simply outdid themselves even if Bergman could not magically turn Moritzen into the consummate lover (interview Sept. 2006).

That Bergman’s strategy worked is evidenced by the praise heaped upon the performance, not only in the 1970s but continuing into the twenty-first century. According to Klaus Hoffmeyer, the Bergman production far outshines any recent attempts at directing Molière’s comedies (telephone interview Aug. 2003). Whereas every one of the managing directors, theatre practitioners and scholars I have interviewed expressed surprise at Telle’s use of a camper as the focal point for the 1998 performance of *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, equally, every one of them referred to Bergman’s *Le Misanthrope*, performed 176 times at *Det Kongelige Teater* in 1973, as the ultimate classical production played to perfection (Leicht and Hellars 227).

**Aveny Teatret 1987**

*Le Misanthrope* was again performed in 1987, this time at *Aveny Teatret* in Copenhagen. The Swedish director Ragnar Lyth used Møllehave’s new translation included in his book *Møllehave gendigter Molière -- Misanthropen -- Omskoling af Kvinder* (*Møllehave Recreates Molière -- Le Misanthrope -- The Re-Education of Women* [*L’École des femmes*]). As with his *L’École des femmes*, performed at *Betty Nansen Teatret* in 1983 and published in the same book, Møllehave kept the rhyming scheme but incorporated the rhymes within the sentences and paragraphs, making the translation appear as if written in prose.

The scenographer Karin Betz developed an interesting stage design. During our February 2006 interview, she pointed out that Célimène was the central person in this play the way she had been in Bergman’s production fourteen years earlier. As the curtain opened, a carousel with mirrors was turning at the rear of the stage with the actors and actresses riding on it. In *Misanthropen i os alle* (*Le Misanthrope in All of Us*), Bent Mohn
praised the clever scenographic design detail and described how as the play came to a close, the carousel was again turning. Only Alceste jumped off while the remaining cast members remained, implying their togetherness. Elin Rask explained in *Molière på livets karrusel (Molière on the Carousel of Life)*, that the curtain was almost down before Alceste fled that world of friendship to begin his own world of solitude. She added that the stage had a fairly simple design with only part of the curtain visible, together with many uncomfortable chairs that for some reason kept multiplying on stage.

Betz added a swing in the background. Vibeke Staggemeier explained in *Kærlighedens gøglere (The Gypsies of Love)* how Alceste, as the play began, went directly from the carousel to the swing, moving to and fro, making him appear superior to the characters assembled below him. I believe that the swing also symbolized his childishness as further evidenced the moment his sneer turned to tears like a spoiled brat. In his article *Hovedet hugget af Moliere (Molière’s Head Chopped Off)*, Jens Kistrup referred to the carousel as the carousel of love and the carousel of life, which in English might resemble the metaphor of the circle of life or even the Wheel of Fortune.

Mohn explains how Torben Jensen, who played Alceste, gave an excellent portrayal of this complex character, illustrating his intelligence, immaturity, anger, demands, egotistical nature and even the emotional side of this human being, creating a tragicomic character. Mohn emphasizes how Alceste and Célimène complement each other thanks in part to Tammy Øst’s ever-changing behavior. She teases, he admonishes, coupled with specific moments when various possibilities might occur in their relationship. Mohn describes Célimène as an adorable mixture of offended innocence and experienced woman. He calls her roguish, proud and, despite her young age, far superior to Alceste.

**Odense Teater 1995**

Moving seven years forward from this well executed and portrayed production, *Le Misanthrope* was performed at *Odense Teater* in Odense on the island of Fyn (Funen) in September 1995, also utilizing Møllehave’s rapidly moving translation. According to the reviews, the reception was mixed. In *Grin med dyster alvor (Laughter with Gloomy Seriousness)*, Jon Helt Haarder describes the sole decoration consisting of a rear curtain...
The only other props were chairs placed in front of that curtain. Haarder compares the bare stage design to the inherent sadness in the play. The actors were colorfully and rather ludicrously dressed, and according to Hans Andersen in “Misanthropen” som veldrejet spøg (Le Misanthrope as a Well-Turned Joke), the actors laughed uproariously, drowning the bitter satire and elegant irony in an orgy of laughter on stage.

**Husets Teater 2001**

A contemporary production followed in October 2001 at Husets Teater in Copenhagen with the director Søren Iversen using Niels Brunse’s translation from Botho Strauß’s 1991 German translation of Le Misanthrope. Gorm Grove writes in Forelskelse og afsky (Love and Dislike) that one of Molière’s biggest tragicomedies has, in Botho Strauß’s gentle adaptation, become a modern portrait of a young man’s impossible love and conflict with his ideals. Where Célimène remains twenty years old, in this production, we meet a young Alceste. In Overbeviste ikke (Was Not Convinced), Henrik Lyding is unsure whether the new translation has improved Peter Hansen’s classical work from 1879. It disturbs Lyding to discover that the modernization was not carried out throughout the translation: “The characters continue to discuss many historical issues such as sonnets, the French king, the court, dueling and privileges, some of which might puzzle the contemporary audience.”
Lyding describes how scenographer Magdalena Stenbeck created a red stage with furniture, paintings, walls and floor -- all in dark, passionate red -- which matched Célimène’s dress. The story took place during a social evening with lighting that added a ghostly feeling to the stage, and the men were dressed in black tuxedos (see fig. 104). According to Bettina Heltberg in *Kærlighedens fundamentalisme (The Fundamentalism of Love)*, Klaus Bondam, the former managing director at *Grønnegårdsteatret*, added a humorous touch to his Clitandre by wearing red socks to match the red décor. Although the storyline was followed -- in prose instead of verse -- this *Le Misanthrope* might rather be termed a play à la Molière than a play by Molière.

**Betty Nansen Teatret 2002 and 2003-04**

To further demonstrate the wide variety of productions of *Le Misanthrope* during the past many decades, I will finish with a creative performance at *Betty Nansen Teatret* during the fall of 2002. The unusual production of this traditional play was so popular and successful that the two managing directors of *Betty Nansen Teatret*, Henrik Hartmann and Peter Langdal, decided to repeat *Le Misanthrope* with equal success from December 2003 until February 2004.

Under Langdal’s direction, women comprised the entire cast. Why did the director choose only female players? Neither Jesper Kjær, who translated the play for Langdal, nor the dramaturge Kitte Wagner had been able to explain the reason for the director’s choice of only female performers. Until the October 2005 interview with Langdal, the question remained unanswered.

As mentioned in the Preface, Langdal explained that he wanted to gauge the audience’s reaction to having only female players and that there was nothing unusual about his decision. Because of his belief that a woman is better able to demonstrate a man’s inner feelings than a man, he one day asked Ghita Nørby if a woman could portray a misanthrope. She answered that such a portrayal could certainly easily be done since she herself was a misanthrope all summer long. She described how she hid from the media while working with her roses in her summer garden.

During our September 2006 interview, Ghita Nørby explained that her decision to accept the role to play Alceste was definitely more complex than simply dressing up in a
man’s clothing the way Langdal had made it sound. She first told him that it would be impossible for her to play a man’s role, portraying a relationship such as the drama of love played out between Alceste and Célimène. Had it been the simple matter of a friendship between two men or two women, it would have been quite another story. Nørby felt unable to play a lover, but because of Langdal’s unique talent and ideas, she eventually agreed to accept the role.

Nørby cannot explain how she succeeded in this role, but she did and without the audience believing she had changed her sexual orientation. She explained how her performance took place in an inner mental state without Nørby considering herself a man. Karin Betz’s scenography also helped. She had Nørby arrive in trousers and shirtsleeves with the jacket across her arm. At this point, she still looked like a woman, and she refrained from taking larger strides to walk like a man. She explained that by slowly dressing in Alceste’s male costume, she, little by little, closed the woman within herself before she became Alceste in front of the audience (see figs. 105 and 106).

What made Langdal’s version so popular? I agree with Kitte Wagner when she postulates that the reason for the popularity was most likely because the lead actresses, Ghita Nørby and Bodil Udsen, are considered to be two of Denmark’s most popular and best known performers (e-mail 27 Oct. 2003). The audience flocked to see them portray
male characters and continued to do so during the second season. The two lead actresses, playing Alceste and Philinte, remained the same while most other roles, including Célimène’s, were reassigned to further improve the production, both according to Langdal (interview Oct. 2005) and according to an online review posted directly after the opening of the second season (12 Dec. 2003).

The online review describes Langdal as an *enfant terrible* who prefers to shock his audience by distorting the script and/or the stage design to make the production almost unrecognizable (12 Dec. 2003). Having seen the video and spoken with Langdal, I disagree with that statement. Langdal has a unique approach to directing. In *Le Misanthrope*, it is the all-women cast that is unusual, while the play itself remains traditional from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries both in regard to language and to costumes.

Langdal writes in the introduction in the theatre program that during the early morning hours following the first rehearsal, he wonders if they will succeed with this unusual production. He describes the text as seething and bubbling within his body in an effort to escape. Langdal considers Molière a genius because he is able to make us look at ourselves, look at our vices and hold a mirror to our faces and forcing us to see how grotesquely we are behaving on life’s stage. He asks if misanthropy is only a male trait and speculates that women might in reality be better able to show how absurdly men behave. He asks if self-righteous indignation over everything and everybody -- as well as hate for the world -- in reality has anything to do with gender? He does not think so. He is excited about having the male roles be portrayed solely by women similarly to the way Shakespeare let men act in all his roles. He is certain that Ghita Nørby will deliver the misanthrope’s pride and superior knowledge and will expose the morass of masculine characteristics that Molière’s misanthrope has gotten himself caught up in (4-5).

[Fig. 107. Bodil Udsen as Philinte © Photo: hansen-hansen.com]
During our interview, Langdal emphasized how Ghita Nørby, as Alceste, and Bodil Udsen, as Philinte, were simply phenomenal. At sixty-seven years of age, Nørby played a terrific misanthrope. She was definitely the lead character in the play the same way she, as Célimène, had been the lead character in Bergman’s version in 1973, and despite Udsen being close to eighty years old, she portrayed a gentle and convincing Philinte (see fig. 107 above). Langdal had previously worked with these two actresses when directing them in Anton Chekhov’s The Three Sisters. With the two women having acted together for close to fifty years, he wanted to bring them together once more. Except for Alceste and Philinte, the cast consisted of young women. However vast the age difference, the ages did not appear to matter. It was the presentation that counted, together with the excellent scenography (see figs. 108 and 109).

When I interviewed Karin Betz about her set design and costumes, she echoed Langdal’s opinion about women (Feb. 2006). She is convinced that women are far better at portraying men. She added that women are able to depict nuances and depths in men that might never have surfaced had the director not let these facets be brought forth by females.

Betz created a two-story house for Célimène, a house she had inherited from her late husband. As seen in the video, the house was a simple wooden structure with warm reddish colors meant to imply the eroticism inherent in the play. The upper story was a simple balcony leading around three sides. The ground level, sparsely furnished with a couple of wooden chairs, had a number of doors on the sides with an open area towards the rear of the stage where
actors could be observed applying make-up and putting on wigs. Both Betz and Langdal explained that their reason for this scenic effect was to draw the audience into the play-within-a-play atmosphere.

Birgitte Grue takes this suggestion a step further in *Ghita -- fandens til karl!* (*Ghita -- The Devil of a Guy!*). She writes that seeing the actors in the background, preparing themselves for the play, keeps the audience aware of the fact that this is theatre and not reality. She adds that this theatre game is an important element in the production. She also points out that as seen in the photos, dressed in their severe, black costumes, Alceste and Philinte remain separated from the rest of the cast. Grue describes the other characters as looking ready for Mardi Gras, making a parody of the play (see figs. 110 and 111). However she adds that this type of magic can take place in a theatre. Although Grue has problems with the play, she emphasizes that the play belongs to Nørby closely followed by Udsen.

Betz explained that by having Nørby arrive on stage carrying her jacket, she wanted to emphasize that Nørby was about to enter the role of Alceste, and to further emphasize that here was a woman ready to play the role of a man. As seen in the various photos, instead of wearing a wig, Nørby’s own hair was pulled back into a strict-looking ponytail. According to Betz, her
hairdo gave her a serious or even diabolical look. As mentioned above, both Nørby, as Alceste, and Udsen, as Philinte, were dressed in unrelieved black except for Philinte’s white kerchief. They wore heavy makeup as if masked to hide their own identities. As seen in the photos from 2002, Célimène, played by Sidse Babett Knudsen, who played Agnès in L’École des femmes at Det Kongelige Teater in 2001, was dressed in a beautiful, passionate red gown with the other actors wearing colorful, frilly, lace-bedecked costumes meant to portray the apparel from the time Molière wrote this play (see figs. 110 above and 112). The photos illustrate these fanciful, and at times clownish, outfits. As seen in the photos from the following year, Célimène, played by Lotte Andersen, was dressed in pristine white, imbuing the character with a more innocent and less passionate feeling.

In Ghita Nørbys sorte Alceste (Ghita Nørby’s Black Alceste), Jens Kistrup wonders how long it will take before Alceste returns from his self-proclaimed exile. He senses that Alceste will want to resume his relationship with Célimène, a coquettish, vain young woman who, against all reason, is his unrequited love. I disagree with Kistrup. I believe Célimène does love Alceste in her own way, but she is far too young and lively to leave her present life at court and move with him to the solitude in the country.

Kistrup reminds his readers about Nørby’s splendid Célimène under Bergman’s direction in 1973. In Misanthropens højtid (The High Point in Le Misanthrope), Monna Dithmer agrees with Kistrup and describes Nørby’s Célimène as having reached the acme of her career. Kistrup adds that never has he seen as splendid an Alceste as the one portrayed by Nørby in 2002. He claims that with this role, Nørby has fortified and increased her position as Denmark’s greatest actress. That is quite a compliment and a well deserved one. Kistrup continues his high praise by stating that Nørby is unsurpassed in comedy and unsurpassed in tragedy and adds that she is best where those two elements
are combined. He finishes by commenting that in the role as Alceste, even the light area must yield to the dark side.

Molière’s multi-faceted comedies present many challenges when performed on the Danish stage, particularly a play such as *Le Misanthrope*. An all-female cast is one of many ways directors have faced these challenges. One might wonder what the next director plans to do with *Le Misanthrope* or with any of Molière’s plays.
CONCLUSION

After interviewing managing theatre directors, directors, actors, scenographers as well as professors, translators and theatre critics, after examining a vast number of manuscripts and newspaper reviews and conducting extensive research in Danish archives and libraries, I believe I have documented and thus established that Molière has had a crucial and lasting effect upon the development of Danish theatre ever since the early eighteenth century. After researching the various productions, I have identified the extent to which Danish theatre professionals remain faithful to the original plays including aspects such as theme, language and costumes. It is clear that Molière has had a tremendous impact on contemporary Danish theatre. It is equally clear that without Molière there would be no Ludvig Holberg and that without Holberg, Danish theatre would not exist as we encounter it today.

The questions that appear in Appendix A guided me through the beginning process. Following the interviews, I analyzed the comments, discussions and intuitive advice followed by an even closer scrutiny and in-depth research of a multitude of recent manuscripts. I then compared these manuscripts with the original translations from the eighteenth century. The personal interviews have augmented these discussions and have provided added insight into how Molière is performed and accepted onstage in twenty-first-century Denmark. The answers and comments all speak to the enduring fascination that Danes have with Molière. The fact that managing directors regularly present Molière to their Danish audience, whether in a traditional or ultra-modern version, serves as testament to his continuing influence. Comparisons of contemporary performances to original translations that remain from the eighteenth century aid us in better understanding the reason behind Molière’s popularity throughout the centuries.

Kasper Wilton, from Odense Teater, describes Molière as being a cornerstone in Danish theatre tradition and considers him immortal (3 March 2005). Kim Bjarke agrees with that statement, as do many other theatre practitioners. Several dozen interviews with theatre practitioners, scholars and journalists have reinforced my knowledge about how Molière has been viewed and produced in recent decades in Denmark. It has been an
incredible journey to meet and be welcomed by so many Danes, to watch a number of
videos with recent Molière productions, to peruse the manuscripts and translations and to
examine dozens of theatre reviews. Additionally, photos and illustrations to further
illustrate the written word will aid the reader in understanding the amazing scenography
that has been designed for many of the plays. Thanks to those who have offered free use
of those images.

There is little doubt that Molière will continue to be performed in Denmark
throughout the coming centuries, and that his plays will continuously be adapted to fit
social conditions. Directors are frequently given carte blanche to provide their own
visions while discussing their ideas with managing theatre directors and scenographers.
This freedom permits the directors to provide a vast range of productions, which is
witnessed in such performances as Ingmar Bergman’s highly praised, classical rendition
of Le Misanthrope at Det Kongelige Teater in 1973. This production stands in stark
contrast to the director Emil Hansen’s ultra-modern Tartuffe at Aarhus Teater in 1996
and Catrine Telle’s unusual rendition of Le Bourgeois gentilhomme at
Grønneårdsteatret in 1998. Whether traditional or ultra-modern, each production has
its own value. It is immaterial whether theatre critics and theatre practitioners approve of
the changes or not. The adaptations bring life to classic plays and prove that Molière
continues to be an important part of Danish theatre. There is no doubt that Molière will
continue to be considered a cornerstone within Danish theatre tradition and will continue
to be produced in theatres all across Denmark on a regular basis, both in novel and
traditional ways.
APPENDIX A
QUESTIONS USED AS GUIDELINES TO THE INTERVIEWS

When I first began the interview process, I posed all or some of the following questions to a variety of theatre practitioners, theatre critics and scholars to guide me in my research. The answers have been incorporated wherever appropriate into the chapters. I utilized these questions to conduct and augment previous interviews with a variety of people whose names and occupations are added in Appendix B. In order to provide uniformity, the questions served as a foundation for each interview. The questions originated from an interview conducted with Kim Bjarke about his production of L’Avare at Odense Teater in March 2003. I specifically adapted them to each interviewee and did not limit myself nor did I limit my interlocutors to answer only those specific questions.

1. How familiar are you with Molière?
2. How do you envision Molière’s continued presence in Denmark today?
3. Would you be familiar enough with Molière to direct one of his plays yourself or would you prefer to give your director carte blanche to direct the play as he/she prefers to direct it without your interference?
4. Does your theatre regularly present productions of Molière’s plays?
5. Do you show plays by Molière or plays based upon Molière’s ideas?
6. What play by Molière do you consider the most popular in Denmark and why?
7. If you were to produce/direct a play by Molière for your next season, which play would you choose and how would you present it?
8. Would you present a traditional Molière play or a contemporary version?
9. What type of actors/actresses would you choose if permitted to choose them?
10. Would you change the script to colloquial Danish or present a version directly translated from French into Danish to remain true to the original version?
11. If your theatre troupe performs or if you direct a play to be performed by Molière around the country, do you adapt it to suit the audience location, e.g., small rural town, large provincial town, large city?
12. During a play’s run, do you pay attention to the audience’s reaction and adapt the play accordingly to please the audience or do you leave it as is?

13. How is a playwright with Catholic sensibilities understood in a largely Protestant country, e.g., Tartuffe?

14. Would you consider it necessary to adapt such a play to the Protestant audience?

15. Who are some colleagues you think I should also be asking these questions?

16. What is Molière’s importance to Danish Theatre -- in the past and in the future?

17. Molière versus Holberg -- who wins -- who do you consider most important?
APPENDIX B
THEATRE PROFESSIONALS, SCHOLARS, TRANSLATORS, THEATRE CRITICS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

Bente Bak, secretary at Aarhus Teater
Louise Beck, scenographer
Hans Bendix, illustrator, deceased
Karin Betz, scenographer
Kim Bjarke, director
Camilla Bjørnvad, scenographer
Klaus Bondam, actor, former managing director of Grønnegårds Teatret and Folketeatret and now a politician
Asger Bonfils, actor, director and the translator of the 1968 L’Avare
Jacob Carlsen, photographer
Dr. Mary Karen Dahl, professor in Theatre at Florida State University
Marie í Dali, scenographer
Brita Fogsgaard, photographer
Pernille Grumme, director
Lars Grunwald, photographer
Morten Grunwald, actor and former managing director of Betty Nansen Teatret
Frede Snippen Gulbrandsen, director, graduated Spring 2005 from Statens Teaterskole
Emil Hansen, director
Preben Harris, actor, director and former managing director of Folketeatret
Henrik Hauch, photographer with Huset Mydskov
Annette Haugaard, former secretary at Statens Teaterskole
Ole Haupt, photographer
Elsebeth Hansen, secretary at Odense Teater
Anders Hjerming, photographer
Klaus Hoffmeyer, director and former managing director of the drama division at Det Kongelige Teater
Linda Holm, secretary at Betty Nansen Teatret
Tony Holmstrøm Larsen, photographer
Lars Horn, photographer
Euðun Johannessen, director
Rikke Juellund, scenographer
Lars Juhl, scenographer
Dr. Knud Arne Jürgensen, research librarian, theatre archives at Det Kongelige Bibliotek
Jesper Kjær, translator and poet
Marianne Kjær, theatre critic and journalist at Fyns Amts Avis
Morten Kjærgaard, press director at Odense Teater
Ebbe Knudsen, translator and opera director
Lars Knutzon, actor and director
Lene Kryger, theatre critic and journalist at Fyens Stiftstidende
Elzbieta Krygier, secretary and librarian at Statens Teaterskole
Milla Kær, PR at Det Danske Teater
Jesper Langberg, actor
Peter Langdal, director and managing director at Betty Nansen Teatret
Birgit Lassen, secretary at Nørrebros Teater
Klaus Lindewald, photographer, deceased
Rolf Linder, photographer
Dr. Klaus Neiendam, lector in Theatre History at University of Copenhagen
Dr. Erik A. Nielsen, professor in Danish at University of Copenhagen
Ghita Nørby, actress in theatre and film
Ulla Gjedde Palmgren, author, translator and French teacher at Virum High School
Dr. John Pedersen, translator and retired French professor at University of Copenhagen
Hjørdis Plato, illustrator
Ida Poulsen, museum director, research librarian and curator at Det Kongelige Arviv in Hofteatret
Jørgen Reenberg, actor
Rikke Rottensten, theatre critic at Kristeligt Dagblad and editor of Teater 1
Lone Sams, secretary at Det Danske Teater
Henrik Saxgren, photographer
Nina Schiøttz, scenographer
Lisbeth Sjölin, secretary at *Husets Teater*
Lilo Skaarup, librarian at *Det kongelige Teater*
Jens Smærup Sørensen, author and translator
Catrine Telle, Norwegian director and former managing director in Norway
Alexa Ther, director
Kasper Wilton, actor, director and now managing director of *Odense Teater*
Vibeke Wrede, director
Fig. 113. Map of Denmark with names of cities with the major theatre venues
Fig. 114. Central København (Copenhagen) with major theatres marked in red
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>King</th>
<th>Reign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian I</td>
<td>1448-1481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hans</td>
<td>1481-1513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian II</td>
<td>1513-1523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederik I</td>
<td>1523-1533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian III</td>
<td>1533-1559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederik II</td>
<td>1559-1588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian IV</td>
<td>1588-1648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederik III</td>
<td>1648-1670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian V</td>
<td>1670-1699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederik IV</td>
<td>1699-1730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian VI</td>
<td>1730-1746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederik V</td>
<td>1746-1766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian VII</td>
<td>1766-1808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederik VI</td>
<td>1808-1839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian VIII</td>
<td>1839-1848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederik VII</td>
<td>1848-1863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian IX</td>
<td>1863-1906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederik VIII</td>
<td>1906-1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian X</td>
<td>1912-1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederik IX</td>
<td>1947-1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margrethe II</td>
<td>1972-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E

PERMISSIONS

Kære Annelise,
Du er velkommen til at kontakte mig i september, så du kan tage foto af mine tegninger, og du er velkommen til at bruge mine illustrationer i din bog, hvor den angivne kreditering er OK. (You are welcome to contact me in September to photograph my drawings, and you are welcome to use my illustrations in your book with the suggested wording.) Scenographer Louise Beck

A verbal invitation from Scenographer Karin Betz to photograph her illustrations.

April 7, 2006 for L’Avare at Odense Teater in 2003.
Hej Annelise
Så vil jeg meget gerne hjælpe dig. Jeg har også fine billeder fra forestillingen.
(I will be very happy to help you. I also have excellent photos from the performance.)
Scenographer Camilla Bjørnvad

Hej Annelise
Hvis billederne ikke bliver offentliggjort kan du godt bruge billederne uden beregning.
(As long as the photos are not to be publicized, you are welcome to use the photos free of charge in the dissertation. [A later message gave price quotes].)
Med venlig hilsen, Photographer Jakob Carlsen
fotograf@jakobcarlsen.dk www.jakobcarlsen.dk

Hej Annelise Leysieffer.
Meget kort, du er meget velkommen til at bruge mine foto i din afhandling, og jeg ser frem til at modtage den på CD. Kommer det til en publikation senere hen, vil jeg gerne honoreres for brugt billedemateriale. (To be brief, you are welcome to use my photographs for your dissertation. I look forward to receiving a CD. Should publishing be considered later on, I would like an honorarium for the photo material.)
Photographer Brita Fogsgaard

Anvendelse af fremsendte billeder, fra ovennævnte forestillinger, til dit videnskabelige arbejde er OK, blot du husker at nævne fotografen Lars Grunwald, som er ophavsmand til samtlige. (Use of the displayed photos from the productions for your research is OK as long as you mention the photographer Lars Grunwald.)
Managing Theatre Director Morten Grunwald and brother to Lars Grunwald.
January 21, 2007 for **L’Avare** in 1974 and **Tartuffe ’86** in 1986 at **Folketeatret**.
Verbal permission from Preben Harris to use the photos taken during his tenure as managing theatre director by his **Photographer Klaus Lindewald**, deceased.

January 25, 2007 for **Le Misanthrope** in 1973 and **L’École des femmes** in 2000-01 at **Det Kongelige Teater**.
"**Huset Mydtskov**, hereby permits Annelise Leysieffer to use photos by Rigmor Mydtskov from the performances of Fruentimmerskolen and from the **Misanthrope** in her doctoral dissertation titled "Molière in Denmark, Then and Now."
Med venlig hilsen, **Henrik Hauch, Huset Mydtskov**
henrik.hauch@mydtskov.dk  www.mydtskov.dk

January 21, 2007 for **L’École des femmes** for **Jørgen Blakstad Turnéen** in 1990.
Verbal permission from **Photographer Ole Haupt** to use his photos.

I, Anders Hjerming, give Annelise Leysieffer permission to use photos from the production of **Den Adelsglade Borger** at Grønnegårdsteatret in 1998 in her doctoral dissertation titled "Molière in Denmark, Then and Now." If she later on plans to publish her dissertation as a book, I need to see the publication before I decide whether to participate free or if I want a fee.
**Photographer Anders Hjerming** anders@hjerming.dk  http://www.hjerming.dk

To whom it may concern:
On behalf of Betty Nansen Teatret and its photographer, I give Annelise Leysieffer permission to use photos from the theatre program and from online in her doctoral dissertation titled "Molière in Denmark, Then and Now." If she later on plans to publish her dissertation as a book, I also give her permission to use the photos free of charge.
Yours sincerely, **Secretary Linda Holm**, Betty Nansen Teatret

**Kære Annelise.**
Du må meget gerne bruge de omtalte 3 foto i din afhandling, og efterfølgende bruge dem i en evt. udgivelse. Dog med navns nævnelse. (You are welcome to use the aforementioned three photos and also use them later in case of a possible future publication, but make sure to mention my name.)
Med venlig hilsen, **Photographer Tony Holmstrøm Larsen**
www.tl-reklamefoto.dk

January 19, 2007 for **Tartuffe** at **Aalborg Teater** in 1996.
I, photographer Lars Horn, hereby give Annelise Leysieffer permission to use photos from the performance of Tartuffe and from the theatre program in her doctoral dissertation titled "Molière in Denmark, Then and Now." If she later on plans to publish her dissertation as a book, I also give her permission to use the photos free of charge.
Best regards, **Photographer Lars Horn**, Baghuset Pressefoto

192
To whom it may concern:
I give Annelise Leysieffer permission to use my illustrations in her doctoral dissertation titled "Molière in Denmark, Then and Now." If she later on plans to publish her dissertation as a book, I also give her permission to use my illustrations free of charge.
Scenographer Rikke Juellund

Kære Annelise Leysieffer,
Du må gerne benytte de tre billeder fra Odense Teaters opsætninger til din doktorafhandling. (You are welcome to use the three photos from Odense Teater for your dissertation with the captions mentioned below.)
For L’Avare: Photo: Odense Teater -- For Tartuffe: Photo: Reklamefotograferne
Med venlig hilsen, Morten Kjærgaard Pressechef, Odense Teater

Hi Annelise
Jeg er lige kommet tilbage fra Indien efter toenhv måned, derfor har du ikke hørt fra mig. Tillykke med doktorgraden -- den vil jeg da gerne se engang. Du har min tilladelse til at bruge billederne som skrevet står, Jeg skal bare krediteres i texten. (I have just arrived home from 2 1/2 months in India. Congratulations with the doctorate -- I would like to see the dissertation at some point. You have my permission to use the pictures as written. I simply need to be credited in the text.)
Best regards Scenographer Lars Juhl

On behalf of Det Danske Teater and its photographer, I give Annelise Leysieffer permission to use photos from Scapins Rævestreger in her doctoral dissertation titled "Molière in Denmark, Then and Now." If she later on plans to publish her dissertation as a book, I also give her permission to use the mentioned photos free of charge.
Best regards, Secretary Milla Kær, Det Danske Teater

Hej Annelise.
I, Rolf Linder, give Annelise Leysieffer permission to use four photos from the theatre program in her doctoral dissertation titled "Molière in Denmark, Then and Now". If she later plans to publish her dissertation as a book, I also give her permission to use the mentioned photos free of charge.
Med venlig hilsen, Photographer Rolf Linder

Kære Annelise!
Jeg skal hilsne mange gange fra Hjordis Plato og undskyld, at hun ikke har svaret på din forespørgsel. Hun siger, at du har hendes fulde tilladelse til at bruge hendes tegninger! Når blot du anfører at det er hende, der har tegnet. (Greetings from Hjørdis Plato and forgive her for not answering your request herself. She gives you her complete
permission to use her illustrations as long as you credit her with having sketched them.)

Mange kærlige hilsner fra **Illustrator Hjørdis Plato** and **Journalist Lene Kryger**
Kulturredaktionen, Fyens Stiftstidende

**January 20, 2007 for Le Misanthrope at Husets Teater in 2001.**
I, Henrik Saxgren, give Annelise Leysieffer permission to use photos from the production of Le Misanthrope at **Husets Teater** in 2001 in her doctoral dissertation titled "Molière in Denmark, Then and Now." If she later on plans to publish her dissertation as a book, I also give her permission to use the photos free of charge. PS! I do not have other photos. If you can get a couple from Husets Teater, then you are welcome to use them as well.

**Photographer Henrik Saxgren**

**January 29, 2007 for Les Fourberies de Scapin at Det Danske Teater in 2002.**
I give Annelise Leysieffer permission to use my costume design drawings in her doctoral dissertation titled: "Moliere in Denmark, then and now." If she later on plans to publish her dissertation as a book, I also give her permission to use my drawings as illustration free of charge.

**Scenographer Nina Schiöttz**
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Fremstilling af det Kongelige Teaters Historie fra Skuepladsens Aabning paa
Kongens Nytorv 18. December 1748 til Udgangen af Sæsonen 1888-89. 5
Copenhagen: 1898-1900.
Behrend, Chr. “Grønnegadeteatret og Holberg: Bedømt af en samtidig.” EDDA:
---. Holberg som Epigrammatiker og Essayist I. Epigrammatikeren. Copenhagen:
Munksgaard, 1938.
---. Holberg som Epigrammatiker og Essayist II. Essayisten. Copenhagen: Munksgaard,
1939.
1994.
---. Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature I-VI. London: Heinemann, 1924.


Dali, Marie i. Personal interview. 19 Sept. 2006.


---. Personal interview. 3 Feb. 2006.


Harris, Preben. Personal interview. 5 Oct. 2005.


Hansen, P. Den Danske Skueplads I. Copenhagen: Ernst Bojesens Kunstforlag.


Juhl, Lars. Personal interview. 9 Sept. 2006.


Lundquist, Anne S. “Ludvig Holberg and Molière: Imitation or Constructive Emulation?”
245-51.
Molière. Comoedie om Gamle Jens Gnier eller Pengepuger. Skuespiltekster fra
Komediehuset i Lille Grønnegade. Comp. Eiler Nystrøm. Vol. 1. 1724. Copenhagen,
1920. 5 vols. 37-156.
---. Comoedie om Den Høy-adelige Borger-Mand. Skuespiltekster fra Komediehuset i
293-406.
---. Fruentimmerskolen. Trans. Diderich Seckman. Skuespiltekster fra Komediehuset i
97-193.
69.
Nørrebro’s Teater. 1996.
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Annelise Leysieffer
Born in Copenhagen, Denmark

Education

A.A. Tallahassee Community College 1990
B.A. The Florida State University 1993 French Summa Cum Laude
Minor: German
M.A. The Florida State University 2003 French Literature
Ph.D. The Florida State University 2007 French Literature

Presentations

2000 Blue Ridge International Conference on the Humanities and the Arts
“Opposing Interpretations of Caspar David Friedrich’s Rückenfigur”
2001 Blue Ridge International Conference on the Humanities and the Arts
“Love’s Grammar” from Annie Ernaux’s Passion Simple

Honors

1988 Phi Theta Kappa Community College Honor Society
1992 Mortar Board National College Senior Honor Society
1992 Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society
1992 Golden Key International Honor Society
1993 Phi Beta Kappa
1995 Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society
2004 Garnet & Gold Key Leadership Honor Society

Awards

2002-03 Advisor of the Year
Florida State University - Leadership Awards Night
2002-03 National Excellence in Advising Award
Mortar Board Senior Honor Society

University Related Activities

1993 - present Phi Kappa Phi
Undergraduate Student Vice President
Graduate Student Vice President
Scholarship Committee
1994 - 2005 Mortar Board Chapter Advisor
1997 - present Phi Beta Kappa:
Membership Committee
1998 - 2007        Omicron Delta Kappa:
                   Faculty Secretary / Advisor
                   Grads Made Good Chair
1997 - present    Tallahassee Community College Alumni Association
                   Board of Directors
                   Vice President (2000 - 01)
                   President (2001 - 04)
1985 - present    Faculty & Friends Club of Florida State University
                   (formerly FSU University Club)
                   Vice President - Membership (1985-86)
                   President - (1986-87)
                   President - (1994-96)
                   President - (2003-05)