

Spicing The Classroom With Laughter: Classical French Comedy Structure

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Overview

The Pittsburgh Public Schools world language program, especially the French program, has been undergoing many changes since the early 1980's intended to improve both the outlook of the program and student achievement. While these changes have improved the oral and written proficiency of students in world language classes, it has probably not achieved the same results with the literary appreciation skills, especially at Taylor Allderdice high School, where I have been teaching for the last 21 years.

In 1981, when I started teaching with the district, elementary schools had no world language programs, and most elementary schools had only exploratory programs in which students were exposed to the very basic aspects of one language and its related culture all year round, or various languages and related cultures. In the high schools, there were two categories for placing students in world language classrooms, as in all the other subjects: main stream for slow learners and all students achieving below a B in their specific classes. Then came the implementation of the Pennsylvania Gifted Program Act, which instituted the placement of voluntarily tested students with 130 or more IQ in a different category. In most of the high schools in the district, the gifted program is named the CAS (Center for Advanced Studies) program, which is intended to challenge the students at a higher level. In the world language

classes, this placement has improved the rate of learning, and has probably improved oral and written proficiency levels.

The two most important programs implemented purposely to improve student achievement and performance as well as to increase student enrollment and more voluntarily integrate the district schools were the introduction of magnet programs in the 1980's and the incorporation of standards in the 1990's.

For world language programs, the introduction of magnet schools was intended to accelerate language learning processes by starting in selected elementary schools. These were full-blown programs as opposed to the exploratory ones which formerly existed in the middle schools. Likewise, selected middle schools took in the special students that had gone through the rigorous programs in the elementary schools. By the time these students got to high school, they normally knew a lot more of a specific language than the students who had gone through other elementary and middle schools. Being a strong integration program, the International Studies Academy included an elementary school in a mostly black residential area—East Hills, a middle school in Oakland, in the midst of white and black residential areas, and the high school—Schenley, which at that time had a completely black student enrollment. Over the years, this program has succeeded very well as an integration measure. Based on racial make-up, East Hills enrolled as many white students as blacks, and Frick Middle School had to accept all students graduating from East Hills before others from around the neighborhood. Students graduating from Frick had to choose between Schenley High School and their neighborhood school. Usually, about half of the Frick graduating class chooses to go to Schenley where international baccalaureate courses are offered, including certification in French and Spanish. The other half choose Taylor Allderdice high School, where classes are offered in both languages up to level 6, and students can take the AP exams whenever they feel they are ready to do so before graduating.

Oral proficiency became a major criterion in evaluating student achievement in learning world languages in the 1990's, and from that sprang the standards and rubrics for measuring that success. For the Pittsburgh School District, the standard in world language achievement has been that "all students converse, at a minimum level of "intermediate low" as in the oral proficiency guidelines developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language, in at least one language other than English, including the native language, if other than English. At this point, the short-comings of this proficiency standard in the Pittsburgh Public Schools is that the students are evaluated against it in their third level class in high school but most students are not required to take a world language for more than two years in high school. So this standard and correlating rubrics are therefore applicable only to students who are in their third year of a specific language. I believe that the setting of proficiency standards has

contributed to higher achievement especially for spoken and written French in the district. While the literary achievement might have been improved in Schenley High due to the establishment of the international studies magnate program, the same has not happened at Taylor Allderdice High.

Twice in the late 1980's, I taught levels 4 and 5 French for the gifted classes, and all we did each of those years was to read AP literature in preparation for the test, which most level five students and a few level four students took and everybody passed, some with the score of five. Classics including Molière, Voltaire, Becket, Ionesco, Sartre, Camus etc., did not seem to be problematic to the students at all. Today, however, I wonder why not a single student has taken the AP test in French literature since the late 1980's. It is certainly ironic that, at the same time that the magnate school and the proficiency standard have both apparently helped to elevate the spoken and written test result, the literary aspect – especially as it concerns taking national achievement tests—seems to have been neglected or totally avoided by students.

It is not only the students that seem to have negative views about the World Language AP's. In a rather surprising turn of events, I heard a teacher of German complaining about how the grammar AP's are biased in favor of "native speakers." This observation actually suggests a more alarming look at the situation than has been the usual case. By "usual", I am referring to the fact that most students have usually avoided taking the AP test in literature, but have had to take the grammar—just like other subjects. Even as I heard the French teacher concur, I wondered even more whether it is actually the unfairness of the test or the dropping individual students' standards that ought to be blamed for producing the negative appraisal. I remember very clearly that only in the eighties, students were having scores of fours and fives in French literature AP.

In my opinion, any student who has taken the AP in English, history, biology, etc., has probably had the same level of anxiety, experienced the same frustrations and dealt with the similar difficulties as in the foreign language grammar AP. To say, therefore, that this grammar is biased in favor of only the native speakers is to imply that the literature which the students have avoided for almost two decades is in a class of difficulty all by itself—one which is simply impossible to tackle.

There are several questions that need to be answered. Why have the programs implemented by the board failed to help students appreciate literature though they have helped them perform better in written and spoken French—in spite of the observation stated above? Are students intentionally avoiding taking the AP because of reading difficulties? Are they avoiding the literature test because of

the tedious and may be not-so-interesting reading. My aim is not to investigate and establish these probable causes. On the contrary, I simply intend to make comedy an important aspect of literary reading and appreciation in the French 4, 5 or 6 levels. I believe that emphasizing comedy will attract more students to read higher level French literature and in the process bring back interest in the AP French literature test.

Rationale

My rationale for creating and implementing a curriculum on comedy in the French class is based on the simple premise that making French literature more fun will lead to students taking the AP French Literature Exam. The basic argument is that comedy classes are fun. The conclusion, therefore, is that French comedy classes will encourage students to enroll in AP French Literature classes and take related exams instead of the grammar test which all students in the district (except a few International Baccalaureate students at Schenley High School) now precipitate to be evaluated in.

These days, teachers are consistently told by both students, their parents and researchers that fun-learning leads to success. Of course, this is a basic premise in task performance, progress and results. Any activity that is cause of joy or laughter is most likely to be tackled and completed than one that is tedious and boring. Consequently, reading or studying a comedy is more likely to please students than reading a tragedy, science fiction or literature covering other aspects of daily life, history, philosophy, etc.

Though this may be going too far, it can be asserted that this view is the corollary of the theory on human nature which states in lay terms that humans mainly seek what is fun and try to avoid “work” as much as possible.

It is understandable that in school completely avoiding “work” is impossible for any student who intends to complete required courses for graduation. The introduction or accentuation of comedy will mainly serve as an enticement, or even a bait, to recruit students who otherwise would not continue with French past the third year, or may do so while already having their minds set on taking the AP exam in grammar instead of literature. If these students completed a comedy course, it would be more likely that while their interest would be held by the fun generated by this genre of literature, the they (the students) would also have more confident in their reading, comprehension and literary analytical skills in

general. Subsequently, the thought of taking the literature rather than the grammar test would not seem such an insurmountable task.

Convincing young people to “join the fun” is certainly not a problem, and the health results of joining this fun should certainly be a strong motif for many students who are health-conscious. In critiquing James Sully’s “An essay on laughter; its forms, its causes, its development and its value,” Bergson specifies what happens during laughter. He observes that in a general sense, laughter is the exhibition of a pleasant sentiment. In children as in the adult society, it expresses a sudden brightening of the pleasure-tone of consciousness, and consists to a great extent, in an interruption of the natural rhythm of the respiratory process, and has the aim of accelerating circulation and assuring more complete oxygenation of blood throughout the blood capillaries. “En ce sens, le rire exerce une influence bienfaisance sur l’organisme en accroissant l’activité vitale. Il es le retentissement organique naturel d’un état de joie” (p. 215 Of *Ecrits et paroles*). In short, this means that laughter produces a beneficial influence on a being by increasing the vital activity. It is the natural organic reverberation of the state of joy.

This natural organic reverberation of the state of joy, and the understanding that laughter produces a beneficial influence on a being may be the centrifugal force that pulls some students into a comedy class. It is possible that most students hate to work, and that they try to avoid work for as far, and as long, as they can. But the comedy class would provide work that brings laughter and would surely be different from the other aspects of work.

Objectives

Since the objectives of the district’s lesson plans are written in terms of what the students would be able to do given the fulfillment of certain conditions by the teacher, the objectives to be stated below are expected to be realized by the students after the completion of the course.

The teacher’s goals are to:

- Expose the students to French comedy through the reading of Molière’s *Le Misanthrope*, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and Voltaire’s *Candide*
- Introduce students to the concepts (physical and theoretical) that describe and define comedy
- Promote the understanding of literary appreciation, especially in the context of comedy.

Based on the stated goals, students will be able to accomplish the following tasks throughout the course and thereafter:

- Raise their proficiency level in reading, writing and speaking
- Successfully and confidently appreciate French comedy
- Determine with certainty the characteristics of comedy
- Approach French literature in general with more understanding and confidence

Curriculum Design

This curriculum is designed to be used at Taylor Allderdice High School in French 4, 5 and 6 classes, where most preparation for the Advanced Placement Test takes place. Since this is supposed to be a course to entice students who would otherwise most likely opt to take the grammar AP test, the most promising class in which to introduce it would be level four, where the serious preparations for the test begins, and there is most probably still time for the student. Most students in level four French at Taylor Allderdice High are in the tenth grade, so they still have time to read a lot of literature in preparation for the test. In fact, they can take the grammar as well, depending on the schedule.

To thoroughly treat three books as an introductory process to a continuing and progressing curriculum, a whole nine-week period—a school quarter—is necessary. The course will start at the beginning of the year so that students who find it interesting and helpful can continue with more readings in preparation for the test, most likely the following year. It is possible for some avid readers to complete the reading list in one year, but it’s much better to take two years, and digest the material well.

Strategy and Methodology

The high school classroom is a setting for many exciting and energetic activities, depending on the contents of the lesson, as well as the strategies for instruction and the whole process involved in the implementation of the curriculum or specific lesson plans. The word “comedy” invokes, in variable settings, funny, strange, actions, speeches and behaviors that incite laughter. Thus, a comedy class—in high school or elsewhere—is expected to involve as well as produce laughter, giggles, smiles, smirks, grins, or even grimaces. The question, therefore, is how to successfully implement a comedy lesson or curriculum that will be a centrifugal force in directing the students to make positive decisions on taking the literature AP.

There are many approaches in which students can be exposed to literature in general and comedy in particular. But there is a basic criterion that every student must fulfill if he or she is to successfully explore the possibility of taking the Literature AP. Every student enrolling in the class should be willing and ready to read. This should be made clear to students at the beginning of the class so that they do not have the misconception that this class on comedy is just a venue where people sit down and succession of funny activities start to happen. Plainly put, if a student is eventually going to take an AP test in whatever subject, he or she must be willing to read a lot.

Limitation of Definition

The first strategy after the establishment of the criterion for enrollment will be to define comedy in the most basic, clear but also inclusive terms. This should include theoretical concepts from authors, such as Frye, Meredith, Bergson, Langer, etc., For each of these authors, there is (are) concept(s)-- some of them theoretical—which define comedy and prescribe the structural and content rules. Frye discusses plots, characters and scenes, with emphasis on the corrective, rejuvenating and constructive nature of comedy on the society that it targets. At the end, the “green world”, a symbolic victory of summer over the winter is a cause for celebration. As for Meredith, comedy mocks at a world in which there is excessive (male) folly and stupidity, and in which there is need for an educated and intelligent audience and characters to either change the trend of events or replace the men. To him, a cultivated audience is inconsistent without educated and intelligent women. Bergson believes that we are in a socially regulating society which interrupts the organic nature of our activities and the natural flow of consciousness. Comedy becomes the primitive, but restorative and healing nature in this situation. As such, laughter, as a result of comedy, has a social function—social reform—and pursues a unitarian aim of general improvement. These concepts would be pursued vigorously if the aim of this curriculum were to discover the effects of certain comedies or situational comedies.

In the high school comedy classroom, a lesson will be more engaging if the students find the process not too taxing or demanding. When the word “comedy” is “thrown” at a student of this generation, only a very slim percentage will think about it in terms of the structure and philosophical implications. Definitely, most of them will think of it in the immediate sense of a situation or thing that causes laughter. Therefore, given the preliminary nature of the offered course, exploring the nature and situations of comedy in chosen texts will be mostly within the context of actions, reactions, activities or behavior that cause laughter, smile, grin, grimaces, or giggles. Though these situations are sometimes not easy to establish, students will be instructed to discern and appreciate situations which deal with what is funny or comical. An individual’s speech can be funny depending on the setting, how it is presented, the audience, etc. A joke can be funny depending on the point in time, the contents, individuals and the setting. Irrationality or the “idiot law” provides the “rational and sane” society not only with puzzles and wonderment, but also with an occasion to grimace. Incongruity or a non-fitting action, occurrence, activity or behavior in a given setting is reason for laughter. Intentional self-deprecation or a demonstration of the possession of inadequacies of any sort also gives the society reason to smile or laugh at the subject. Exaggeration and/or boasting provide laughter, especially when the audience understands that the subject is doing this without the benefit of knowing that the audience is aware of the situation. Repetition, in most cases, causes laughter. Clowning and/or miming are also actions that draw laughter from the audience, depending on the setting, the contents of the actions, and the period.

Since our curriculum deals a lot with Molière and the regular classic comedy, it is important to discuss the characteristics of his typical piece of comedy, which has, according to Marie-Claude Cavano (*La Comédie*, p. 63) “un double but de <<plaire>> et d’ <<instruire>>-- the double objective of pleasing and teaching. Molière’s *Le Misanthrope* is characterized as a comedy of character or personality. In this genre of comedy, the main character is often prevented—by a parent—from realizing his love dreams and goal (as is the case between Candide and his love, Cunegonde); in the larger extent the character is not only deprived of his love object, but his personality, his passions and his manias come out and makes him stand alone against all the other characters and the world. This is certainly the case in Molière’s *Le Misanthrope*. In la comédie de moeurs, comedy of manners or morals, contemporary manners are brought to life, and the superficiality of characters are examined. Molière’s *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* –The Would-Be-Gentleman fall under this categorization.

Teaching and Learning Technique

Given the nature of the texts that will be used, teacher will facilitate daily student readings by, first of all, stating the theme or topic that is central in assigned readings. However, discussion and appreciation of the contents will be done only after the reading has been done by students. Background information to further facilitate the reading, as well as a bilingual vocabulary sheet will be provided for students to use. In fact, the vocabulary booklet or handbook will be given out at the beginning of the course, with specific instructions as how to use it daily.

Finding what is funny will be a daily major task for students. Reading and appreciation by students will be a primary approach to teaching and learning. First and foremost, students will have to read about ten pages of a play to prepare for the next day's class. To make reading progress rapidly with maximum comprehension, students will normally be provided vocabulary lists with word definitions as well as explanation of situations and actions. Students will be requested to take note of situations, actions, behavior and speeches which they find funny or comic. They will be also expected to state why they think that their selections are funny. Students will be selected randomly daily to tell what scenes, actions, or behavior they found to be funny and laughable at.

Student dramatization of selected scenes will also be a useful technique in teaching and learning. Dramatization, if done well with all the bodily gestures, is the best way to establish the laughable aspects of a scene or just a selected piece of dialogue. Dramatization can, when students are well prepared, be done without the help of texts; however, given time limitation, it will be done with the help of the text.

The last technique in the instruction and learning process will involve student response to the questions about the contents of the reading. This is always necessary in a high school classroom setting where many students do not keep up with their readings, and do not understand what is going on. I have found out over the years that a content-check list which asks specific questions makes most students try to understand at least the progression of the basic plot and also the important actions that take place.

Lesson Plans

Lessons will consist of an introduction to comedy taking about two days. The first two days of the curriculum, I will make this introduction very basic, instructing students mostly on what makes comedy, discussing what students think make comedy, but avoiding the rather involved history of comedy.

Molière's works, *Le Misanthrope* and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* will then be read and discussed, after the introduction of some information on Molière himself. About six weeks will be needed to talk about the author and complete the readings and also carry out full discussions. Voltaire will be immediately introduced, thereafter, with a little more emphasis on the differences between his world and that of Molière and the subsequent differences in their comedies. Though *Candide* is a high school text and has actually made the AP reading list, some of the scenes grotesque and will not be fully discussed—mainly because of possible complaints from parents. If this were an approved AP class, however, the book would be treated in detail because the students in the class would have made the choice to read and appreciate whatever material made up the syllabi.

Topics in Lesson Plans:

This is not an exhaustive list of the topics that will make the lesson plans on the two authors and their three texts. First of all, this is simply a preliminary list that can be lengthened by any teacher, depending on his or her strategies. Moreover, this list is limited to the topics that I am going to include in my sample lesson plans which are limited to a whole week, instead of the nine-weeks which may be needed to complete the whole curriculum.

- Types of comedy according to Maurice Charney's *An Introduction to the Experience of Comedy*, supplemented with material from Marie Claude Canova's *La Comédie*, and James Feibleman's *In Praise of Comedy*.
- In Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, aspects of comedy will be explored as the play is read progressively. First, the play will be categorized under one or two of fitting categories of comedy. In his Bordas publication of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, Jean Thoroval observes that "la peinture satirique des mœurs de ce temps constitue l'essentiel intérêt de cette comédie, et la vérité s'en révèle cruellement à la lumière de ce que nous savons de la société française..." In this encapsulation, however, are specific topics, such as, the comedy in social class and dress; the comedy in social class and the appreciation of the fine arts; how, in spite of his aspirations, M Jourdan's clumsiness in learning to sing, dance and fence actually put him in the lower class of buffoons; the aggrandization of self and trade (job) as portrayed by the fight between the dance teacher and fencing teacher, and later, between the philosophy teacher against the other three teachers; M. Jourdan goes to school just to discover that he has been speaking prose all his life; etc. Finally, the two structural comedy plots—one relating to Jourdan's unwittingly giving her daughter's hand in marriage to a commoner, and the other relating to the festive ending of the play, all provide aspects of comedy .

- Molière’s *Le Misanthrope* is a social comedy of a different sort. The main character, Alceste—in spite of his love for the young, pretty and smart socialite Celimène, whose ways he does not like—eventually leaves for the desert by himself in order to be away from all humanity. Many scenes on manners and morals, jealousy and revenge are typical of this “peinture satirique des mœurs”.
- Voltaire’s *Candide* while dealing with the bizarre, and the absurd of human accidents, fortune and destiny, also has room for the structural comedy involving a love plot, albeit the celebration of the regeneration and continuation of life is without festivity and joy. Age, time and fortunes have taken a toll on both Candide and Cugneconde, but they have to stay married and keep cultivating the physical garden and the metaphysical garden of living. This has been on the AP reading list from time to time, and therefore deserves complete reading and appreciation within the time frame available for the implementation of the curriculum.

Standards

The Pittsburgh Board of Education has established “Standards” for each content area taught in the district. The proficiency standards in foreign languages or world languages, as they are called now, range from the novice-low level to the advanced level. Though the rubric stresses mostly oral proficiency, the fact that grammar and vocabulary are included is proof that written and other skills are important. In fact, to be able to respond orally correctly at any of the levels, a student will need writing, listening, pronunciation, and reading skills. Consequently, these standards reflect an inclusive prescription of language skills requirements or prerequisites.

Students preparing to take the AP—whether in language or literature—are most definitely students who have met the advanced level requirements as specified in the oral proficiency rubrics. This means that students involved should be able to communicate with any audience at any given time; they should have enough vocabulary to narrate, describe, discuss, summarize, compare and contrast, while using paragraph-like discourse 60% of the time in all the frequently used tenses. It also means that students involved will be acquiring more vocabulary and linguistic skills at and beyond the Pittsburgh Board of Education advanced level of the oral proficiency, as the read, discuss, act out, and analyze the chosen classic comedies.

The goals and objectives of each and every lesson plan in this curriculum, therefore, will meet and surpass the advanced level of the communication skills of students taking French Pittsburgh district schools. They will also meet advanced standards in other areas, such as history, world cultures, drama, philosophy. Established in this section of the curriculum, reference to standards, hereafter, will be rare.

Sample Lesson Plans

Day One: Establishing what makes laughter from Student Perspective

Lesson Goals

This lesson is intended to sensitize students to all possible situations that create laughter, or may be considered funny—without yet burdening them with theories about comedy. It is actually an indirect way of making them think—may be for the first time—why they laugh at certain situations, actions and simple words. In addition, it makes students start to reason and share with one another their ideas about what makes them laugh or what is comical to them. Finally, it is intended to point out the fact that jokes—though always intended to make people laugh—may not be so funny depending on the teller, the audience and the occasion, and may actually be offensive to some people notwithstanding the occasion.

Lesson Objectives

At the end of the lesson, each student will be able to:

- State at least five situations that he or she thinks would be laughable or just funny.
- State about two situations or activities that may be laughable or funny depending on circumstances.
- State reasons why jokes may not always be funny, and may actually be offensive.

Materials Needed

Each student will need a pen or pencil to write with. Teacher will provide groups with two sheets of paper. One will serve as a scratch paper. The other will serve on one side as an alternate list (actions, situations, etc, that may be laughable to only one person in the group of three) while the other side will serve as the list of items that will be laughable or funny to at least two of the group members.

Molière's ***Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme***, preferably a Bordas publication

Procedure

On this first day of class, students and teacher will brain-storm to establish ideas and activities that make laughter, or are just funny. Students will be asked to form groups of three, and to work together to make a list of situations, activities, and just words that would make them laugh. The group approach is in order for students to make sure that they have reasons as to why something would make them laugh or just be funny. Individuals sometimes make unilateral, and arbitrary decisions which, in the social context, may not be acceptable. Groups will be advised to include any situation, activity, etc., which all or two of the members believe will be funny or laughable. If they did not agree on something and did not have a majority either, then they would include that in an alternate list.

In addition, students will be asked to include concise and explicit reasons why something or a situation would be funny or laughable. Sometimes one and the same thing may be laughable or funny to different people for different reasons. In spite of that possibility, any situation or activity agreed upon as being funny by two of the three members of each group will be included in the list.

Assignment:

Students will be asked to read the introductory section of Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* in order to have a knowledge of the background that makes the play and other of Molière's comedies of social manners and morals. Teacher will compile and consolidate student ideas on laughable ideas and comedy

Day Two: Juxtaposing Scholar's views about laughable or funny situations with those of students.

Goals of the Lesson

The lesson is intended to reconcile or unify students' ideas and perceptions on laughable or funny situations with those established by scholars—mainly in respect to comedy.

In this process, we intend to establish the basic concepts that determine, describe and prescribe comedy, and give the students basic key words to which to refer while discussing or writing on comedy. In the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute class, for example, professor Kennedy has summarized the aspects of comedy as: what is funny; drama with structural pattern that is comical and/or funny; something rational that deals with irrationality; a dramatic structure that follows Kurt Vonegar's graph with highs and lows; situations in which people of a certain social class are trying desperately to fit in another class; a drama mostly aimed at the exposing the follies of failures of the society as a whole instead of one specific individual; jokes told at the right time, in the right setting, and to the appropriate audience; exposition of a society that needs restructuring, the achievement of which brings celebration.

Objectives of Lesson Plan

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- State what situations, activities and actions are funny and laughable according to student
- State what situations, activities and actions are funny and laughable according to scholars and experts on comedy
- Identify comical or funny situations in plays and novels from an "educated" point of view.

Materials Needed

1. Bordas publication of Molière's *Bourgeois gentilhomme*
2. Teacher-compiled list of student ideas on comedy
3. Teacher hand-out containing brief background on Molière and the comedy of manners and morals
4. Other reference texts which will be needed for other lesson preparations include Marie Canova's *La Comédie*, Maurice Charney's *Comedy High and Low*, Maurice Charney's (ed.) *Comedy: New perspectives*, Denis Holler's *A New History of French Literature*, James Feibleman's *In Praise of*

comedy, and E.M.W. Tillyard's *Nature of Comedy and Shakespeare*. These reference books are mainly for the teacher.

Procedure

First, teacher and class will review the revised student list that state what situations students find funny or comical and why. Each student will have a copy of the list as teacher goes over it with class. Clarification and explanations will be made on points which are not fully or clearly understood by any student.

After looking at students' ideas, the teacher will then instruct the class on ideas that make comedy or are laughable, from the point of view of scholars. Granted the students' views are not far apart from those of scholars, it would be a good starting for a comedy class. This is, however, not to say that students cannot be swayed from their beliefs or ideas. Besides the ideas about comedy acquired in class, such as self-deprecation; trying to fit in a social class in which one is not born into; irrationality within a rational context; deceptions and disguises; betrayal; and clowns, outlines from Charney will also be very useful. His *Comedy High and Low* provides a good analysis of types of comedies. He characterizes and defines comedy as follows:

- Comedy is made of language and rhetoric (which include irony, intentional and unintentional rationality, calculated and spontaneous nonsense, comic aimlessness and stupidity, popular humor, repetition, and joke-telling)
- Comedy is made of comic characters (which include social stereotypes, characters with conventional identification methods through costume; those with arbitrary values and connotations; those using wit to replace virtue and pretense to replace vice; deflated as well as displayed and celebrated pretenders, and extreme and caricature characters)
- Comedy is structured (usually beginning with a startling pronouncement or outrageous situation; comic action is developed by repetition, accumulation and snowballing; comedy ends happily, with feasting, dancing, drinking, revelry and the promise of offspring).
- Comedy is in various forms (a farce has an extravagant plot in which anything can happen, with quirks and eccentrics as characters; in tragic farce, the themes of tragedy have been absorbed and comically transformed; burlesque comedy mocks the moral and stylistic pretensions of tragedy and romance; in comedy of manners, the wits are arbiters of good taste, the butts awkward, stiff, pretentious and social misfits; satiric comedy is intended to show but also control the villain-heroes; festive comedy overcomes all obstacles and is full of festive and carnival spirit)
- In theory and practice, there are seven aspects of the comic hero (imagination of invulnerability and omnipotence; indulgence in wish-fulfillment; engagement in play without ulterior purpose; a realist who celebrates the body and affirms life force; cultivation of comic paranoia—as if laughter protects against hostile reality; representative of the ritual clown of his society, acting as a scapegoat for its taboos; never merges in the tragic hero, but represents an entirely different range of experience).

Whether we analyze the three chosen works of comedy by their language and rhetoric

their structure; their form, or by the characteristics of the comic hero, the goal is to establish the comical aspects of the work. Some of these aspects, in fact, may not readily cause laughter, but the education of students about these characteristics facilitates their understanding of what makes comedy, catalyzes their interest in their interest and evaluative process. Students will be provided a summary list with the characteristics offered by Charney. It will be for the teacher to determine what aspects of comedy to use to establish comic situations, actions and characters in each text.

Specifically about Molière and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, it is especially important to stress that “the painting of satiric pictures of morals and manners of that time constitutes the essential interest of this comedy and reveals itself throughout the play”, according to Jean Thoroval the editor of the Bordas publication. The would-be-gentleman is a representation of the nouveau-riche of the merchant class who had nothing better to do with their wealth except to buy titles and to emulate the nobles. As obvious from the play, most of them were fleeced by the nobles and other trades-men as they tried to fit themselves into the society by such means as hosting parties for nobles, buying clothes fit for the nobles, paying for education in order to fit in social and cultural functions that define nobility, etc.

Evaluation

To verify as to whether the objectives of the lesson were met, students will be given a sheet with various situation, some funny and based on typical definitions of comedy and some not funny at all. Students will state why they think chosen situations or actions are funny.

Assignment

Students will be asked to read the first 12 pages of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. In addition, they will be expected to do a worksheet on which they will summarize the important actions and activities in each scene, determine which sections are comical and say why—based on the descriptive and prescriptive criteria established in class.

Day Three: Act One through Act Two scene 3. *Introduction of the outrageous and other aspects of Comedy*)

Lesson Goals:

This lesson will bring the students full force with various aspects of comedy, starting with what Charney calls the “introduction of the outrageous”. At the beginning of the play, the dance teacher and the music teacher are preparing for the arrival of M Jourdain to both their classes. The discussion about him shows that they are milking him even as they are doing far too little service for him compared to a situation where they would have sweating in the studio to produce music or dance. Many rapid subsequent actions will also generate the many aspects of comedy as defined and prescribed by the a priori discussed outlines.

Lesson Objectives:

After the completion of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify aspects of comedy to which each scene associates with
- Show how the puffy entrance of M. Jourdain is predicative of the life of the comic hero who imagines himself to be invulnerable and omnipotent.
- Specify why the beginning of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* fits the “the announcement of something outrageous” pattern in identifying comedy aspects.
- Show how comical the dance and song teachers are in their self-interest for the gullible would-be-gentleman who is ready to pay them any amount in order to be schooled in the arts and life of nobility.
- Analyze the comical factors that govern the verbal and then the physical fights between the three teachers, and especially Jourdain’s comic way of bowing out from trying to stop the fight: “You people can beat up each other as much as you want; I am neither going to receive some painful blows nor soil my clothes for your follies.” (My translation).
- Make a short contextual summary and show how it relates to previous actions

Evaluation:

After class discussion to verify if students read and comprehended the assignment, appreciation of specific sections will be done verbally. First, students will be asked to cite specific sections which they found laughable and reasons for this decision. Then teacher will also bring up situations which are obviously comical but have been overlooked by students. Lastly, a worksheet will require students to answer specific questions about all laughable situations, and give reasons why.

Assignment:

Student will be asked to make good notes about what they find to be comical while reading acts 2, scene 3 through scene five. Each student will be required to share their findings during class the next day.

Day Four: Act 2, scene 3 through Act 2, scene 5: The Gullibility and Stupidity of the Would-Be-Gentleman Is a Tickler

Lesson Goals:

Students will be exposed to various facets of comedy in these scenes which mostly disclose the stupidity and gullibility of the main character, M. Jourdain.

Lesson Objectives

After the lesson, students will be able to:

- State the qualities that make M. Jourdain a ridiculous character
- State the actions of his that make him a pompous character trying too hard to fit in a social class to which he was not born
- Relate these activities and actions to the basic rules and prescriptions of comedy
- Make a short contextual summary and show how it relates to previous actions

Materials Needed

An analytical sheet on which students will have to provide information based on reading of the assigned section, about the caricature nature of the gentleman at learning the alphabet; his stupidity and gullibility in believing that a philosopher actually knows how to receive physical blows, and his naivety and self-aggrandizement by his soaking in all the flattery and paying out all the money he is carrying for those words of flattery.

Procedure

After discussing the reading with students and checking for comprehension and questions, teacher will then ask individual students to read out their prepared work sheets dealing with contextual questions and analytical exercises. Depending on the size of the class, all or only a few students will complete this process.

Objectives

At the end of the lesson, each student will be able to:

- State what they find personally amusing and comical
- Appreciate how even more comical the session between the philosophy teacher and Jourdain (after the fight) is. The would-be-gentleman apologizes to the philosophy teacher for all the blows he has received from the other two teachers, but the philosophy teacher says: "It's nothing. A philosopher knows how to receive anything in the proper manner" (including blows!) And then three more hilarious activities take place between them. First, Jourdain finds out that he has been talking in prose all his life, but then turns around to reject the poem which the philosopher has written for him (to give the woman he has a crush on). The philosopher has no other option, but to offer this idiot the option of sending syntactically incorrect and nonsensical sentences to this woman. Secondly, the imagination of a middle-aged man learning the alphabet and being told how to shape the lips, where to put the tongue, etc., is very comical. Lastly, we find him being fleeced by the three young tailors who have brought his new outfit, and who call him by every possible nobility title –each getting some money for his flattery.
- Project the character of the philosophy teacher within the context of the French society then
- Discuss the (in)sincerity of the boy tailors in their praise of M. Jourdain .
- Make a short contextual summary and show how it relates to past actions

Evaluation

Based on the individual reports in class, teacher will determine whether students understand the prescribed aspects of comedy. All students' work will also be a measuring meter for this process.

Assignment

Students will be asked to read Acts 3, scenes 1 through 3, and also fill out a contextual questionnaire on what he or she has read.

Day Five: The Women in M. Jourdain's House ridicule him: the house maid laughs at his clothes, his fencing and dancing while his wife makes fun of all that as well as his stupidity in letting Dorante keep borrowing money which he certainly will not pay back (Act 3, scenes 1-3)

Lesson Goals:

Act three starts to bring the reader into the household of the gentleman, and start the exposition of the dirty laundry. First of all the relation between Jourdain and the giggly Nicole is nothing like one between a master and a subordinate. Nicole bursts out laughing when she sees how comically her master is dressed. All the threat from Jourdain will not stop her. Then he tries to teach the servant the little fencing he has learned, only to have the little woman push him almost to his fall, at which point he excuses his clumsiness by saying the servant had skipped one step. Then he quickly finds out that he cannot keep up with his dance steps either. The only thing he seems to fascinate Nicole with is how to say "U", but his pedagogic method is very poor. In scene three, his wife rants at him for lending money to people who will never pay him back. He retorts that these nobles are doing him a favor by borrowing from him. Could he do any less for an honorable who calls him his dear friend? The very perceptive wife tells him he's never going to get back the money, just as the noble man is coming again, "to borrow some more money." This tells a lot about the life of the nobility who, at Molière's time were leaches on

the rich middle class. It is also in this section that the students will encounter the sub-plot involving the love between Jourdain's daughter. She actually loves Cleonte the servant, whom Jourdain spites because of his social class, and wants to marry off his daughter to the same leach nobleman who owes him money. These situations are satirical, instructive and funny.

Objectives

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- State what they find personally amusing and comical
- Provide a short critical view of the relation of the women in Jourdain's house with him.
- Provide an analytical view of Jourdain's schooling up to this point
- Show how Molière, according to Meredith's theory of comedy, is juxtaposing the stupidity and folly of the male against the perceptive and sensible nature of the woman
- Provide basic information that is funny but also shows the progressive nature of the gullibility and stupidity of Jourdain.
- Form an opinion as to how the sub-plot of the love affair the gentleman's daughter will progress.
- Make a short contextual summary and show how it relates to previous actions

Material Needed:

Text

Guide or Notes on comedy as prepared by teacher

Procedure

Most of the scenes in this section lend themselves to dramatization or at least reading out loud in class with as much gesture as possible. After the reading by selected students or volunteers, teacher will lead discussion to make sure that all outline objectives are covered.

Evaluation

Students will be asked to write short paragraphs, each demonstrating that the above-stated objectives have been met.

Assignment:

For the next day's lessons students will be asked to read Act 3, scenes 4 through seven.

In addition, a sheet with contextual questions will have to be done in order to help the student understand more of what he or she is reading.

Day Six: Jourdain is Dorante's milking cow and Madame Jourdain smells something fishy: Act 3, scenes 4-7

Lesson Goals

The lesson will reveal the growing wisdom and prudence of the women in the play. As observed in act 3, by Madame Jourdain, the noble man Dorante was probably coming back to Jourdain to borrow some more money. In fact, that is the sole, though disguised purpose of Dorante's visit in scene four, where he coaxes Jourdain into lending him more money while promising to pay him back and to do him a favor by talking well about him at the royal court. Madame Jourdain tells her husband, "You are the milking cow

of this man.” She sees through this man who is ruining her husband, even as he pretends to care and brags to Jourdain that he can get the money somewhere else. This section will also reveal the plot in which this same man is double-dealing by deceiving Jourdain that he is taking gifts to a countess with whom Jourdain is in love; he is actually wooing the woman for himself, using all the gifts from Jourdain. The discussion between Dorante and Jourdain about this is overheard by Madame Jourdain who sends Nicole to eavesdrop some more, but Nicole gets a slap from Jourdain. Madame Jourdain also responds very rudely when Dorante asks about her daughter; she knows that he would mainly use her. She would like her daughter to marry Cleonte, a person of same social status. She tries to speedily advance this cause by sending the housemaid Lucile to find Cleonte so that she can give her daughter to him without the husband’s knowledge or approval. Lucile is only too pleased to do this, not only to please her mistress but also for her own selfish reason: If Cleonte marries Lucile, then Coville who is inseparable from Cleonte will marry her and they all will be a happily married pair. All these activities and interactions are comical.

Lesson Objectives

Upon the completion of the lesson, students will be able to:

- State what they find personally to be comical and amusing
- Show that the women in the play, though still powerless in some ways, are more reasonable than the men, especially in regard to the would-be-gentleman
- Make a limited comparison of the way of life of the nobles and the middle class in medieval France.
- Highlight the humorous statements made to Jourdain by his wife, such as, “you are the milking cow of that man”; “Are you learning how to dance for when you can no longer walk?”
- Show how the resource-less nobleman—representing all nobility—has learned how to sweet-talk the middle class and coax the rich into giving them “loans” which will probably never be paid back
- Give a critical summary of the progression of the love-affair sub-plot wherein M. Jourdain is against Cleonte, but Madame Jourdain is arranging for the marriage.
- Relate each of these objectives to an aspect that defines comedy
- Make a short contextual summary and show how it relates to previous actions

Materials Needed

Text

Prepared questionnaire by teacher to help students meet the objectives

Procedure

Teacher will begin class by questioning students to find out if there were difficulties in reading and comprehension. After that, chosen sections—those exhibiting meaningful information and those most demonstrative of comedy characteristics—will be read out loud in class. Students will then be asked to do an appreciation sheet with questions directly linked to the objectives of the lesson

Evaluation

Both the contextual and analytical questionnaires will be reviewed by teacher to determine how well students have comprehended the reading and how well they can relate actions and activities to prescriptions and characteristics of comedy.

Assignment

Students will read Act 3, scenes 8 through 10, and do a contextual as well as analytical questionnaire.

Day Seven: The Ballet of Misunderstanding. Repetition, imitation and role-reversal produces a comical situation (Acts 3, scenes 8 through 10)

Objectives of Lesson:

Lesson will give more information to students about the dual love affair between Cleonte and the daughter of the gentleman, and between Lucile the maid and Covielle. An observation of decorum had made the gentleman's daughter go by Cleonte without saying a word, and that led to a misinterpretation of the situation by Cleonte. When Lucile goes as a messenger for Madame Jourdain to find Cleonte to get married to the girl, she is received with cold shoulders, and Lucile does not understand why Cleonte tells her to get lost. Covielle also tells Lucile to get out of his sight. The reception of Lucile is rude but funny because neither the audience nor Lucile was expecting that.

While left with Covielle, Cleonte cannot hold his tears over (false) belief that his love has deserted him. The most difficult thing now seems to be how to get her out of his mind because he loves nothing else in the world. First of all they, each talk about the infidelity, ungratefulness of his loved one for whom they have sacrificed a lot, and put in a lot of time. Cleonte believes that the Count Dorante who has been borrowing money from M. Jourdain is actually the one for whom the girl has an eye. He asks Covielle to state all the bad things about the girl so that he can start to hate, instead of love, her. Everything that Covielle says, however, only fuels Cleonte's love for the girl. So if his love has small eyes, they are still full of fire; if she has a big mouth, the mouth is sexier and more attractive than small mouths; if she is not very tall, she can then be easily taken by her man; if she speaks without thinking, she still has a lot of grace in the way she speaks; her conversation is very charming; if she is always serious, she is just behaving as a non-flirtatious woman who opens up only to her one and only lover. Ironically, Cleonte believes that the fact that he cannot stop loving this girl is the reason why his vengeance will be very striking—to hate her and to desert her all pretty and perfect!

The two pairs meet. At first, the males decide not to respond to the women's pleas. Covielle decides to imitate Cleonte, and this begins the ballet of misunderstanding. When finally Nicole asks if her not saying anything to Cleonte that morning was the issue, Cleonte agrees, and call her unfaithful, and tells her he is breaking up with her first, before she has the chance to do same to him. Covielle echoes his friend's decision—to break up with Lucile too. Nicole tries to explain about the morning, but each time she starts a sentence, Cleonte disrupts her by calling her a name. The two men begin to leave and the women follow them, pleading for the men just to listen, while they men keep responding with insulting words. When finally the women get fed up, Lucille says, "Then keep your thoughts and do whatever pleases you." As the women turn and walk away, they men start to follow them, asking to hear the explanation, at which point it is the women's turn to belittle the men. The women turn around and start to go and the men follow them again; as the women continue to go, Cleonte finally says, "Alright, infidels, go, and I will go far from you and die of heartache," at which Nicole and Lucile immediately turn around and say "Where are you two going?" (My translation) They are surprised to hear this and Cleonte says they are going to die because of the cruelty and infidelity of the two women, since the two women have refused to clarify the situation about the morning. This cannot be farther from the truth, given that the two men started the whole situation by accusing the women of infidelity and refusing to

listen to them. With one phrase, Lucile explains the situation: an old aunt who would have taken it dishonorable for a young woman to talk to a man on the street was near, and she had to follow the rules of decorum. That settles the whole problem between the two pairs of lovers, and the ballet ends with both pairs looking at each other, the men saying how a single word from their lovers had lightened the load on them. The alternating intransigence of each pair, and then the alternating resilience of the other pair create a stage choreography which many critics call the ballet of imitation.

Lesson Objectives:

After the lesson, students will be able to:

- State what they find personally amusing and comical
- Appreciate the developing love affair sub-plot within the context of the structure of classical comedy
- Point out how a little incidents can create very dramatic situations
- Point out how the male is mostly portrayed as stupid and self-destructive while the female is more reasonable and understands life and the society better
- Hypothesize on the probability of the success of the relationship between Nicole and Cleonte, given the M. Jourdain's tenacity against it and the possibility of other misunderstandings between the couple
- Make a short contextual summary and show how it relates to previous actions

Procedure:

These are good scenes to be read out and dramatized. The comic aspects of this section are found not only in the words of the characters, but in especially their choreographed back and forth movement during which time the couples alternately plead for the other to listen. After the reading by volunteers, teacher will clarify sentences and situations which need to be explained.

Evaluation:

A contextual and analytical questionnaire will be completed by students as part of an evaluation process. Also, the dramatic reading will serve as a yard stick in determining not only the understanding of the context but also in the conscientious action of class actors to bring out the comical situations in their dramatic reading in class.

Assignment

Student will be assigned Act 3, scenes 11 through 13

Day 8: Covielle promises to undo the M. Jourdain's determination not to let her daughter Nicole marry his Cleonte, and Mme Jourdain who does not want a gentleman for a son-in-law is determined to go against her husband's wishes too.

Goals of Lesson:

This lesson advances further the love sub-plot, and highlights the theoretical concept in classical comedy that an on-going love affair between a young couple is usually thwarted or frustrated by one or both parents or even a pair of parents. In this case, it is mainly the bombastic middle-class gentleman who is the obstacle between her daughter's and Cleonte's marriage. When Cleonte comes and formally asks for the hand of Lucile, at Mme Jourdain's request, M. Jourdain asks him if he is a gentleman. Believing that honesty will give him favor in Jourdain's eyes, Cleonte answers truthfully and readily: "Many people hesitate when asked this question, but I will truly tell you that I am definitely not a gentleman. I was born of parents with humble but honorable duties, and I myself have been in the service for my country." "There you go; that's the point," retorts the would-be-gentlemen. "My daughter is not for you!" (My translation).

While it is funny to see the suitor stopped, cold in his steps, it is even funnier to hear and see M. Jourdain disclaim his heritage. His wife reminds him that both their parents were merchants, but he curses at her, telling her that his parents were noble. In a satiric manner, Mme Jourdain tells him that there are a lot of gentlemen who are idiots (an one could add, like Jourdain himself). The servant Lucile gets into the conversation intimating that she knows a gentleman in her village who has poor manners

and is a hoghead. To end this discourse, the gentleman's wife states: "I will not have for a son-in-law someone who will insult me and whose children will be ashamed to call me their grandmother; nor one who will come to visit me with an entourage and not be able to say hello to the neighbors." In short, she would prefer for a son-in-law a man to whom she can say at any time "Be here!" "Have dinner with me at such and such a time!" (My translation). Her husband tells her those are the statements of a trifling fool.

The sub-plot continues with the appearance of Covielle and Cleonte. Covielle seems to see through Jourdain and tells his friend that he is unscrupulous to have played into Jourdain's game of nobility. Cleonte says he did not believe that one would have to prove his noble heritage in order to be the son-in-law of Jourdain. He laughs and comforts him, saying he has a plan that will fool Jourdain, a plan he has conceived based on a foreign friend who visits from time to time, and one he will tell Cleonte later on. This is the plot that will culminate in the marriage of the two young couples, with everybody's knowledge of who they are except the duped Jourdain who will believe her daughter is being married to a Turkish prince.

Objectives of Lesson

After the lesson, students will be able to:

- State what they find personally comical and laughable
- Comment on the very comical situation in which M. Jourdain claims he was born a noble and totally disclaims his heritage of merchant parents.
- Highlight the irony in Jourdain's response to Cleonte's sincerity about his heritage
- Make a critical analysis of the contrasting views and recollections of M. and Mme Jourdain about their heritages
- Make an analysis of the direction of the progressing sub-plot, especially in regards to what Colvielle has in mind
- Make a short contextual summary and show how it relates to previous actions

Materials needed

Text

Teacher-prepared contextual and analytical questionnaire on this section related to the objectives stated above

Procedure

After out-loud reading in class, students will be given time to ask questions on context. After clarification on contextual inferences, teacher will guide students through both the contextual and analytical questions.

Evaluation

A correctly completed questionnaire on context and critical analysis will be the basis for the determination of student comprehension.

Assignment:

Students will be asked to read Act 3, scenes 14 and 15

Day Nine: Jourdain's Pursuit of Nobility Catalyses His Duping and Makes a Fool of him (Acts 3, Scenes XIV and XV)

Lesson Goals:

This lesson will continue to expose M. Jourdain's stupidity and gullibility as he continues to chase his gentleman's title.

In scene XIV, Jourdain is bragging about his love for nobility—how nothing is as beautiful as being a nobility or being with nobility, and how he would have liked to be deprived of two fingers and be born a count of marquis. At this point, a servant announces the arrival of a count (Dorante) and a lady with him.

The parasite noble-man Dorante continues with his leeching on, and duping of, Jourdain. The pretty widow Dorimène whom Dorante brings to Jourdain's house is supposed to be Jourdain's lover. But Dorante has used all the gifts from Jourdain to get the woman for himself-- and to ice the cake-- to bring her to Jourdain's for a feast which he claims to be the provider. (He states that Dorimène is the one who is against his going to hers house or his house for him to shower her with love). To the contrary, Jourdain has been duped into believing that he is having the feast in honor of his lover. Before Jourdain comes to meet his guests, the conversation between Dorante and Dorimène establishes the relationship between the two. Dorimène complains about how Dorante has entrapped her with all the gifts, and now she does not feel like rejecting him. She does not especially like to be taken to a stranger's house; besides, she feels pushed to the point of no-return in this situation, and tries to explain to Dorante that it's always hard for two individuals to live in complete harmony.

Lesson Objectives:

After the lesson, students will be able to:

- State what they personally find to be funny and comical
- Make personal and analytical observations about Jourdain's ironic chase of nobility who only use him more and more for his resources.
- Make an objective analysis of Dorimène's reasons for being with Dorante
- Establish the prude aspects of Dorimène
- Make a short contextual summary and show how it relates to previous actions
- Suggest, according to their imagination of behavior, action and reaction, the way to dramatically read out this section

Materials Needed:

Text

Teacher prepared questionnaire on contextual and critical material

Procedure:

These are only two scenes and offer enough time for out-loud reading and dramatization.

Various parts will be assigned to students the day before for dramatic reading preparation. Students not assigned parts will still have to do their reading so as to be aware of contents and actions, and to be ready for other class activities.

After dramatic reading, students will be asked to criticize the way people read, giving their own opinion as to how a certain phrase, sentence, or whole section should have been read. This will just be another way to see people's imagined ways about certain situations, given that both the students and teacher are not expert actors.

Evaluation:

It would really be interesting to find out what students suggestions for the dramatized reading in various situations would be. In addition, teacher prepared questionnaire on context and critical work will be completed by each student.

Assignments:

Students will be asked to read Act 4, scenel and start related questionnaire

Day Ten: Dorante completely takes over and dominates Jourdain in his own house; in spite of this maneuvering, Jourdain is just about to have close conversations with Dorimène when Mme Jourdain comes home and he has to “lie” that the party was made by Dorante for Dorimène (Act 4, scene I)

Lesson goals:

This lesson introduces some very interesting and comical situations. It is important for students to follow the undoing of the would-be-gentleman.

In an earlier scene, M. Jourdain had asked his wife to go visit her sister and to stay for a while. The suspicious woman had sent Nicole to eavesdrop on a conversation in which Dorante and her husband were planning this reception for Dorimène.

The most comical aspect is probably the fact that Dorante completely takes over the management and direction of activities in Jourdain's household. He tells the servants to serve the food, tell the musicians and other entertainers to put on their show, asks for more wine to be served so that people can become merrier. While that mostly takes away Jourdain's authority in his house, it also minimizes his ability to communicate one on one with Dorimène. He manages, however, to have exchanges of words with Dorimène, who is getting interested in him, and makes the statement “You excite (tickle) me”, and Jourdain answers, “Yes, I can tickle your heart,” just as Mme Jourdain gets home and breaks up the party, and the husband has to unfortunately “lie” that the party was arranged by Dorante to entertain the lady. In a sense, this is true and false. To him, it was his opportunity to have a lover, but to Dorante, this was another way to use the fool. To Dorimène, it was Dorante's doing, which was true but she was also getting interested in Jourdain.

This lesson also brings in an aspect of comedy which involves the celebration of life. The drinking songs are about love and living. When one drinks, one's inhibitions are lifted and love is let lose between

courting couples. In addition, it is good to drink and be happy because life does not go on forever. Though this is not yet the end of the play, this action is justifiable here because, as a background to this comical situation, it sorts of reaffirms that dramatic comedy is life itself to be lived.

Lesson Objectives:

After the lesson, students will be able to:

- Show how the would-be-gentleman is continuously fleeced by Dorante
- Discuss the sly nature of Dorante in his ability to use Jourdain even to the point of taking charge over the household affairs for a day
- Analyze the dilemma of Jourdain when, at the moment he is getting closer to Dorimène, his wife returns and he has to lie to cover up, but does not really know that he was actually used.
- State all the actions and activities that are comical in this section.

Materials:

Text

Teacher-prepared questionnaire

Procedure:

This is also a good section for out-loud reading. In spite of all the complications that are involved in dramatizing this section, an effort should be put into highlighting the various situations in which Jourdain finds himself. The importance of the drinking song beyond its carousal effects should be

analyzed by teacher for the benefit of the class. After teacher's explanation, the dramatic readings, and questions, students will be asked to complete teacher questionnaire on contents and analysis.

Evaluation:

Teacher will determine if students understand context and critical aspects by the oral responses to questions in class, the manner in which the dramatic reading is carried out and how the rest of the class responds to that. Finally, the successful completion of the daily teacher-prepared questionnaire is an indication that the lesson's objectives and goals have been met.

Assignment:

For the following day's lesson, students will be asked to read Act 4 scene 2 and to start the questionnaire

Day Eleven: Mme Jourdain claims her rights and that of all the women (Act 4, sc. 2)

Goals of lesson:

This lesson will bring students face to face with a character declaring an important theme in comedy—that of the role/rights of all women. We have so far seen Mme Jourdain as an archetype—Edith in the American comedy show *Archie Bunker*—who belittles the husband and makes fun of everything which the husband thinks is important and embarks on accomplishing or achieving it. The theory posited by

Meredith and others declare the society full of men who carry out activities and actions of follies which need the intellect of women to rectify. The cousin theory talks about irrational actions (again carried out especially by men) and the rational correcting actions (mostly by women) to create a balance.

In the last lesson, Mme Jourdain catches her husband close to Dorimène, saying, “I can tickle/excite your heart”. As she breaks up the party, she rails at her husband for sending her to her sister’s for dinner so that he could have his lover Dorimène at home; insults Dorante for leeching on her husband and now bringing women for him to her house, and shames Dorimène for being a less-than-honorable lady. Her husband is not able to convince her that the Count Dorante arranged the party for the noble lady Dorimène. Dorimène who was just about to be tickled by Jourdain regains her senses and reproaches Dorante for having brought her there. As she leaves, the count unsuccessfully restrains her and goes chasing her. Back in the house, even under threats of having her head smashed with all the meal that the guests have left behind, Mme Jourdain continues to mock at her husband and the nobles who leech on him. Finally, she says, “They are my rights that I am defending, and all the women will be on my side.”!

Objectives of Lesson:

After the lesson, students will be able to:

- Make a short contextual summary of activities
- Analyze statements made by the four characters in the lesson, especially Jourdain and his wife.
- Relate actions and words in this section to modern shows in which women rightly belittle men
- Make a critical statement about Mme Jourdain’s rights and her claim that all women will be for her and their rights.

Materials:

Text

Teacher-prepared questionnaire

Excerpts (films or script) from modern shows with scenes comparable to this section.

Procedure:

Teacher will review the basic concepts in Meredith as well as ideas from others about comedy and women in a society of men of follies. Since the lesson consists only of one scene, class will analyze individual speeches, word for word and pull out the funny and comical sentences and actions. After teacher has explained everything and answered arising questions, students will do questionnaire with questions tied to objectives above.

Evaluation:

Given that this has a very current and controversial topic, this should be an exciting lesson, generating high student involvement in discussion and provision of modern situations. In addition to realizing this response, teacher will expect students to successfully complete questionnaire.

Assignment:

Students will read Act 4, scenes 3 through 5 (including all the ballet entrees)

Day Twelve: The Unraveling of Covielle's Plot to Trick M. Jourdain and Make Him Let Lucile Marry Cleonte {Act 4, scenes 3 through 5, (Including Ballet Entrees 1 through 5)}

Lesson Goals:

The first goal of the lesson is to show students how M. Jourdain can easily be deceived, especially when it comes to making him socially above and beyond his bourgeoisie class. Covielle with whom he deals everyday disguises himself, and visits Jourdain and tells him everything that he likes to hear about his heritage. He claims he knew Jourdain while he was still a child and that his father was a nobleman. To answer Jourdain's question why everyone else knew his father as a merchant, Covielle tells him that this is a big lie, and that is only because his dad was an outgoing person who bought things for people wherever he went. Covielle goes on to declare that after a long trip around the world, he had come home, and he came to visit Jourdain to announce to him a very important news item—that the Turkish Emperor was visiting, and would not only like to meet Jourdain, but above all, to declare the love of his son—the Turkish Prince—for her daughter, Lucile. Before Jourdain can savor all this wonderful news, Cleonte adds icing to the cake, saying that before his daughter could marry the Turkish Prince, he Jourdain would be made a Turkish noble with the title of Mamamouchi--in French, a medieval lord. Jumping for joy, Jourdain wants to go and thank the Turkish Emperor for all this honor he is bestowing on him, but disguised Colvielle tells him he does not have to, for the Grand Turk himself is coming to him!

In the next scene, the Grand Turk is none other than Cleonte, the lover of Lucile, and rejected by Jourdain because of his heritage. Also disguised, he is able to deceive Jourdain into believing that he is the Grand Turk—the emperor. Aside, Covielle, upon seeing Dorante the gentleman leech, laughs with joy at the success he and his friend are having in the disguise, and what a dupe Jourdain is. Colvielle also asks Dorante to help them in the on-going action. Dorante witnesses a long ceremony in which Jourdain is made a Turkish noble by singing Turks and a Mufti, all fake of course!

Lesson Objectives:

After the lesson, students will be able to

- Appreciate the introduction of the traditional aspect of comedy dealing with disguise and masks
- Show how Jourdain would do anything for nobility of any type and nationality
- Criticize the gullible nature of Jourdain (incremental assessment)
- State all the comical and funny phrases and activities.

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Material:

Text

Teacher-prepared questionnaire on context and analysis.

Procedure:

Since this is a rather lengthy and sometimes inconsequential section, a quick reading will be done. All the Turkish sections will be skipped, as they are supposedly translated into French. The main focus will be to find those phrases and actions which actually bestow the title on to Jourdain, and what he supposedly is able to do as a Paladin. After the reading, students will be allowed time to ask questions about context. Then they will be asked to complete the prepared questionnaire.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on their successfully completed questionnaire.

Assignment:

Students will be asked to read Act 5, scenes 1 through 5, and to start to complete their questionnaire

Day 13: In short successive scenes, Jourdain's stupidity and gullibility are obvious as he is the center of attention, everyone except his family already aware that he is duped, but continue to give him false respect. (Act 5, scenes 1 through 5)

Lesson Goals:

The main goal in this lesson is to expose the continued and increased level of Jourdain's stupidity and gullibility. In each scene, something happens that makes the audience more and more surprised at Jourdain's actions. It is laughable, but it is also sorrowful when one sees Jourdain being ruined to the point where his wife is chasing him to stop him from spending their last penny on his dreams.

In scene 1, his wife tries to find out why he is in such a ridiculous attire. She asks, "Who bundled you up this way?" He calls her impertinent for talking disrespectfully to a Mamamouchi. But she gets nowhere trying to find out from him what that means—because he repeats the "foreign" words that were used in making him Paladin to his wife. When he gets to the word "paladin", the wife thinks he means "baladin", and asks him, "Are you still of the age to dance ballets?" The continued explanation in jargons, according to Mme Jourdain, leads no where, and as the man takes off singing "Hou la ba...", the woman yells out, "At last! my God, my husband has become totally insane." In turn, Jourdain tells her to shut up and to respect the Mamamouchi. But his wife senses insanity and wants him stopped before he spends their last penny.

In scene 2, Dorimène announces that she has decided that they hastily get married before he is ruined by buying her all the daily courting gifts; little does she know that it is Jourdain who is being ruined. In scene 3, Dorante and Dorimène come to "congratulate" Jourdain on his title and the planned marriage of his daughter to the son of the Turkish emperor. He asks Dorimène to come back sometimes to his house because she can acquire his heart any time. In scene 4, Dorante and Dorimène turn to Cleonte, disguised as the son of the Grand Turk (known to Dorante) and tell him that they are coming to pay respect to him as the son-in-law to Jourdain. Colvielle (still disguised) interprets. In scene 5, Jourdain informs her daughter to come and give her hand to the gentleman who is asking to marry her. The daughter, obeying the dad, asks him, "Is this a comedy you are putting on?" Jourdain answers, "No. It's not a comedy. This is the husband I am giving you." The girl first tells the dad that she does not want to get married, but then realizing that it is actually her lover Cleonte in disguise, she changes, "It is true

that you are my dad, and I owe you total obedience; it is for you to get rid of me the way you want.” (My translation)

Lesson objectives

After the lesson, students will be able to:

- Show how Mrs Jourdain continues as the rational female while the husband follows the destructive male path to the point of ruining the family
- Show how Dorimène is also following the female instinct to prevent the man she is going to marry from being ruined (even though we know that Dorante has no wealth of his and has been out to leech on Jourdain)
- Show how Jourdain may actually be going from stupidity to insanity (willing to spend up the family wealth for any title; the only person so far not to realize the trick being played on him by Cleonte and Colvielle, etc.)
- Compare and contrast the engagement and marriage process in Molière’s society and today’s society
- Discuss the irony in Lucile being totally obedient to the father and marrying the person he wants her to marry
- Bring out miscommunication between characters as an aspect of comedy

Materials:

Text

Questionnaire

Procedure:

Dramatic reading of each scene will be done, followed by analysis, guided by teacher questions. Students will be allowed time for questioning and then they will complete their contextual and critical questionnaire

Evaluation:

Teacher will look at students' ability to complete contextual and critical questions within the framework of the objectives above.

Assignment:

Students will read for the next class session Act 5 scenes 6 and 7

Day 14: The Complete Duping of the Would-Be-Gentleman (Act 5, scenes 6 and 7)

Objectives of the lesson:

In this lesson, the student encounters the complete duping of Jourdain. First of all, his wife, who has opposed his giving his daughter over to the disguised Cleonte, whom she describes as a carnival clown, realizes that it is Cleonte. She had been more belligerent about this because Dorante was pushing for it and telling her that he was doing it because of the love and friendship that he had for the family. After telling Dorante to mind his business, she agrees to the marriage because Colvielle (disguised) pulls her apart and tells her that her son-in-law-to-be is actually Cleonte disguised.

This scene culminates in the ending of the love plot in classical comedy in which lovers who are prevented from marrying each other by parents finally have the opportunity and consent to do so. In this case, it is at the expense of M. Jourdain. His stupidity, gullibility, and his follies all contribute to his giving up his daughter to the person he did not intend to marry her to. On the other hand, if Mme Jourdain has seen the family lose most of its wealth, she is happy that her daughter is married to the

person she would like her to get married to: a son-in-law who will not visit her with an entourage, one who will be able to greet the neighbors on a visit—not a nobility.

The last scene presents the Ballet of Nations, which celebrates (as the structural theory of comedy suggests) the rejuvenation of the society and life. As the celebration goes on, however, one can only wonder how M Jourdain is going to react when he finds out that he is no real Mamamouchi after all, and that his real son-in-law is the commoner he had rejected, not the son of the Turkish Emperor. He is certainly included in the ceremony physically, but will he willingly remain part of the celebration upon realizing that his son-in-law has duped him?

Lesson Objectives:

After the lesson, students will be able to

- Relate the ending to specific aspects or theories of comedy
- State specific situations of personal interest
- Say in a few paragraphs why this play is a comedy.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on how well they respond to questions which are all tied to specified objectives.

Days 15 through 28: Molière's *Le Misanthrope*

The lesson plans for *Le Misanthrope* is not intended to be a comprehensive daily plan like the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Instead, I am suggesting a general guideline that can be developed and implemented by

individual teachers. I am suggesting a two-week period for the curriculum within an encapsulated framework which can be broken down in the same manner as that of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.

Lesson goals.

Unlike le bourgeois in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, Alceste in *Le Misanthrope* hates a lot of things about the society and people and does not really want to be part of it. His main fault, albeit at the very end of the drama, is his love affair with Célimène. However, it is well established that this is a comedy, not only per definition and description, but also by the sheer presence of funny and comical situations that create giggles, grins, and laughter.

Le Misanthrope does not exhibit the typical structure of comedy, which begins with the announcement of the outrageous and ends with communal celebration and inclusion. To the contrary, the drama opens with an argument or discourse over the phoniness of people of nobility, and ends with the protagonist taking to the desert to escape humanity and all its social and moral evils. But some critics see Alceste's exit not so much as an act of self-exclusion as a moral stance of idealism which, of necessity, pricks the conscience of the community to sympathize with, and symbolically and conscientiously join him. Thus, we can argue that the structural ending is not an aberration from the typical.

Frye posits that the traditional comedy, instead of titling the drama with the main character's name as in traditional tragedy, uses the name of a social ill that is an embodiment of all the others. Consequently, we have *Le Misanthrope* or *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, instead of *Macbeth* or *Hamlet*. Of course, rules are occasionally broken or bent, and Aristophanes names his comedy *Lysistrata*, using the name of the protagonist. Both *Le Bourgeois* and *Le Misanthrope* follow this rule while *Candide* would be viewed as an aberration.

Rationality versus irrationality as a theme features in *Le Misanthrope* over and over. The most outstanding example is the main theme of the drama—Alceste, the Misanthrope is helplessly in love with Célimène, the flirt who uses men and makes promises to each of them. Though she seems to truly love Alceste at the end, the fear of living with him without the rest of the society is both irrational and unthinkable.

Of course, Alceste's observation of the society and all its faults causes some laughter not so much because those faults are funny to take note of as it for the fact that this idealist seems to have fallen from out of another planet where social, ethical and moral standards mock at those in the world. Not surprisingly, therefore, Alceste's convictions about ethics, morals, sincerity, relationship, etc., are a source of laughter not only from the society that he is out to change, but also his close friend Philinte, who unsuccessfully advises him on several social and legal issues. Of course, the audience is bound to chuckle, smile and even giggle at this very intelligent individual who thinks that by himself he can change human nature and all the negative practices. Some of the specific things that Alceste complains about are:

- Phoniness and fawning at the powerful even for the wrong reasons. In Act 1 he reproaches his friend Philinte for succumbing to the tickle of a man he has hardly known; this is exaggerated politeness and hypocrisy. As an example, Alceste refuses to go and personally plead his case before a judge (which may mean some bribery) instead of publicly defending it in a corrupt court where he knows for sure that he will lose against a clearly dishonest adversary. His friend Philinte not only warns him of the foolhardiness in taking such a position, but also expresses his surprise and astonishment at the fact that his misanthropic friend would fall for a young flirt like Célimène. Alceste defies his friend's advice and puts his practice of honesty by telling the nobleman Oronte not to ridicule himself by publishing his rather poor poetry. He is standing up to his principles of honesty, sincerity, and truthfulness.
- Slander and lying are also social evils to Alceste. In Act 2, Alceste confronts Célimène about letting people to slander others in order to flatter her. This is at the same time that some of her suitors, including two cousins visit with the intent of forcing her to choose there and then.
- Alceste hates plots against other people. Immediately after Arsinoé loses the "battle" with Célimène in which she jealously and hypocritically make up slanders and other things that people are saying about Célimène, to which Célimène responds in like manner, Arsinoé tries to entrap Alceste into promising to marry her—by using slander against Célimène. Though Alceste refuses to give in to Arsinoé, he succumbs to her request to follow her to her place and get evidence of Célimène's treachery against him.
- The one fault which Alceste has—the love for the coquette Célimène—also makes him the victim of uncontrollable jealousy. This is the case when he gets a note from Arsinoé, in Célimène's own writing, in which the latter expresses her love for Oronte—the author of the poem for which Alceste has been taken to for "vilely" criticizing the poem. To express his jealousy, he revenges by asking Eliante an acquaintance who has been pursuing him, to marry him; then changes right away after getting flimsy explanations about the note from Célimène.

- If Alceste loses in court because he gave his personal opinions about a poem on which he was asked to give his true opinions about, then there is definitely something amiss in the justice system; if Célimène has been double-dealing by expressing her love in writing to other men than Alceste (which is what Alceste truly finds out from those men, then this is true treachery. He however, tries to convince Célimène to marry her, which she would do— if and only when he became a patient and understanding member of the society, a society in which Alceste sees only faults. It is therefore time for him to leave the human society behind him and be a complete misanthrope.

Lesson Objectives:

Based on the above goals to which the students have been exposed, the students will, therefore, be able to:

- Analyze the drama according to the classical dramatic structure
- Explain why there is no traditional festivity of inclusion at the end
- Make a critical summary of funny and comical aspects in each lesson according to teacher's plans
- Enumerate the evils which are prevalent in every social class and socialization age-groups.
- Discuss why a one-man revolt against these institutionalized evils is funny
- Discuss the pattern of rational against the irrational, as well as the congruous versus the incongruous

Materials:

The Nouveaux classiques Larousse version of Molière's *Le misanthrope*

Teacher-prepared contextual and analytical questionnaire on each lesson

An outline of 14 lessons based on logically related contextual segments of the text

Critical Material at students' comprehension level

Procedure:

First of all, teacher will break the five Acts of the play into a 14-day lesson, each lesson having specifically identified comical actions or situations. For each day, lessons assigned for reading the previous day will be discussed in class. Certain scenes will be read out loud with possible dramatic effects in class as teacher determines. Teacher can always lecture the class when there is need for explanation and provision of background material. After the completion of each lesson, students will do the contextual comprehension as well as the critical questionnaire prepared by teacher. These are only suggestions which can be changed to fit any teacher's plans. In fact, teachers can totally ignore the suggested procedure; however, the contents as well as the suggested guidelines on aspects of comedy will help in realizing successful analysis and appreciation of the book.

Evaluation:

In most cases, evaluation will determine how well students have comprehended the reading and applied the concepts about comedy to successfully complete the critical analysis section of daily teacher-prepared questionnaire. Teacher who is not able to prepare these questionnaire must devise an alternate method, including asking students to answer the questions provided at the end of each scene in the text, or other using questions found elsewhere and considered good enough for the teacher.

Days 29 to 48: Candide ou l'Optimisme

Candide is a "different" type of comedy which presents the teacher with not only many challenges, but also the opportunities to delve deeper into the reading and search for more meaning. In *Le misanthrope* and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, Molière is not any less philosophical than Voltaire, but one must admit that *Candide* is mostly based on the philosophies of the time— philosophies which are consistently measured against that of Candide's famous teacher Pangloss. A satirical piece, *Candide* possesses many aspects of comedy as provided by critiques, but there are hardly any scenes that produce roaring laughter or even giggles.

Content-wise, *Candide* is characterized by farce; satire; bizarre occurrences, including the resurrection from the dead of many people; people having sex with animals; many fantasy worlds including El Dorado; slapstick; Darwin's the survival of the fittest concept; there are marriages and forceful breakups; corruption and theft, gory scenes of war and other imaginable human sufferings. In fact, these do not represent the typical comical aspects of comedy, and may mostly be classified as black humour.

Structurally, it has love plots, the most important of which is that of Candide and Cugnegonde. In accordance with the tradition of comedy, this love affair is disrupted when Cugnegonde's father finds Candide kissing her, and throws the boy out of the house. They eventually get married, though they do not experience the fantasy bliss that a timely and non-problematic marriage is expected to bring. In fact, when finally Candide has Cugnegonde, he now finds her a withering ugly flower that he is no longer willing to admire. But he marries her, as the structural aspect has to be fulfilled. The corollary of the love structure is the festive ending in which everyone is included. The inclusive reference in *Candide*, however, is strictly about living and fulfilling individual duties in order to live. All the characters have to continue to experience the realities of life, and Candide now has to accept the fact that Cugnegonde is now ugly.

Given that the gory and other not-so-pleasant scenes may be controversial in today's classroom, individual teachers will have to take consideration into planning their lessons or even reading this book at all. If the whole student body in a given class is going to take the AP which has included *Candide* in the reading list, then that will take care of all possible arising problems from parents. On the other hand, if this is not the case, then the teacher must first survey the class to determine if at all to include the book.

The nature of the book, viz, the narrative structure is such that makes reading and comprehension challenging. With too many incidents and co-incidents, too many places, and too many non-causal relationship of events, the reading taxes many readers abilities. But even those who are able to remember and piece together separate events rather easily still find the many incidences in which previously dead people are alive not very convincing. The main job of the teacher here will be to make sure that every student reads and keeps up with the rest of the class, and that those who have problems in relating actions and events as well as actions and places.

In making a daily lesson plan for the book, therefore, the teacher has to give thought to all the situations that make this book different from the first two. In addition, to fulfill the terms of comedy, which in *Candide* are not so much reasons for laughter, the teacher has to make sure that different views such as farce, satire, black humor, etc., are emphasized.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bergson, Henri. "Laughter," in Sypher, Willie. Comedy. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1956.

Bergson basically analyzes situations, characters, and expressions that produce laughter in a comedy. These are mostly ideas that students can digest, and teacher should either make a summary of the essay for the students or read certain parts of it with students.

_____. "écrits et paroles; texts rassemblés par R. M. Mossé Bastildé in Revue Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1957-59.

Canova, Marie-Claude. La Comédie. Paris: Hachette Livre, 1993.

This text is a critical analysis of comedy—what it is; what it is supposed to do, and expected effects on the audience. It also provides a historical perspective. While the text is mostly recommended for the teacher, some items can be reproduced for classroom reading and discussion.

Charney, Maurice. Comedy High and Low: An Introduction to the Experience of Comedy. New York: Peter Lang, 1991.

Charney's book is the most comprehensive source on comedy. It treats the language and rhetoric of comedy, conventions and types of comic characters, the structure of comedy, forms of comedy, and the theory and practice. It is also an easy book and a good resource for students and instructors.

_____. Comedy: New Perspectives Vol 1: New York Literary Forum, Spring 1978.

A collection of articles on comedy, this resource offers some direct analyses and critique on comedy as can be used in the classroom. There are articles on theory, structure, laughter, and other aspects. Teacher can make discretionary use of the articles which relate to what is being taught in class.

Feiblemen, James. In Praise of Comedy. London: Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1939.

This is a necessary resource book for the teacher. It provides a complete history of comedy, from ancient times to the 19th Century; offers some classical theories; looks at the criticism of modern comedy; provides and discusses the meaning of comedy, and provides illustrations from modern comedians. This book will provide theoretical material for both students and instructor.

Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Hollier, Denis, ed. A New History of French Literature. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1989.

A collection of essays on French literature from 778 AD through 1985 this text provides critical analyses of French literature including comedy. Teacher can select material that is suitable and relevant to the classroom situation.

Langer, Susanne. Felling and Form: A Theory of Art. NY: Scribner, 1953

Meredith, George. "An Essay on Comedy," in Sypher, Willie. Comedy. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1956.

Meredith's essay is on the theoretical aspects as well as the characters that make the comedy—cause laughter. The suggestion in this essay is for a more inclusive audience in the middleclass to support comedy. Ideas about comedies in the courts of French and English kings provide historical as well as theoretical concepts that can be shared with students.

Molière. Le Bourgeois gentilhomme. Paris, France: Petits Classiques Bordas, 1970.

This edition by Bordas is excellent for both teachers and students, because it not only is a text, but also a critical and analytical resource which guides readers through and facilitates the critical, comprehension and appreciation process of the text, for teacher and students alike.

Molière. Le Misanthrope. Montrouze, France: Nouveaux Classiques Larousse, 1965.

Comparable to the edition by Bordas, the Nouveaux Classiques directs the reader—student and teacher alike—through comprehension and analytical exercises. It is a good and helpful text for students and teacher.

Roche, Jenny. Comedy Writing. Chicago: NTC Publishing Co., 1999.

Though this is a resource book for people who want to write comedy, I believe that it can also give ideas about analyzing and critiquing comedy. Roche begins by providing readers with all the basics about what makes comedy. This serves, more or less, as a basic theoretical resource book.

Sareil, Jean. ed. Voltaire et la critique. Englewoods, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1966.

It is a collection of critical essays on most of Voltaire's writing, including Candide. I suggest that, while the other essays are selectively read, all those on *Candide* be exhaustively discussed in class.

Tillyard, E.M.W. The Nature of Comedy and Shakespeare. Oxford: U. Press, 1958.

Though the book is mainly about Shakespeare, the critical and theoretical concepts are inclusive of ideas about comedy in general, and are useful in understanding and analyzing classical comedy as in Molière and Voltaire.

Voltaire. Candide. A dual-language version, trans. by Shane Weller. NewYork:Dover Publications, Inc., 1993.

This version is recommended mainly because of the difficulties that students may have in reading the text. For the first time reader, and for the student who is trying French at this level, a quick reference from time to time may make the difference between simple frustration and completely quitting.