TERENCE'S PHORMIO

AS THE BASIS FOR
MOLIÈRE'S LES FOURBERIES DE SCAPIN.

BY HELEN JORDAN

THESIS FOR DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OF ARTS

IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS.
Terence's Phormio as a Basis of Molière's Les Fourberies de Scapin.

A study of Molière's Les Fourberies de Scapin, and of Terence's Phormio, suggests striking similarities in plot, and minor details. The scene of the latter is at Athens, and that of the former is at Naples. The personages and manners which both plays depict, are rather of the ancient than of the modern school. Les Fourberies de Scapin, like Phormio, has a double plot. The two old men go off on different journeys, each leaving his son
in the care of a servant. During thier absence, the young men fall in love with poor girls.

In Phormio, the names of the two old men are Demipho and Chremes, brothers, both of whom have good positions in Athens, and a considerable fortune. Demipho is a miser, and Chremes is a man of weak character, always in terror of his strong minded wife, Vanessastra. Demipho has a son named Antipho, and Chremes, a son called Phaedria, and also by a secret marriage, a daughter in Lemnos by the name of Phania. Demipho, who is aware of his brother's second marriage, has agreed to marry his son to the daughter of Chremes. The latter goes to Lemnos to bring home the girl, and Demipho goes away also on a journey of business. The old men leave their sons at home under the care of Eta, the slave. The young
men, however, have headstrong characters and are difficult to manage. Phaedria falls in love with a slave girl Pamphilia, and Antiphos with a penniless young girl whom he first sees in the street weeping over her mother's dead body. Antiphos wishing to marry the girl, appeals to the parasite Phormio for advice. Phormio tells him that there is a law in Athens which compels the nearest relative of an orphan girl to marry her. He invents a scheme by which Antiphos is made out to be the girl's nearest relative, and the marriage is brought about. No sooner has this taken place, than Antiphos hears of his father's return and is much concerned lest he will be compelled to give up his bride. In the meantime, Phaedria learns that Dorio, the owner of the slave girl Pamphilia, has decided to
sell her. Very much distressed by this news, he
goes to Leta for advice; he is so consoled by the
latter who promises to obtain money by which
Phaedria himself can buy the girl. As a result of
his scheming, Leta goes to Demipho and tells him
that in order to save him the trouble of obtain-
ing a divorce for his son, Phormio has consented to
take the girl for his own wife, on payment of a
certain amount of money. Demipho refuses to part
with so great a sum; but Chremes, anxious to
settle things for his daughter, promises to pay
the amount from revenue derived from his
wife’s estate. Chremes left alone, is considering
how he can find his wife and daughter, who
had left him alone before his arrival there,
when to his utter amazement, Sophronia,
Phaumia’s nurse, comes out of Demipho’s house,
He is still more bewildered when she tells him that his wife is dead, and that his daughter is married to Antiphon. Chremes hastens to tell the joyful news to Demipho, and is overheard by Geta, who in turn relates the facts to Phormio. Then the two old men wish to go back up on their bargain with Phormio, the latter assumes a high hand, and refuses to give up Pharnium. A loud discussion follows, during which Daukiestrata appears, and demands what the trouble is. Phormio tells her to the consternation of Chremes. He further tells of Phaedria's marriage, and the trick by which the money was obtained. This angers Chremes, but he is promptly silenced by his wife, who upholds her son. There is then a general reconciliation. Phormio asks for a good dinner.
as a reward for his services, and they all go into the house.

There are several minor changes in the plot of Les Fourberies de Scapin. Argante and Gironte the two old men, who by the way are not brothers, each have sons named respective ly Octave and Leandre. While their fathers are absent, Octave falls in love with, and marries a penniless young girl called Hyacinthe, and Leandre falls in love with a young gypsy girl by the name of Gerbinnette. Immediately after Octave's marriage, he learns that his father is returning home with the design of marrying him to the daughter of Argante. Octave hastens to tell the story to Silvestre, the domestic in whose charge he has been left, and asks his aid in getting out of the difficulty. While
the two are discussing the matter, Scapin
the servant of Léandre, appears. He promises
to contrive some stratagem by which to
avert the trouble.

When Argante discovers the fact of his
son's marriage, he is very much enraged;
but on Scapin's assertion that his son was
compelled to marry Hyacinthe, he is somewhat
appeased. Scapin and Silvestre form a plan by
which they hope to obtain money from the old
man for Octave's subsistence. Hérute, by a hint
let fall by Scapin, learns that his son has al-
so been getting into a difficulty, and takes
him to account for it. As soon as he is dis-
missed by his father, Léandre, indignant at
being betrayed by Scapin, threatens him and
orders him to confess what he has done.
Whereupon Scapin, not knowing to what his master refers, confesses a series of clever tricks which he has played upon him.

While this scene is going on, it is announced to Leandre that unless he sends a certain sum of money for her ransom, Germinette will be carried away by the gypsies. Leandre turns to Scapin for assistance and the latter finally agrees to get the money from the two old men. He accomplishes this end by trickery. He tells Argante that Hyacinthe has a brother who has promised to dissolve the marriage upon payment of a sum of money which Argante considers unreasonable. After much strategem Scapin, part the old man is frightened into acquiescence and consents to give up the money. Scapin then goes to Terence and tells him that his son
has been captured by the Turks who demand a ransom for his release. After a long struggle between his paternal love and his avarice, Géronde also yields, and hands over the money to Scapin, who then plays another trick upon the old man. He tells him that Hyacinthe's brother is coming to take revenge upon him for threatening to take the case to law, and induces him to hide in a sack. Scapin then by changing his voice, pretends to be different men and manages to lay many heavy blows upon the sack. Géronde finally discovers the trick, and Scapin runs away. After more trouble and worry on Gérontée's part, he meets Berine, a woman to whose care he had entrusted his daughter, and learns from her that the former is the wife of Octave. The two old men rejoice at the happy
circumstance of the marriage. When they finally understand the turn which their affairs have taken, Nyatia and Octave try to persuade Argante to sanction the marriage of his son Léandre to Gerbinette. Léandre then informs his father that Gerbinette is of good family, having been stolen by the gypsies when a child. He shows a bracelet which was found upon her, and Géronyme identifying it, and looking closely at Gerbinette, recognizes her as his own daughter whom he lost under such circumstances.

It is then announced that Scapin, in consequence of an accident which has befallen him, is dying and desires to ask the pardon of the old men before he breathes his last. This is freely granted and the whole matter being now adjusted, both families retire to
celebrate the happy events of the day.

It may perhaps be seen from the foregoing narratives of these plays, that some of the characters which take rather a prominent part in Phormion, have been suppressed in Les Fourberies de Scapin, and vice versa. For instance in the French farce there is no character analogous to Naucistrata, the wife of Echeneus; while in Phormion she is very clearly drawn as a strong minded shrew, of whose sharp tongue her husband stands much in awe. Neither does the character of Dorio, the repulsive and rascally slave dealer, appear in the play of Les Fourberies de Scapin. The same is also true of Hegio, Cratinus, and Crito, the three advocates who come to give their wise sounding advice to Demipho. On the other
hand, the two young ladies who do not appear upon the stage in Phormio, are seen several times in Les Fourberies de Scapin.

In each of these plays the rascals, Phormio and Scapin, by the strategems of whom the plots are connected, are the chief characters. The individuality of Phormio is strongly marked. Although he is a shrewd, unscrupulous parasite whose avowed means of getting a living is by preying upon the vices and weaknesses of his neighbors, he yet displays a fidelity to his friends which redeems him from utter rascality.

The character of Scapin is beyond controversy, one which possesses a very great fertility of imagination, the evidence of which is shown by the strategems which he devises. The ease with which the old men are able to be duped, de-
tracts somewhat from the admiration which might be felt for his ingenuity. The character of Scapin is not so agreeable as is that of Phormio, because the prevailing motive of his tricks is that of gaining revenge upon the old men.

In both plays, the two young men are rather commonplace, and are very similar in character. They are weak minded and timid, quite wanting in moral principle, their only good qualities being their frankness and affectionate dispositions. Their personalities is not very clearly shown in either play, though Terence succeeds somewhat better than does Molière in presenting these two young men.

On the other hand, the personality of the two old gentlemen in Phormio is sharply drawn, and clearly worked out. Demipho
is an irascible miser with a domineering disposition and a love of money which makes him ready to expose his brother to public shame rather than to submit to the loss of thirty mine. Thremes is a lifelike picture of a man of weak character, wanting in both principle and honesty.

In Molière's play, the old men Géronte and Argante, are presented with less striking individuality. Both are consumed by an inordinate love of money. This avarice causes Géronte to hesitate whether to ransom his son from the Turks, or to lose him and keep the money. Argante's avarice is only overcome by his extreme cowardice. Of the other characters little need be said. Geta, the slave in Phormio and Silvestre, the domestic in Molière's play.
are both faithful to their young masters.

In comparing the two plays in detail, we find that there are many similarities to be noted. Both plays open with the return of the old men from their respective journeys. In Le bourgeois de Scapin, the situation is given by a conversation between Silvestre and Octave, while in Phormio it is told by Geta in conversation with the slave Davoë. Compare the following passages from Phormio and from Molière.

Phormio, Act I, Scene II:

*Geta* - Event remitce ambobux simul

*Iti illi in Lemumin ut esset, nostro in Cilician

*At hospitium antiquorum.*

It happened that both old men went at the same time upon a journey, the one to Lemnos,
and our old man to Cilicia to visit a friend of
long standing.

Molière, Act I, Scene II.

Octave—Tu sais, Scapin, qu'il y a deux
mois que le seigneur Géronte et mon père s'élbor-
quirent ensemble pour un voyage qui regarde
certain commerce où leurs intérêts sont mêlés.

You know, Scapin, that it is two months
since my father embarked and Mr. Géronte em-
barked together on a voyage, for the purpose
of seeing to certain matters in which the in-
terests of both are concerned.

In comparing the above passages, we
find in Phormio that we are told that the
old men went away at the same time, and
we are also informed as to their destination.

We know that the object of one was to visit an
old friend, but we do not know the object of
the other. In Molière, we are told that
the old men went away together upon busi-
ness; in the passage from Phœnix we are
not told their destination. In the play of
Molière, the old men journeyed together; in
Terence's creation, they went upon separate
voyages.

Phœnix, Act I, Scene II.

Gea.- Abentes ambo hic tum semus me filiis
Relinquant quasi magistratum.
Both old men departing, let me in charge of
their sons.

Molière, Act I, Scene II.

Et que Léandre et moi nous fûmes laissés par
nos pères, moi sous la conduite de Scapin, et Léandre sous ta
direction. And that Léandre and I were left by...
our fathers, myself in charge of Silvestre, and
Leandre under your care.

These two speeches are almost identical in
meaning, though in the former, it is the one
left in charge, who is speaking, while in the
latter, it is one of the young men. In Phormio
the slave Geta has charge of both, while in Pro-
livre the care is divided between the servants, Sil-
vestre and Scapin.

Phormio, Act I, Scene II.

hic Phaedria

Continuo quandam nocte est puellulam
Citharistriam, hanc amare coepit perdite.
Ea homini servirebat inspurissimo;
Necque quod daretur quicquam; id curarant patre
Restabat aliud nil nisi oculos pascere,
Sectari, in ludum ducere et reducere.
Nos olivae operam dabanus Phaedriae.

This Phaedria immediately found a certain young girl—a harp player; he began to love her to distraction. She was serving a very wicked man, and there was not a penny to give for her. The fathers had taken care of that. There remained nothing to do but to feast his eyes upon her, to follow her about, and to escort her to and from school. He being at leisure, gave our attention to Phaedria.

Molière, Act I, Scene II.

Octave—Quelque temps après, L'André fit rencontre d'une jeune Égyptienne dont il devint amoureux. —— Comme nous sommes quand amis, il me fit aussitôt confidence de son amour, et me mena voir cette fille, que je trouvai belle, à la vérité mais non pas tant qu'il
voulut que je la trouvassse.

Some time after, Leandre met a young gypsy with whom he fell in love. Since we are great friends, he straightway confided to me his affairs, and took me to see the girl. She indeed seemed beautiful to me, but not so beautiful as he wished me to think her.

The only similarity in the meaning of these two passages is in the fact that the young man meets a poor girl with whom he falls in love. In Phormio, the girl is a harp player and a slave. In Isoliere's work, she is a gypsy. Phormio, Act 5, Scene 11.

In quo haec discelerat ludo, expavorum ilios
Postrina erat quaedam, hic solebamus fere
Plemenque eam offeriri, dum inde iacet domum.
Interea dixit sedemus illi, intervenit
Adulterus quidam lacruma: nos mirari.
Rogamus quid sit; in unquam acque inquit ac modo
Paupertas mihi omnes vicissim est et miserum et grave.
Modo quandam vidi virginem hic vicinae
Miseram, suam matrem lamentari mortuam
Nihil adebat adjumenti ad pulchritudinem
Capillus passus, nudus pes, ipsa horrida,
Laetitia, vestitus turpis; ut, ni vis boni
In ipsa inesset forma, haec formam extinguer
ist.

Right opposite the school which she attended,
was a certain barber shop where we were ac-
customed to wait for her while she was gone.
from home. While we were sitting there, a certain youth came toward us weeping; we wonder; we ask what the trouble is. Never as now has poverty seemed such a wretched and grievous burden. In this vicinity, I just now saw a young girl weeping over her mother's death. The corpse was laid out opposite the door. There was no kind friend, no acquaintance, and no relative present, to assist at the funeral. No one except a nurse. I pitied her. There was nothing present to add to her beauty. Her hair was unbound, her feet bare, her dress unkempt. She was in tears, and her clothing was dirty. Yet her beauty was innate; these things did not destroy the very essence of her beauty.

Molière, Act I, Scene II.

Un jour que je l'accompagnais pour
aller chez les gens qui gardent l'objet de ses voces, nous entendimes, dans une petite maison d'une rue écartée, quelque plaintes mêlées de beaucoup de sanglots. -------- Nous voyons une vieille femme mourante, assistée d'une servante qui faisait des regrets, et d'une jeune fille toute fondante en larmes, la plus belle et la plus touchante qui on puisse jamais voir. -------- Les larmes n'étaient point de ces larmes désagréables qui défigurent un visage, elle avait à pleurer une grâce touchante et sa douleur était la plus belle du monde.

One day when I was accompanying him to the house which guards the lady of his choice from a little house on a by street, we heard sobbing and groaning. -------- We see a dying old woman attended by a wailing ser.
vant and by a weeping young girl; a very beautiful young girl, whose sorrow and beauty made the most touching sight that one could see. Her tears were not the disagreeable tears which disfigure the countenance. She wept with touching grace, and her sorrow was the most beautiful in the world.

In these two passages we have given the circumstances under which one of the young men meets the girl whom he afterwards marries. In Phormio, the story is told principally by Leta, while in Molière it is told by the young man himself—thus changing the point of view. The details which are given describing the young girl and her surroundings, are quite similar.

Phormio, Act I, Scene II.
Antipho: Quid si adeimulo? satiu est?
Geta: Vales.
Antipho: Cunctum Contemplarimum, eni!
Satine sic est?
Geta: No.
Antipho: Quid sic sic?
Geta: Propemodum.
Antipho: Quid sic?
Geta: Sat est!
Em! istuc serva! et verbum verbo par pari ut respondes.
Ne te iratus sis saevidice dictis prolet.
Geta: Scio.
Antipho: What if I should assume an air. Is this enough?
Geta: No indeed.
Antipho: Look at my face. Now! Is that enough?
Geta: No.
Antipho: Is this?
Geta: That's a little better.
Antipho: How's this?
Geta: That's all right. Now take care that you
Scapin—Çà, essayons un peu, votre rôle, et voyons si vous ferez bien. Allon; la mine résolue, la tête haute, les regards assurés.

Octave—Comme cela?

Scapin—Encore un peu davantage.

Octave—Ainsi?

Scapin—Bov. Imaginez-vous que je suis votre père qui arrive, et répondez-moi fermement, comme c'était à lui-même.

Scapin—We shall try to accustom ourselves to this a little. Rehearse your rôle for a little while and let's see how well you do it. Now! A resolute appearance, head erect, an assured behavior.
Octave - How's that?
Scapin - Still a little bad.
Octave - And that?
Scapin - Good. Now imagine that I am your father who has just arrived, and reply to me firmly as if to himself.

In these two passages, much the same effect is brought about by a greater conciseness of expression than in Molière. In the conversation from Phormio, we receive the impression that Antipho is by nature much more weak and cowardly than is the young man in the French farce.

Phormio, Act I, Scene IV.
Geta - Sed quis hic est senex, quem videas in ultima platea? Antipho - Ipsus est.
Geta - Non posses adesse.
Geta - But who is this old man whom I see
in the farthest court?

Antipho—It is he. I must go. (runs away).

Molière, Act I, Scene IV.

Silvestre—Voila votre père qui vient.

Octave—O ciel! je suis perdue.

Silvestre—See, there comes your father.

Octave—O heavens! I'm lost.

In this scene we see that the cowardly disposition of the young man, Octave in *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, is very similar to that of Antipho in *Phormio*. Both young men had begun to feel more courageous about meeting their fathers, but as soon as they hear that they must face the difficulty immediately, both run away.

The whole conversation between Scapin and Argante in regard to the latter's safe return, resembles very closely that between Yeta and Dem
ipho. The scene in Les Travaux de Scapin, in which the old man is meditating on the subject of his son's unexpected marriage, is also very similar to the same scene in Phormio.

Phormio, Act I, Scene II.

Demipho. Quamobrem omnis, quae secundae res sunt maxima, tum maxime meditari secund opertet, quo pacto adversam aerumnam ferat.

Persil, damna, exilia peregre rediens semper cogitet.

Aut illi peccatum aut nosteris mortalium aut morbum filiae, comminia esse haece, fieri possit, ut ne quid animo sit nouum.

Quidquid praeter spem eveniet, omne illa depet are esse in luco.
Demipho. When every thing is especially prosperous, then it is especially necessary to rehearse to oneself how to bear the most adverse circumstances. One returning from abroad, should always think of dangers, injuries, or exiles, or that he has been wronged, or on the death of his wife, or the disease of his daughter.

Molière. Act II, Scene VII.

Scapin. Que, pour peu que son père de famille ait été absent de chez lui, il doit promener son esprit sur tous les fâcheux accidents que son retour peut rencontrer, se figurer sa maison brûlée, son argent dérobé, sa femme morte, son fils estropié, sa fille suborneé, et ce qu'il trouve qui ne lui est point arrivé l'inputer à bonne fortune.
That if the father of a family is, forever so short a time, it is necessary to review in his mind, all the misfortunes which he might meet upon his return. So picture to himself his house burned, himself robbed, his wife dead, his son crippled, and his daughter seduced. All that he finds has not happened upon his arrival, let him count to his own good fortune.

It is quite evident that this speech of Scapin's was suggested to Molière by the speech which Demifho makes on his return home after discovering the fact of his son's marriage. The idea which Scapin expresses is the same, though the misfortunes which he enumerates, are different. In Act II, Scene 5, in Phormio, the scene
in which Phoemio is laying a plan by which to assist Antipho in getting out of his difficulty, while Leto stands by admiringly, is very closelyimitated in the French farce, Act I, Scene VII, in the scene between Scapin and Silvestre. There are also many points of similarity in the scene where one old man inquires the other’s luck in the search for his daughter. This scene in Phoemio is in Act III, Scene I, and in Molière in Act I, Scene I.

Compare the following passages: Phoemio, Act II, Scene V.

Phaedria—Hi patruce, salve! Demipho—Salve! sed ubi est Antipho?
Ph. Salviun venire. De—Credo: hoc responded nibi:
Phaedria—How do you do, Father?
Demitho: How do you do. But where is Antipho?
Ph.– You’ve arrived safe—
Dem— I believe so. But answer me this.
Molière.
Léandre— Ah! mon père, que j’ai de joie de vous voir de retour!
Géronte— Doucement. Parlons un peu d’affaire.
Léandre— O my father, I rejoice to see you again.
Géronte— Softly. Let’s talk a little business.
In these passages, we have a rather amusing scene in which the son tries to engage his father’s attention, while the latter is resolved to find out the facts in regard to the marriage. In both Phocéïe and in the French play, the one who is not married is acting in behalf of the other.
Act III, Scene VIII and IX in Molière, where the old men struggle with their avarice, closely resemble the scene in Phormio, Act III, Scene III.

The scene in Molière in which the old man discovers that his son is married to the girl whom he desired him to marry, shows many points of similarity to that in Phormio. The amusement and joy which the father experiences upon hearing this news, is represented by Molière in a manner closely resembling Terence's style of depicting the scene. In both plays, the information is brought by the girl's nurse. Here again in showing the man's fear of being exposed by the nurse, Molière has copied from Terence.

As the farce of Les Fourberies de Scapin
progresses, the evidences of its being founded upon the Latin play, become less and less apparent. The latter part of the farce is taken up with an account of the various tricks which Scapin perpetrates upon the unsuspecting old men. In Phormio the latter part tells how Naucistrata discovers her husband's treachery and terrifies him by her vigorous scolding.