



Research Article

Tragic elements in Molière's comedy: a study of the play "Le Misanthrope"

Emre Yalçın^{1*}

Performing Arts, Fine Arts Faculty, Kafkas University, Kars, Türkiye

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Abstract

Molière, who abolished the classical distinction between tragedy and comedy that Aristotle had engraved in the foundations of Western theatre with the Poetics, developed writing strategies that violate the boundaries of tragedy in many of his texts. The most important feature of this approach is that Molière's characters are people who, like the characters of tragedy, succumb to their hybris. The character of Alceste in Molière's *Misanthrope* exemplifies this situation with her arrogant and intemperate behaviour, listening to no one. The second quality that Molière reveals with Alceste is that he removes the distinction made by Aristotle between comedy and tragedy by saying that comedy "imitates people lower than the morality of the average man". Alceste is moral, as is a hero of tragedy. The third quality that Molière has in common with the tragedians is that of the secondary characters, who act as a chorus, warning the heroes and calling them to common sense. The characters of the honnête homme/femmes, which means reserved, kind, honest, representing the ideal intellectual identity around the court of the time, in which Molière can also be included, invite the protagonists, who are arrogant and trapped in their self-love, to reason, virtue and moderation. This study will analyse the tragic elements that come to the fore in the characters of Molière's play *Le Misanthrope*.

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Introduction

Nowadays, we have to face the fact that the genres of comedy, drama, epic, drama, etc., have largely disappeared in the writing and performance of plays. Hybrid structures and grey areas, in which narrative and dramatic flow are intertwined; absurd texts are staged with realistic acting; the concrete and the abstract are fused; historical texts are mixed with current issues, tragic and comic elements are presented one after the other, characterise playwriting and staging. In this context, the question of "is the play we are about to see a comedy or a drama?" loses its meaning.

Although such a radical change is usually attributed to the developmental phases of modern theatre (historical avant-garde movements, the 60s, the 90s, the post-dramatic or post-modern phase, etc.) and tried to be grasped in a linear line, it is obvious that the beginning of this line, at least in the context of authorship, should be sought much further back. From a broad perspective, it is possible to trace the origins of such a historical development to the Renaissance, to the Middle Ages on the basis of Bahtin's "grotesque" determinations, and even to Ancient Greece with Krates of Athens, who wrote comedy with the virtuous characters of tragedy. Motivated by this search, this study will focus on Molière, one of the most important figures of the French Renaissance.

"Le Misanthrope (Le Misanthrope ou L'Atrabilaire amoureux), one of the milestones of Molière's writing, stands out as a comic text with tragic qualities (Jauss, 1983, p. 318). He wrote this text by violating the rules of writing that have been filtered through the history of Western theatre, starting with Aristotle and reaching their strictest form with

¹ Corresponding author: Asst. Prof. Dr., Performing Arts, Fine Arts Faculty, Kafkas University, Kars, Türkiye. E-mail: yalcmre@gmail.com ORCID: 0000-0003-3569-5730

the neoclassicists. The place where the violation begins is the distinction between the hero in tragedy and comedy, contained in the Poetics and manifested in the Neoclassical rules. According to this, the hero of tragedy must be a flawed character with "above-average morality, but not perfect". The hero of comedy, on the other hand, should be a character with a lower-than-average moral structure, a character who is not noble. "Alceste, the heroine of *The Misanthrope*, is both noble and of above-average morality" (Morgan, 1984, p. 297), which makes her out of place in a comedy. However, her "hybris" attitude is closer to tragedy than to comedy.

Accordingly, his excesses, such as jealousy and not listening to anyone, his arrogant attitude that sees himself as superior to many, are rational and consistent in his own name, as can be observed in the tragedies of ancient Greece and Shakespeare. Not through his stupidity as a comic quality, or his blindness revealed by his thoughtlessness. The other quality of the play that tends towards tragedy is the presence of honnête homme/femme characters who represent the "social common sense" carried by the "chorus" element, which is particularly prominent in Ancient Greek tragedies. As in his texts such as *Dom Juan*, *Le Tartuffe* and *L'Ecole des femmes*, Molière created honnête homme/femme characters who directly invite the protagonist and indirectly the audience to "social prudence" and "moderation". In this context, we see Dom Carlos in *Dom Juan*, Cléante in *Le Tartuffe* and Chrystalde in *L'Ecole des femmes*, as well as Philinte and Eliante in *Le Misanthrope*.

Problem of Study

The aim of this study is to find the roots of the disappearance of genre distinctions in contemporary theatre by identifying the tragic elements that come to the fore in Molière's 17th-century comedy *Le Misanthrope*. In this sense, the sub-problems of the research are as follows

- How does Alceste in *Le Misanthrope* abolish the moral distinction between the characters of tragedy and comedy from Aristotle to the present day?
- How do the excesses and grandeur of Alceste's character approach the quality of hybris in ancient Greek tragedy?
- How does the character of Alceste, with all her excesses, relate to the Honnête Homme/Femme characters who carry the notion of Sôphrosûnê (moderation) in the play?

Method

This study used a case study design, one of the qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is a broad term that encompasses research methods that analyse experiences, behaviours and relationships without the processing of numerical data (Merriam, 2009). A case study is a research approach used to gain an in-depth, multifaceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context. It is an established research design that is widely used in a variety of disciplines, particularly in the social sciences (Crowe, et al. 2011).

Data Collection

This research used the technique of document analysis, which is used in qualitative research methods. Document analysis is a systematic process for reviewing or evaluating documents - both printed and electronic (computer-based and web-based) material (Bowen, 2009).

Data Analysis

This study used the technique of content analysis, which is a qualitative research method. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), content analysis is the objective and systematic examination of oral, written and other materials and their organisation according to particular themes.

Results

Breaking Aristotelian and Neoclassical rules: Alceste's high morality

In the Poetics, Aristotle makes the following moral distinction between the main characters in tragedy and comedy:

"The things that representative artists represent are the actions of people, and if people are represented they are necessarily either superior or inferior, better or worse, than we are. (Differences in character you see derive from these categories, since it is by virtue or vice that people are ethically distinct from each other)... The very same difference makes the distinction between tragedy and comedy: the latter aims to represent people as worse, and the former as better, than people nowadays are" (Aristotle, 2013, p. 18-19).

This epistemological distinction of Aristotle's, which is still accepted and circulated by many today, reached its strictest form in the neoclassical view that marked Molière's period. In neoclassical thought, it is forbidden to mix genres. "A play must be either tragedy or comedy" (Iji & Umukoro, 2011, p. 171). Although Molière followed the neoclassicists' "rule of three unities" in terms of place, time, and plot in the structure of his plays, as seen in *The Misanthrope*, he rejected this distinction through the protagonist by making Alceste, the protagonist of a comedy play, better and more moral than the average person.

Alceste's honesty and morality, approaching that of a classical tragic character, are first revealed in his opposition to the sycophants and unvirtuous behaviour that surround him. Accordingly, Alceste maintains a courageous and heroic attitude throughout, which can be appreciated in any society and culture. His ruthless behaviour and his refusal to give up what he knows to be right, even when he is condemned in unfair trials, make him something of a tragic hero. The moral structure inferior to that of the average person, the lack of nobility, the vulgar and light qualities that Aristotelian conventions and established rules look for in comic characters are not found in Alceste. He was taken to court by the nobleman Oreste, whose poetry he did not like, but he ignored the warnings and suggestions of those around him and persisted in his ideas. Oreste's poetry is terrible, as anyone can see. Therefore, the only moral and virtuous thing to do is to tell him to his face, and not to give up speaking this truth, which people with other concerns cannot speak. In this respect, Alceste, with her moral attitude and courage, is not like Harpagon or Knemon, but like Antigone, Othello and Hamlet:

Alceste. "...You can't stop me, I'm leaving—high time I was gone.

There's far too much corruption in the world today;
 ...The fact that I was in the right led me to trust
 That I would win—but no, the judgement's a disgrace!
 With justice on my side, I've gone and lost my case!
 ...It's got to be preserved for all posterity,
 A fine example, to enable men to gauge
 The vile corruption of this modern day and age" (Molière, 2008, p. 262-264).

With this strict moral attitude, Alceste does not spare his words throughout the play for gossips, hypocrites, sycophants, manipulators, braggarts and those who engage in false relationships. However, while maintaining this attitude, he often goes to extremes and behaves immoderately in a way that appalls even those who agree with him. His excesses and extravagance not only lead him to express himself and judge his surroundings, but also to a fever of jealousy in his love for Celimene. At the same time, this situation brings him one step closer to becoming the hero of the tragedy, in a way that can be considered together with the concept of *hybris*.

The *hybris* phenomenon in the *misanthrope*: the extremes and awesome of Alceste

The notion of '*hybris*', which leads Alceste to approach the hero of tragedy, is one of the most important concepts in the ancient Greek world, which forms the basis of Western thought and lifestyle. *Hybris*, which represents an attitude, character and line of action that is the exact opposite of the ideal sober life (*sôphrosûnê*), has also left its mark on tragedy. In this sense, the concept of '*hybris*' encompasses much more than its dictionary meanings of 'intemperance' and

'arrogance'. Macdowell (2018) identifies a number of topics in the ancient Greek world in which the attitude of *hybris*, which can also be the subject of legal punishment, appears (252-253). Excessive eating and drinking, excessive sexual activity, causing mischief, physical violence or killing, appropriating the property or privileges of others, mocking or insulting others, disobeying human and divine authority; each of these are topics associated with *hybris* attitudes and behaviour. These headings produce a negative energy in the person, making him or her "full of himself or herself" and prone to fulfil his or her own desires and wishes without respect for the wishes, rights and preferences of other people.

While Alceste stands up to the moral problems around him, such as corruption, sycophancy, deviation from the truth and unjust authority, he does so with "excess", "immoderation" and "arrogance", which is *hybris*. Like the heroes of ancient Greek and Shakespearean tragedies, his *hybris* blinds him to common sense. This blindness is most evident in her attitude and behaviour towards Celimene, with whom she falls in love. Alceste's *hybris* leads her to focus only on her own thoughts and feelings in her communication with Celimene. Although Celimene expresses that she loves him, Alceste sees this love as insufficient and sometimes false. He pressures her to adopt the same radical ideas and attitudes as he does, and wants her to reveal more of her love for him. He is also extremely jealous of her:

Celimene. "You're growing jealous of the entire universe.

Alceste. The universe pays court to you, it's too perverse.

You say that I'm a lot too jealous. Tell me, what Advantages do I have, that the rest have not?

Celimene. The joy of being sure that I'm in love with you.

Alceste. I feel so anxious—how can I believe it's true?....

Celimene. Well since I've told you so, and I'm not one to bluff,

I think that my confession should be quite enough.

Alceste. But how am I to know? The truth may be that, when

You say you love me, you're two-timing other men" (Molière, 2008, p. 226).

In addition to his excessive behaviour towards Celimene, he treats everyone outside his moral framework in an outrageous manner, insulting, ridiculing, always talking down to them and approaching them with anger.

Alceste. "I want to lose my temper, and to make a stand..

...

Philinte. You seem to have decided I'm the one to blame...

Alceste. That's right. Why don't you crawl away and die of shame?

You met a man, you treated him as your best friend,

You were all over him, you hugged him without end,

...I asked you for the fellow's name, when he had gone,

And you scarcely remembered who he was—come on!

No sooner had he turned his back on you, I swear,

You spoke of him to me, as if you didn't care.

Good grief! The way you carry on is a disgrace.

You worthless coward, must you really be so base?" (Molière, 2008, p. 209-210).

Alceste says these words to his best friend because of his behaviour, which includes praising, approving and flattering each other as part of the courtesy between nobles. Although Philinte tries to explain these behaviours as customs to be followed, he only provokes Alceste's anger. At this point, Alceste imposes his own strict moral views on his friend, and he does so in an excessive and exaggerated manner, to the point of insult. Even if he is telling the truth, the way he says it is extremely immoderate. His behaviour is similar to that of Orente, who later accuses him of insults and sarcasm. Orente has written a sonnet and wants to read it to Alceste, whose opinions are very important and respected. Although Alceste tries to put it off, he can't keep his mouth shut:

Oronte. "...But what's the difficulty with my sonnet, pray?

Alceste. Quite frankly, you'd much better throw the thing away
 You took your inspiration from a doubtful source;
 The whole effect is artificial, and lacks force.
 What do you mean by Hope alleviates our woe?

...

Or by Oh, Phyllis, we grow hopeless, when we find
 That hope prolonged just turns into despair?
 The precious way you write is popular, it's true,
 But, frankly, it's contrived, and unconvincing too
 It's full of clever puns, elaborate word-play, ...

Oronte. Well, many other people liked it quite a lot.

...

Alceste. Yes, that's because they're hypocrites, which I am not.

Oronte. ... Hey, there, my little man, don't take that tone with me.

Alceste. I'll take the tone I like, you don't have to agree" (Molière, 2008, p. 221-223).

Alceste's negative qualities of "hybris", manifested in excess, immoderation, mockery, humiliation, judgement, arrogance, anger and insult, make him a frightening and feared person for society. On the other hand, his truthfulness, courage and honesty win the admiration of his beloved Celimene, as well as Philinte and Eliante, who invite him to reason in the play:

Philinte. "... The Marshals did their best, and tried in vain to find

A way to coax Alceste to stop, and change his mind. ...

"No, gentlemen, I won't take back my words," said he.

Eliante. He really does behave in an eccentric way,

But I think that he's special too, I have to say.

The way he won't agree to play the hypocrite

Does have a noble and heroic side to it

...If only other people tried to do the same!

Philinte. I find it more and more surprising, for my part,

That he's let passion conquer him, and win his heart

He's not the same as other people. Heavens above!

I can't see how he's had the face to fall in love" (Molière, 2008, p. 250-251).

This double hybris quality of Alceste, that is, the aspects that both frighten and disturb people and win their admiration, is related to the concept of "deinos" that we often encounter in tragedy. The quality of "deinos" that we observe in characters such as Antigone, Oedipus and Hamlet is the ambiguous revelation of positive and negative qualities. In addition to their fearlessness, power and arrogance, the heroes of tragedy are also respected for their intelligence and admirable talents (Oudemans & Lardinois, 1987, p. 129). The English equivalent of deinos can be seen as "awesome". Alceste is "awesome" in a way that tends towards tragic heroes, with all her fearfulness, terrible behaviour, intelligence and admirable virtues.

The problem of the Sôphrosûnê of Alceste and the characters of the common sense of Le Misanthrope

In ancient Greek tragedies, we see the phenomenon of "sôphrosûnê" as the opposite of hybris. "sôphrosûnê", which roughly means moderation, measure, often includes meanings such as common sense, prudence, prudence, caution, foresight, moderation, self-knowledge, knowing one's limit (Arıcı, 2005). In this context, hybris is revealed by the abduction of sôphrosûnê. The insurance of moderation, which stands as a central virtue in the ancient Greek world, in the tragedy form is undoubtedly the Chorus. While the chorus structurally fulfils many functions and tasks within the

dramatic structure, it endeavours to guide both the audience and the tragic characters towards moderation. In this respect, the chorus functions as a social common sense that observes religious, cultural, national and state values.

In Molière's texts, a role similar to this function of the chorus is given to the *honnête homme/femme* characters, who are often close to the main character. "*Honnête hommes/femmes*" has its origins in Cicero and even Aristotle, but especially after the Revolt of the Fronde, it is used to refer to the ideal aristocratic morality and social environment around the French aristocracy of the 17th century. "*Honnête*" is an adjective with meanings such as honest, rational, cultured, refined, measured, gentle, truthful, wise, decent, moderate, rhetorical, tasteful. This characteristic, which is encountered in the moral writings of names such as Pascal, La Rochefoucauld and La Fontaine under the leadership of Montaigne, appears as an ideal desired to be achieved in society in the France of the period (Calder, 2002, p. 73-79).

The notion of *honnêteté* can be detected in Molière's texts on many levels. Firstly, the ideal of *honnêteté* is sometimes signalled by the main character's adversaries and sometimes by the development of the plot. Thus, it is not possible to speak of virtue in a place where there is no moderation, truthfulness, honesty, and where one acts only according to one's own value paradigm. Secondly, as a writing strategy, Molière uses secondary characters in his texts to reveal the *hybris* qualities of the main characters and to keep the themes of the play on the audience's agenda. These *honnête homme/femme* characters, like the ancient Greek chorus, play a multifaceted role in a place that observes social prudence, moderation, virtuous behaviour, cultural norms, etc. Dom Carlos in *Dom Juan*, Crysalde in *L'Ecole des femmes*, Cleante in *Tartuffe* are examples of these characters. In *Le Misanthrope* there are two characters with these qualities. The first is Alceste's best friend Philinte and the other is Celimene's cousin Eliante.

In the play, Philinte is positioned in a place that carries moderation, kindness, moderation, and invites Alceste to be moderate, just like the relationship of the ancient Greek chorus to the characters of tragedy:

Alceste. "No. My disgust is general. I hate all men
 ... Hate some of them because they are an evil crew,
 And others for condoning what the villains do,
 Instead of treating them with loathing and contempt.

...

Philinte. For heaven's sake, don't try to be responsible For all society.
 It's quite impossible
 To be so critical of humans as a whole
 ...You'd better tone it down, and show some self-control.
 You must live in the world, you can't stay on the side,
 A reasonable man shouldn't go to extremes:
 Be sensible, and don't indulge your crazy dreams" (Molière, 2008, p. 212-213).

In *The Misanthrope*, Éliante is the second character, after Philinte, to carry the idea of "*honnêteté*". Éliante is the cousin of Celimene, with whom Alceste falls in love, and Alceste's friend. As mentioned in the previous chapter, he secretly admires Alceste, but keeps her at a distance, both through the presence of his cousin and through his reserved behaviour. Even when Alceste proposes marriage to him after the quarrel with Celimene, he does not succumb to his feelings and maintains his behaviour:

Alceste. "... Oh, help me fight this war. I must have my revenge

Éliante. What, me avenge you? How?

Alceste. That's easy. Just accept
 My hand in marriage now, instead of her, Madame.
 ... To punish her I'll dedicate myself to you.
 I'll make you happy, more than other lovers do;
 I'll worship you. You'll see, it'll be paradise...

Éliante. You're suffering agonies... I truly sympathize;

You offer me a love that's worthy in my eyes.
 But things may not be quite as awful as they seem,
 And later you may find you'd rather drop this scheme.
 You're eager for revenge right now, but you may find,
 Since you love your tormentor, you may change your mind.
 You may hate her for now, your feelings may be strong,
 But you may soon forget the way she's done you wrong.
 The anger that you feel can melt away, and fast:
 We all know that a lover's fury doesn't last" (Molière, 2008, p. 253-254).

Éliante's measured distance from Alceste, even though she is very fond of him, and her rational attitude, subtle views and wise approach to judging events are examples of her "honnête femme" personality. Moreover, like Philinte, she invites those around her to behave prudently:

Celimene. "Oh, cousin, these two gentlemen are hounding me.
 ...They're terribly insistent they must have their way:
 They're forcing me to choose between them, right away.
 I've got to turn one of them down, now, to his face,
 Reject his love, and send him straight off in disgrace!
 Now, tell me, did you ever hear of such a thing?"
 Éliante. Oh, don't expect me to relieve your suffering.
 You'll see you've not picked the right person, for I find
 That I prefer it when a woman speaks her mind" (Molière, 2008, p. 267).
 He maintains the same prudent attitude during Alceste's tantrums.
 Éliante. Just keep your self-control, and try not to give way.
 Alceste. ... I'm done for!
 I've... I've been betrayed!
 Yes, Celimene... oh, who'd believe it, is it true?

Éliante. Oh, come! Have you got proof? How can you be so sure?

....

Alceste. ...Oh, yes, Madame, in here, a letter to Oronte...
 Philinte. A letter isn't always quite what it appears,
 It may mean nothing much, so calm your jealous fears.
 Alceste. ... Don't sort out my affairs, just look after your own.
 Éliante. You must try to control yourself. If this is true..." (Molière, 2008, p. 253).

The notion of *honnêteté*, which comes to the fore in these two minor characters, occupies a central place in Molière's textual strategies. The first of these strategies is that, through characters with a *sôphrosûnê* attitude, Molière makes visible and comedic the "folly", the immoderate behaviour and overvalued attitudes that he sees as one of the main problems of his age. It is a dialectical view. It creates a dramatic conflict in the view of the audience/reader by pitting one or two sane people against the irrational behaviour and thoughts of almost all the characters. In this way, the audience is confronted on the one hand with the disorders and abuses in the society of which they are a part, and on the other hand is subjected to a kind of thesis-antithesis-synthesis process. Whatever conclusions he reaches, the dramatic structure points to *sôphrosûnê*. For although the character of *hybris* does not lead to great destruction and suffering in seventeenth-century France as it did in ancient Greece, the fall into a ridiculous situation, achieved through the stupidity and blindness that Molière points out, is a very destructive situation. A virtuous man must be restrained and know his limits. Otherwise, like the heroes of tragedy, he may succumb to his *hybris* and make great mistakes (*hamartia*) that will

cause him to lose his dignity or be ostracised by his social environment. Molière himself, who brought such a social lesson to the masses through the theatre, abolished the notions of time and space, carried it into the present day and continued his influence throughout the world, is undoubtedly a "honnête homme" figure.

Conclusion

As an integral part of Western thought, the division into genres is not only related to the establishment of boundaries, but, as Derrida points out, it is an act of creating a hierarchy that will find its counterpart on political and ideological levels (Derrida, 1980, p.81). The effort of Western metaphysical thought to divide the art of drama into genres and categories since Ancient Greece has made it a duty to create sharp lines between tragedies, which will carry the morality and entertainment of the upper class, and comedies, which belong to the lower class in terms of theatre (Mosse & Street, 2016, p. 131). This is like a Platonic distinction that sets art and philosophy against each other, with philosophy being superior to art. The more philosophy is superior to art, the more tragedy or drama is superior to comedy. And this view has maintained its hegemony for almost 2400 years.

In contemporary theatrical practice, such rigid boundaries, distinctions and hierarchical approaches are gradually being erased. Contemporary playwriting and staging practices, which reject rigidly prescriptive dramatic conventions, interweave genres, and create hybrid forms and structures are characterised by versatility, multi-layeredness, and heterarchy (Radulescu, 2018, p.259-268). In this direction, it becomes increasingly meaningless to see a play text as comedy or tragedy under genres. What matters now is the original interpretation and creative approaches that a director brings to a classical or contemporary text, moving away from all limitations, distinctions and conventions. This is also the case with playwriting. Beyond the limits of genre distinctions and mimetic representation, the author's wandering in the free fields of imagination and the creation of a self-reflexive field of existence determine the production processes. Thus, it is no longer genres that play a decisive role in theatre production, but rather hybrid structures, the interweaving of different writing and staging strategies, dramaturgical approaches that attempt to develop a different view of each play, and interdisciplinary orientations that are established with different art fields.

Although these developments may seem like a moment in time of a hundred years, they actually have roots that go back to the times when genre distinctions were first made. From Ancient Greece to the Middle Ages, from the early Renaissance to Romanticism, there are many examples of genres intertwining and beginning to erase distinctions. From the Crates of Athens to Shakespeare, from the *Comédie Larmoyante* to the historical avant-garde, from the melodramas to Chekhov, there are many texts and productions in the history of theatre in which genre boundaries are violated. In such a historical flow, the place of Molière's writing, as analysed in this study, is quite special and important. "Molière developed strategies that intertwined tragic and comic elements in 17th century France", where the distinctions made by Aristotle in the *Poetics* and the rules he laid down were even more rigid.

The play *Le Misanthrope* is one of Molière's most important works in which these writing strategies are evident. As this study will attempt to analyse, Molière violates the thickly drawn boundaries between comedy and tragedy with the tragic heroic qualities he creates, especially in the character of Alceste (Simon, 1975, p.410). In this direction, he first of all makes Alceste more moral than the average person, and in this direction he abolishes a convention attributed to comedy and even made obligatory for it from the beginning. In addition, he gives Alceste the quality of "hybris" (excess, intemperance), which appears as a negative trait in the heroes of tragedy and leads them to their tragic end, through his never-ending rage, his unlimited jealousy, his unrestrained intemperance, his attitude of humiliating others, of not listening to anyone, of mocking them, his arrogance and his pride that only cares about himself. This characteristic is the direct opposite of the notion of *sôphrosûnê* (moderation), which dominated the life of the polis in ancient Greece in legal, religious and cultural terms. In addition to this negative aspect, *hybris* has a positive side in tragedy. The heroes of tragedy are also extreme in their intelligence, talent and courage, but their excesses are so great that they leave others in awe. Thus Molière endows Alceste with this second aspect of *hybris*, in addition to all his negative aspects, and transforms him into a wonderful human portrait.

As the study attempts to establish, we see that Molière, again as a writing strategy, creates *honnête homme/femme*

characters that can be contrasted with the concept of hybris. In 17th-century France, the notion of honnêteté, which represents values such as temperance, gentleness, wisdom, virtue, etc., is similar to sôphrosûnê. The function of the chorus, which represents sôphrosûnê in ancient Greek tragedies and represents social prudence in a way that reminds the characters and the audience of it, is given to these characters in Molière's plays. In this sense, Philinte and Éliante in *Le Misanthrope* are given tasks that will trigger the common sense that will develop in them and in the audience, with a contrast that will reveal Alceste's hybris.

Biodata of Author



Asst. Prof. Dr. **Emre Yalçın** is a graduate of the Faculty of Literature at Istanbul University. In 2013, he completed his Master's degree at İstanbul University, Department of Theatre Criticism and Dramaturgy, and in 2019, he completed his Ph.D. at DEU's Department of Performing Arts, İzmir, Türkiye. His dissertation, entitled *Postdramatic and Contemporary German Theatre as an Aesthetic Regime*, was published as a book by Mitos Boyut Publications in 2020. He currently works as a lecturer at the Department of Performing Arts of Kafkas University, Kars, Türkiye.

Web: <https://unis.kafkas.edu.tr/akademisyen/emre.yalcin/lang=en>

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