"I WANT NONE OF YOUR GIFTS!" A MOLIERE MEDIATION AND THE STUDY OF FAILURES IN THIRD PART INTERVENTION

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ABSTRACT: EXPLORING THE CAUSES OF FAILURE IN THIRD PARTY INTERVENTIONS.

While the reasons for successful third party interventions have been extensively studied by scholars, the causes and consequences of failed mediations have not received the same degree of attention in the academic literature. In particular, the mediator's basic assumptions, pre-selected strategy and subsequent methodology for intervention can each be flawed, contributing to a disastrous outcome for all parties concerned. As the mediation attempt in Moliere's comic play The Miser demonstrates, the field of conflict analysis and resolution can benefit from recognizing and incorporating examples of futile third party intervention—especially as actual case studies in interpersonal, intergroup and international mediations. In short, failures in mediation, as well as successes, can serve as an explicit focal point of research and review in order to learn from debilitating errors of the mediator. As such, the recognition and evaluation of third party failures, described here as a Moliere Mediation, can contribute to our understanding and explanation of effective third party interventions in theory and practice.

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INTRODUCTION: IS THE LITERATURE ON MEDIATION TOO OPTIMISTIC?

As Daniella D. Fridl notes, mediation is traditionally thought of as a form of third party intervention that resolves conflicts through negotiations by bringing a settlement acceptable to all parties (Fridl, 2009:7; Harmon, 2006; Bercovitch & Derouen 2004; Kressel & Pruitt 1989; Zartman & Touval 1985). When employed successfully, mediation can have a powerful and positive impact upon the outcomes or even resolution of a conflict (Wall, Stark, Standiefer, 2001; Bercovitch, Anagnoson & Willie 1991). The scholarly literature is full of well intentioned advice to mediators or of case studies documenting success stories concerning third party intervention (Bush, R., Baruch, A., & Folger, J.P. 1994; Goldberg, S.B., & Shaw, M.L. 2007; Greig, M.J. 2001; Kreseel, K., & Pruitt, D. C. (eds) 1989; Pruitt, D., & Bercovith, J. (eds), 2002). Yet, mediation and negotiations can also fail, sometimes dramatically (Zartman, 2005; Smith 2000; Kleiboer, 1996)

So, in the following essay, the potential for a mediator making matters dramatically worse between parties than the *status quo ante* will be explored and analyzed. Specifically, the example of a disastrous mediation in Moliere's comedic play *The Miser* will be employed as a baseline example of what damage a mediator can do by making matters materially and substantively worse for both or all parties concerned (Moliere, 1967). In the play *The Miser*, a house servant, Maître (Master) Jacques, attempts to mediate with disastrous results between a father and son who have fallen in love with the same woman. Hence, a “Moliere mediation” will be defined as a third party intervention by one or more mediators that makes the original conflict discernibly worse between all parties concerned. After this admittedly comical illustration, this essay will explore the very serious case study of Alexander Haig's third party intervention in the 1982 Falkland crisis as a deadly example of a "Moliere mediation" in which the mediator
arguably made matters much worse than the status quo ante before his ill fated intervention. This essay will end with a plea for those in the profession of conflict analysis and mediation to document and study as case studies, our failures as well as successes in third party intervention as an explicit focal point of research and review in order to learn from destructive errors in theory and practice.

THE POSITIVE FUNCTIONS OF MEDIATION: HISTORY AND PRACTICE

According to Wall, Stark and Standifer, “[m]ediation is assistance to two or more acting parties (Kressel & Pruitt, 1989) by third parties who (usually) have no authority to impose an outcome (Wall, Stark & Standifer, 2001).” Professor Wall and his colleagues continue by providing a brief history of mediation and qualifying that: "Not only is mediation one of the oldest forms of conflict resolution, but it is also used worldwide, with examples in China (Cohen, J.A. 1966), Korea (Kim, M. 1986), Malyasia (Provencher, R. 1968, Poland (Olszanska, Olsanki & Wozniak 1993, Azerbaijan (Keller, B. 1991), Israel and Palestine (Abu-Nimer, M. 1996), and Japan (Cortazzi, H. 1990)."

There are multiple theories and methodologies for the successful conduct of mediation in interpersonal, intergroup and international conflicts (Fisher, R.J., 2001; Bercovitch, J., 1997; Boudreau, T.E.,1991). The article The Secrets of Successful (and Unsuccessful) Mediators, divide the elements of successful mediation into five key categories: evaluative skills, process skills, confidence-building attributes-friendly/empathetic, high integrity/honesty, and smart/well-prepared (Goldberg & Shaw, 2007).

Goldberg and Shaw emphasize that confidence-building attributes such as being friendly and empathetic, enables the mediator to relate with the parties involved in the mediation session (Goldberg & Shaw, 2007). Moreover, the mediator’s use of diplomacy, creativity, and a sense of
calmness facilitates focus throughout the mediation process. Finally, Goldberg and Shaw claim that the participants in the mediation process can often detect when the mediator is interacting with them in an honest and neutral manner. By practicing honesty and neutrality the mediator nurtures trust, a vital characteristic that lends greater probability to successful mediation. Intimate understanding of the mediation process by the mediator allows the mediator to exercise effective listening skills and to better control the process by detecting when and how long to allow the parties to communicate fully their ideas before moving to new topics or interests. In particular, Goldberg and Shaw assert that the participants must be assured the mediator will maintain confidentiality as a basic precondition for continuing the process. A smart, well-prepared mediator will enhance the opportunity for successful mediation.

James G. Zack further describes successful mediation as the participants focusing “…on common interests rather than specific mistakes each side may have made.” This is consistent with the Harvard Negotiation Project's focus on *interests* as the key to success in negotiations or mediation (Fisher, R.J., Ury, W., & Patton, B. (ed.) (1991); (Susskind, L., & Levy, P.F. 1999). Zack further qualifies that in order to “win” at mediation, the mediator must be prepared and keep the process informal (Zack, J.G. 2000).

Personal agility and ability is also critical to the success of mediation. For instance Professor Bercovitch states that: “…despite all the fundamental changes we have witnessed, the practice of mediation, and the mediating actors, remain as relevant today as they ever where” (Bercovitch, 1997). Bercovitch further declares “…there is still a very long way to go before we can discard the well tested tool of mediation” (Bercovitch, 1997).

In short, successful mediators demonstrate skills and attributes linked to the ability for gaining the confidence of the parties they are mediating. They are often friendly, empathic and
likable. Integrity demonstrated by honesty, neutrality, trustworthiness, and confidence are held as cornerstones of the mediation process. Being well-prepared, exercising patience and persistence are indicated as critical to successful mediation. Yet, as we shall see in Moliere's play *The Miser*, there is an example of a supposedly successful mediation conducted by Master Jacques, who embodies many of the skill sets of a mediator, yet he fails miserably and makes the conflict materially and emotionally much worse. What went so terribly wrong?

In the next section we will examine the critical components of the Moliere mediation, analyze the errors that were made and then apply those errors to a real life mediation attempt, namely Secretary of State Alexander Haig's aborted mediation attempt in the 1982 Falkland crisis and ensuing war (Eddy & Linklater, 1982)

**BACKGROUND: *THE MISER*, ACT IV, AND A MOLIERE MEDIATION**

As the mediation attempt in Moliere's *The Miser* demonstrates, the field of conflict analysis and resolution can benefit from recognizing and incorporating failures as case studies in third party intervention—in interpersonal, intergroup and international mediation. Otherwise, we will condemn, as was the hapless Master Jacques in Moliere's masterpiece *The Miser*, to making a conflict much worse by making basic mistakes in third party mediation. In view of this, let's review Moliere's play and examine what lessons, however comically presented, he teaches about ineffective third party interventions.

The basic plot of the play is, in typically Moliere style, simply outrageous. In *The Miser*, the audience soon learns that the protagonist Harpagon, otherwise known as the Miser, has fallen in love with his son's beautiful fiancé, Mariane. To make matters worse, the old codger Harpagon demands that his son, Clèante, give way to his father's wishes to marry the girl,
threatening to estrange the father and son forever. The family seems at the verge of dissolution. At this point, a family servant, Master Jacques offers to mediate the matter between the two men, who are now in separate rooms, furiously fuming.

At first glance, in Moliere's play *The Miser*, Master Jacques seems to have all the necessary attributes, and even some of the skills of a successful mediator. Master Jacques is the cook and coachmen to Harpagon, the miserly protagonist of the play. As such, Master Jacques enjoys the respect and trust of Harpagon as well as the Miser's son, Clèante. From all accounts, Master Jacques is a good listener, emphatic and communicates clearly. He seems to possess the process skills and confidence-building attributes that Goldberg, Shaw and Zack (supra) prize so highly. Possessing these valuable qualities, Jacques volunteers to "intervene" between father and son in their bitter intra-family dispute. His offer is eagerly accepted by Harpagon and pressed into service as a mediator to settle the latter's dispute with his son, Clèante. At first, Master Jacques seems to focus on "common interests rather than specific mistakes each side may have made" in his mediation as James G. Zack suggests (above). Their common French interest is, of course, the young woman, Mariane.

Specifically, both the men involved--Harpagon and Clèante--share a deep common interest in the love and affections of Mariane. In France of that day and age, a son's duty was to normally defer to the wishes of the father; so, Clèante is forced into a sudden and unpleasant situation of trying to honor his father's wishes while retaining the love of Mariane. Master Jacques bravely jumps into this vortex of family turmoil and so begins an apparently courageous act of selfless mediation.

Master Jacques proceeds to interview each man separately. Unfortunately, Jacques proceeds to simply listen and then *reassures* each party that the other party is in total agreement
with the other's position. Moliere's mediator Master Jacques then leaves the two men alone in the house, each believing that the other has capitulated totally to the other's demands. For a blissful moment, father and son reunite in each other's arms.

There is a happy moment of reunion based upon the entirely false pretenses, omissions and representations of Master Jacques. Soon, the two men realize that nothing has been resolved, or even progressed, leading to an emotional outburst; after Master's Jacques ill-fated mediation attempt, the father, Harpagon, dramatically disinherits the son Clèante for not submitting to his wish to marry Mariane. The son stalks out of his father's house, refusing to give up his fiancé to his father, and ending the act with the famous statement (in French): "I want none of your gifts!"

Master Jacques obviously made matters much worse and, in doing so, transformed the relationships between Harpagon and Clèante in almost the worst possible way: namely where the father disowns the son and the son Storms out of his father's house, vowing never to return. This is transformational mediation resulting in a much worse relationship and outcome than the status quo ante, an outcome that is not often portrayed in the literature (Folger and Bush, 1994).

Of course, this ill fated mediation by Master Jacques is a comedic farce, designed to entertain, but it can also educate. In The Miser, Master Jacques displays the patience, tact and listening skills required of a successful mediator (supra); yet, he fundamentally fails to realize that his farcical attempt at facilitative mediation is entirely inappropriate to the situation before him. His mistake is strategic as well as personal; he simply assumes that he must listen carefully to what each party has to say without realizing that he must be an evaluative third party furthermore interposing his own ideas as well as presenting accurate representations of the other side. Specifically, Master Jacques simply reinforces each party's "Rorschach realities"
(Boudreau, 2011) without challenging them, or seeking a common ground. Thus, his attempted intervention makes matters materially worse between the parties, despite his best intentions. The end result is what we dub a "Moliere mediation" in which the third party intervener fails, leaving the conflicting parties much worse off than before the ill fated intervention.

PICKING THE RIGHT MEDIATOR, STRATEGY OR METHOD OF MEDIATION:

Of course, Moliere, as the playwright of such a farcical comedy as *The Miser*, begs and avoids the question: Was Master Jacques the right mediator for the formidable task at hand? Once posed, the answer is obviously "No!" As a servant, Jacques was in no position to confront his master Harpagon with the enormity of his attempted usurpation of his son's love for Mariane. Due to this, his style of mediation was largely chimerical and not even descriptive. However, one can easily imagine another much more effective evaluative mediator, such as his wife--if he had one--who would clearly remind Harpagon of his responsibilities and even of his errors and would have obviously robbed the play of much of the farcical impact of Master Jacques subsequent "intervention."

Even so, the play raises the potent questions concerning the selection of the right actor as mediator as well as the selection of the right strategy and methods of mediation (Svensson & Wallerstein, 2010). Master Jacques was obviously deficient in all three areas and this lead to the terrible, if farcical "outcome" of his intervention. Yet, these are critical choices and questions in any mediation and especially in the analysis of its reasons for success for failure.

Unfortunately, this outcome occurs all too often in real life situations beyond the confines of the comedic stage. In our judgment, the phenomena of Moliere mediations can be found in interpersonal, intergroup and even international conflicts in which the mediator made matters much worse than when he or she intervened. For instance, in his excellent article "Facilitating
'Perspectival Reciprocity' in Mediation," Calvin Smith analyses at the end of his essay a failed mediation and attributes it to the failure of the parties, as well as the mediators' to elicit "perspectival reciprocity" or empathy between both parties involved in the dispute (Smith, 2000). Yet, Prof. Smith's one of the relatively few case studies in the academic literature of an actual failure in interpersonal mediation. Hence, there is a demonstrable need to analyze and understand the causes and consequences of such futile attempts, as Marieke Kleiboer (1996) argued for in her article "Understanding Successes and Failures of International Mediation."

Unfortunately, time or space does not permit us to enunciate all possible--or even the most prominent--examples of failures in third party intervention here (i.e. Owen, 1996); so, to illustrate the lessons learned from the Moliere mediation, we would like to focus briefly on one case study that is illustrative of a transformative yet potentially terrible outcome. Specifically, we will briefly examine the famous intervention of Secretary of State Al Haig in the dispute between the British and the Argentine government over the latter’s occupation of the Falkland Islands in the spring of 1982. As we shall see, the United States first undertook to mediate the dispute only to choose sides even while Al Haig was attempting to mediate an end to the crisis. All out war on the islands was the tragic result.

"WE WANT NONE OF YOUR GIFTS!" AL HAIG'S INTERVENTION IN THE FALKLAND CRISIS.

"Had [he succeeded], Al Haig might look now less like an energetic crisis manager and more like a statesman - an image (and a reality) that, despite his gifts, continues to elude him.” John McLaughlin, May, 1982

With the invasion of the British held Falkland Islands by Argentinean military forces in April 1982, the Reagan Administration found itself caught in a potentially deadly quarrel between two valued allies. On one side, the United Kingdom was America's staunchest ally, an alliance forged in the agony of World War I and II, a member of NATO and the victim of armed
aggression against the Falkland Islands, one of its island protectorates in the South Atlantic. On the other side, Argentina was a right wing military junta that was considered by some in the Reagan Administration as a staunch ally in the Cold War, combating feared communist influence and expansion in South America. As a result, President Reagan was not eager to see war break out between the two countries though he recognized from the beginning that Argentinean aggression could not be allowed to stand.

At the same time, his Secretary of State Al Haig was eager to prove his diplomatic credentials as a statesman and diplomat, though he did not enjoy the full support of other strong personalities in the Reagan Administration. Eager to preserve peace between two allies, the President asked his Secretary of State in early April 1982 to attempt an immediate intervention and mediation soon after the Argentinean invasion of the Falkland Islands (Boudreau, 1985).

PICKING THE RIGHT MEDIATOR? SELECTING THE RIGHT ACTOR

In view of America's commitment, forged in our NATO alliance with the United Kingdom, to come to the aid of a fellow member suffering from armed attack, the President's choice of using an American Secretary of State was perhaps unfortunate; at this point, it is important to note that the personal qualities of Secretary of State Haig were above reproach. A highly decorated soldier, Haig had demonstrated great capabilities in war and peace as a patriotic American devoted to his president and country. At the same time, there were people already in the Administration, namely Admiral Bobby Inman, who recognized that, if the situation in the South Atlantic deteriorated and war broke out between the United Kingdom and Argentina, the United States would have to side with the British less we weaken our key NATO alliance and our joint conventional military deterrence along the Rhine.
In view of this possibility, another salient international mediator may have been asked to intervene, such as the United Nations Secretary General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, a Peruvian who had good relations with the Argentineans and who was also a good friend of Vice President George Bush, a friendship that went back to their days together serving as Ambassadors from their respective countries to the United Nations.

However, at this juncture, the United Nations was not held in high esteem by the Reagan Administration and so the possibility was not seriously entertained at the time. A month later, the Administration would reverse this decision, but much valuable time was lost in the interim (Boudreau, 1985). Meanwhile, a British naval flotilla commenced sailing in early April to the islands from the United Kingdom to the Falkland Islands and was charged with retaking them. Since the distance was so great, almost 8,000 miles, the fleet would take nearly a month to arrive. This gave some time, but not much, to negotiate a settlement to the simmering crisis that could easily slip into all out war in the South Atlantic. Hence, the stakes were very high when Haig started out on his mediation effort in April, 1982.

**PICKING THE RIGHT STRATEGY OF INTERVENTION: POWER BROKERAGE VS PROBLEM SOLVING?**

At this point, Secretary of State Haig had to make a basic decision about his pending strategy of intervention. Marieke Kleiboer makes a basic distinction between "International Mediation as Power Brokerage" and "International Mediation as Political Problem Solving." She sees "power brokerage" as a method of the great powers who can advance their own interests as well as the conflict parties in the subsequent intervention; she sees "political problem solving" as one in which the "mediator should be a skillful actor with no stake in the conflict, but with
[a]…. commitment to… a more humane world." She elaborates upon this, stating that: "Mediators need to analyze the conflict in terms of the underlying needs, values, and fears of parties, and they should use different techniques designed to facilitate a more profound dialogue between parties." (Kleiboer, 1996).

While these definitions are incomplete and thus not a precise description of Haig's approach, the idea of using mediation to re-establish at least a social or "working" relationship seems to be Haig's basic strategy; he certainly sought to create, sustain and intensify diplomatic dialogue between the British and the Argentines as a basic goal of his intervention (Rentschler, 1982). This is laudable as far as it goes; yet, it overlooks the essential fact that created the crisis, namely that the unprovoked aggression by the Argentinean regime had initiated hostilities and the seizure of even contested land by the use of force should not stand (Boudreau, 1985). In this regard, Haig would have been better advised from the very beginning to recognize the injustice of the junta's invasion, rather than place the Argentines on apparent equal footing with the British--much to the justifiable ire of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. In short, he needed to use the leverage of the United States to power broker a settlement that recognized the basic principle of international law and life after World War II that territory conquered by force of arms in illegitimate, and could not recognized or accepted as the new status quo (Kleiboer, 1996).

Much later, another protégé of Henry Kissinger, Richard Holbrooke, would use such a power brokering and coercive method of intervention to advance the United States' interest in ending the Bosnian war by holding the Bosnian Serbs as directly responsible for the hostilities (Chollet, 2005; Holbrooke, 1998). Unfortunately, from our records of his conversations with the Argentinean Junta, Secretary of State Haig simply did not seem to convey forcibly the message
that Argentines were wrong and needed to get out (Rentschler, 1982-Margaret Thatcher Foundation). Like Master Jacques in Moliere's The Miser, Haig simply didn't seem to recognize that a basic injustice had been committed and one party needed a carefully constructed fig leaf to retreat.

PICKING THE RIGHT METHODOLOGY FOR INTERVENTION: SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY?

The U.S. mediating mission's mistakes were compounded by Haig's decision, despite the vast distances that separated the capitols of the main protagonists, to use shuttle diplomacy as his primary methods of direct intervention. He may have been inspired in this respect by the successful use of shuttle diplomacy by his mentor Secretary of State Henry Kissinger who used it to end the 1973 war between Israel and its neighbors (Berridge, Keens-Soper & Otte, 2001) Kissinger would use this method with great effectiveness since capitols in the Middle East are often within an easy hour's flying time or less. Hence, he could shuttle back and forth between leaders on the same day. In stark contrast, Haig's shuttle to Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, from the United Kingdom involved 14 hours of flying time and the several different time zones. Yet, he was to fly between Washington, London and Buenos Aires several times during his attempt at mediation. This cost valuable time during a critical period when time was in short supply; it also exhausted Haig and his team though Haig bravely soldiered on despite the weary and wearing schedule. For instance, at one critical moment of negotiations, one of Haig's aides reported that he finally received a room in a Buenos Aires hotel:

"It registers 1 a.m. by the time I settle into a very comfortable bed, a good place to be after having touched down in four different continents within 48 hours .....It was only six hours, but that was the best and longest slumber I've had in the past two weeks! " (Margaret Thatcher Foundation , James Rentschler’s Falklands diary, 1982)
Such exhaustion is not the best condition to be in when making decision of life and death. In fact, the growing literature on crisis management cites the stress and fatigue of key decision-makers as a main reason for cognitive shortcuts resulting in an impaired ability to detect subtle or even clear differences in the changing nuances of messages between protagonists (Suedfeld and Tetlock, 1977). So, shuttle diplomacy in this instance was probably not the best method to be employed, at least initially until much more groundwork was established by simultaneous meetings of the respective U.S Ambassadors already stationed in London, Buenos Aires; these ambassadors could have been utilized, at least initially, as well as the Argentinean and British Ambassadors stationed in Washington D.C. and New York City, assigned to the United Nations. In short, an alternative method of intervention was readily available that was not as exhaustive or person dependent as the method that Haig chose (Boudreau, 1985).

MAKING MATTERS MUCH WORSE: CHOOSING SIDES

Perhaps the worst outcome for any third party intervention is to choose sides before the dispute is managed or resolved. By doing so, the act of "choosing sides" will inevitably make the conflict much worse as valuable time, trust and any progress made--however minimal-- is sacrificed for personal or political purposes. Yet, this is precisely what happened after the Haig mission seemed to falter or even fail. As the Deputy Director of the CIA at the time, Bobby Inman correctly predicted at the onset of the Falkland crisis, the United States would tilt towards the United Kingdom if events in the South Atlantic seemed to escalate towards open war. Admittedly, President Reagan was eager to prevent a war between two allies; yet, if forced to choose, and the U.S. was soon compelled to do so, it was obvious to almost all in the Reagan Administration--except a few lost souls like U.N. Ambassador Jeanne Kilpatrick--that the United States had a moral and military responsibility towards the United Kingdom, both because it was
a valued NATO ally as well as the victim of armed aggression. Also, President Reagan had a very good, close and congenial relationship with Maggie Thatcher, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and considered her one of his strongest ideological and political allies (Reagan, 2007). So, perhaps not surprisingly, the United States came out in support of the British military attempt to retake the islands when it became apparent that Haig's diplomacy was failing.

While this was certainly no fault of Secretary of State Haig, this eventuality should have precluded a mediating role for the United States in the first place; because of our commitment to NATO, the United States had profound strategic interests in preserving the military effectiveness and deterrent ability of the British armed forces (Boudreau, 1985). This was obvious to the best strategic minds in the Reagan Administration, including Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger, who personally lobbied the President--As Haig's efforts appeared doomed to failure--to support England's efforts to re-establish its sovereignty over the islands, by force if necessary. Hence, due to a number of critical factors, some of which were totally beyond his control, Secretary of State Al Haig's mediating efforts ended up squandering precious time, trust and opportunities, making the relationships between the two sides arguably much worse in the progress; his failed effort even poisoned the well between the Argentinean Junta and the United States, a condition that outlasted the subsequent war and only ended when the Argentinean government was ousted by its own people. Thus, despite his very exemplary personal efforts and initiatives, Haig's mission made the entire situation between Argentina, the United Kingdom and the United States much worse off than when he found it at the beginning, the classic definition of what we have described have as a Moliere Mediation.
CONCLUSION: LEARNING FROM FAILURES AND LOST OPPORTUNITIES

In the preceding essay, we argued that Haig's strategic choices of a "problem solving" mediation (Kleibor, 1996) approach plus shuttle diplomacy were both flawed from the beginning so that system of intervention as well as his methodology for mediation served only to contribute to a failed outcome which made the danger and subsequent reality of war much more likely as a result. This is especially true since so much valuable time was lost as he shuttled between Washington D.C. and the distant capitals of the two respective countries. As a NATO ally of the United Kingdom, the United States was not, and could not, be an honest and impartial mediator, as subsequent events vividly demonstrates. Hence, despite his personal gifts and heroic efforts, Haig's third party intervention became a tragic example of a Moliere mediation.

As an alternative to his exhaustive shuttle diplomacy, Haig could have stayed in D.C. to orchestrate the search for common ground through the intentional effort to enhance the integrative complexity of information and options seeking common ground between the two adversaries. Or the United States could have supported the third party efforts of the UN Secretary-General in April 1982, and not a month later; the efforts and ability of Javier Perez de Cuellar was praised by the British during the crisis, and whose impartiality was above reproach (Boudreau, 1985). The United States strongly supported his efforts a month later even though much time was lost at tremendous opportunities costs. Of course, this is a case of "Advanced Hindsight," but that is precisely the point here--that we need to study and research failed mediation attempts as well as successful ones in order to identify all possible alternative courses of intervention and action--whether it be interpersonal or international--to prevent or resolve a potentially expansive or even explosive conflict.
Otherwise, if we don't learn from our mistakes in mediation, we are in danger of following in the footsteps of the hapless Master Jacques, and Moliere will have the last laugh…
References


APPENDIX: MAIN ACTORS IN PLAY, *THE MISER*

Harpagon, Tyrant, father of Clèante, in love with Mariane.

Clèante, Harpagon’s son, lover to Mariane.

Master Jacques, cook and coachmen to Harpagon

Mariane, in love with Clèante