

Syracuse University

SURFACE

Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics

College of Arts and Sciences

Summer 2000

Switching Codes: Class, Clothing and Cultural Change in the Works of Marivaux and Watteau

Amy S. Wyngaard

Follow this and additional works at: <https://surface.syr.edu/III>



Part of the [French and Francophone Language and Literature Commons](#), and the [History of Art, Architecture, and Archaeology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Wyngaard, Amy S., "Switching Codes: Class, Clothing and Cultural Change in the Works of Marivaux and Watteau" (2000). *Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics*. 2.
<https://surface.syr.edu/III/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Arts and Sciences at SURFACE. It has been accepted for inclusion in Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics by an authorized administrator of SURFACE. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.



Project
MUSE[®]

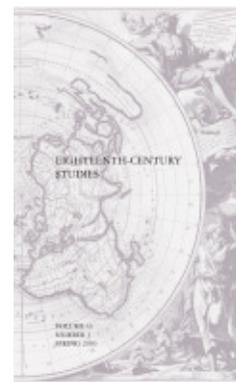
Today's Research. Tomorrow's Inspiration.

Switching Codes: Class, Clothing, and Cultural Change in the Works of Marivaux and Watteau

Amy Wyngaard

Eighteenth-Century Studies, Volume 33, Number 4, Summer 2000,
pp. 523-541 (Article)

Published by The Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: 10.1353/ecs.2000.0049



 For additional information about this article
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/ecs/summary/v033/33.4wyngaard.html>

*S*WITCHING CODES: CLASS, CLOTHING, AND CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE WORKS OF MARIVAUX AND WATTEAU

Amy Wyngaard

The affinity between the works of Marivaux and Watteau is a *lieu commun* of eighteenth-century French studies. Scholars have long remarked on the connections between their gallant themes and rococo frivolity, seen as capturing the essence of Regency society. One of the most compelling recent studies, Robert Tomlinson's *La Fête galante: Watteau et Marivaux* (1981), interprets the similar visions of love and nature and the parallel visual and verbal "arabesques" found in Watteau's paintings and Marivaux's plays within the aesthetic context of early eighteenth-century theater.¹ While much scholarship exists exploring their shared themes, structures, and social context, their complementary treatment of cultural and material issues of clothing in relation to class remains largely unexplored. In this essay, I would like to propose a comparative reading of their works as a means to illuminate the forces and mechanisms behind the changing hierarchies of status and appearance in early eighteenth-century France.

The common thematics and modalities of the masquerade seen in Marivaux's and Watteau's works must be viewed within the context of the social tension and confusion of the Regency. Between 1715 and 1723, France witnessed the beginning of a dramatic reorganization of society. The death of Louis XIV in 1715 brought about a crisis in the aristocracy as the *noblesse d'épée* became engaged in a losing battle with the *noblesse de robe* to assume the country's leadership.² Meanwhile, members of the bourgeoisie were becoming increasingly powerful, rapidly making large fortunes through speculation, overseas trade, and commerce.³ Even members of the lower classes

Amy Wyngaard is an Assistant Professor of French at Syracuse University. She is currently completing a book on representations of the peasant in eighteenth-century French literature and painting.

found opportunity for financial gain during the turbulent years of the Law System (1716–1720), and stories of the dramatic rise of servants contributed to the widespread impression of significant social and economic flux. This sense of social confusion was compounded by the gradual effacement of the apparent distinctions between classes as members of the bourgeoisie and domestic servants were increasingly acquiring elegant clothing, fine furniture, and decorative objects, once luxury goods that only the aristocracy could afford.⁴

Above all, clothing became the highly charged symbol of this emerging conflict of social systems and hierarchies. In the spectacle of the city street, an individual's garments and accessories allowed for the most visible and effective conveyance of signs of real and desired success.⁵ During this time, the (il)legibility of clothing emerges as a dominant theme in literary and artistic representation, providing a mimetic and metaphorical means to explore related issues of class and hierarchy. In the works of Marivaux and Watteau, manipulations of clothing and status allow for an elaboration of the changing significance of vestimentary signs. Their plays and paintings not only demonstrate, but also literally perform, the destabilization of the traditional equivalence between rank and appearance. Sustaining a dialectic relationship with contemporary society, their works both imitated social practices and served as a paradigm to help construct them.

In this essay, I will examine scenes of social and vestimentary transformation in Marivaux and Watteau within their socio-historical context, interpreting their modes and significance through an analysis of the attitudes and reactions of the contemporary public. I will first look at servant role-play and mobility in Marivaux, exploring how his works demonstrate and encourage the questioning of traditional hierarchies. I will then turn to Watteau's *fêtes galantes*, proposing that the confusion of signs and statuses in his works both simulates and realizes the ephemeral social reversals and equalizing performed by the elite masquerade. By examining their works within the context of contemporary theatrical and artistic trends, I will suggest that generic transformation and social subversion are inextricably linked in their works, providing another interpretive standpoint from which to view the complex relationship between society and cultural production in early eighteenth-century France.



The plots of a number of Marivaux's works revolve around servants who dress up and pretend to be members of the upper classes. In plays like *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard* (1730), Arlequin and Lisette assume the clothing and identities of their masters Dorante and Silvia in order to allow the pair to observe each other secretly and decide if they want to marry. In the novel *Le Paysan parvenu* (1734–35), Marivaux portrays the social ascension of Jacob, a peasant who comes to Paris as a servant and gradually attains the ranks of the *haute bourgeoisie* through a series of vestimentary metamorphoses.

Marivaux may very well have found the inspiration for these scenes in the society of his time. During the period when Marivaux was writing, thousands of peasants were moving to the city to enter into domestic service, effecting significant changes in both their real and perceived position in society.⁶ Most ex-provincials found their economic situations significantly improved in becoming part of an urban household. Frequently single, with room and board provided, many were able to amass

fortunes comparable to those found in the lower levels of the bourgeoisie.⁷ A surprisingly large number of servants made significant profits from lending money at interest to members of the popular classes, an activity which contributed to the myth of the ex-lackey financier propagated by Montesquieu in *Lettres persanes* (1721).⁸ In addition, masters often bequeathed money to their servants when they died, thus enabling some to start their own businesses or marry members of a higher social class.⁹ In the early eighteenth century, in other words, servants were widely seen as highly ambitious, socially mobile individuals. Particularly during the Regency, when the public saw fortunes rapidly made and lost due to the rise and fall of the Law System, it appears that many lent credence to the phrase “today valet, tomorrow master.”¹⁰

For most servants, these changes in fortune were accompanied by dramatic changes in their outward appearance. Domestics not only imitated and internalized the speech and mannerisms of their upper-class employers, but they were also given explicit instruction in comportment and proper French.¹¹ Most importantly, wealthy masters provided their domestics with expensive clothing. Despite persistent attempts by the government to regulate extravagance in civil uniform, lower male servants such as lackeys wore colorful and elegant liveries that reflected their employer’s wealth and stature.¹² High-ranking servants, such as valets and chambermaids, often wore the discarded clothing of their masters and mistresses.¹³ Ostensibly inspired by their exposure to luxury goods and sumptuous dress, domestics were also known to purchase fine clothing and accessories on their own.¹⁴

The acquisition of refined mannerisms and elegant clothing among servants was cause for public concern, as these were the outward signs of elevated social status. It was widely believed that domestics could be mistaken for members of the upper classes, because the sartorial marks that would signal their true rank were either absent, unclear, or easily dissimulated. These anxieties were further fueled by the circulation of both real and fictional stories telling of servants dressing up in their masters’ clothing and temporarily assuming their identities. In 1699, the public learned that the Breton servant François Nyon had gone as far as to kill his master and had successfully pretended to be him for four days, selling off the contents of his master’s house in order to accumulate enough money to make his escape.¹⁵ In an attempt to prevent this potentially dangerous confusion, a series of royal edicts concerning servants’ dress was enacted between 1717 and 1725. The edict of 1725 specifically suggested that servants, dressed in bourgeois clothing and equipped with swords, were freely circulating with the public in promenades and theaters. Emphasizing the threat that these individuals posed to public safety and order, these *ordonnances* explicitly forbade servants to carry swords or to remove their shoulder knots, braids, or other characteristic pieces of clothing.¹⁶

Because of this sartorial ambiguity, Daniel Roche believes that urban domestics played a central role in the vestimentary revolution that took place in France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In this time period, Roche sees a movement from what he terms the “vestimentary Old Regime,” when the clothing of an individual clearly reflected his or her social rank, towards a more modern system of dress, where clothing was likely to reflect an individual’s acquired or desired status. Roche argues that servants acted as “cultural intermediaries”: bridging the gap between rich and poor, city and country, servants acquired the social and vestimentary practices of the elite and in turn transmitted them to the lower echelons of society.¹⁷ As Roche

notes, this trend towards a more fluid sartorial system was both influenced by and contributed to an increase in social mobility and the rise of the ideology of egalitarianism. By means of their socio-economic successes and vestimentary transformations, servants both consciously and unconsciously helped to advance the movement towards social equality and sartorial freedom that was declared during the Revolution.¹⁸

The works of Marivaux explore the issues surrounding the changing significance of appearances and the potential for social transformation seen in early eighteenth-century France. Through the clothing changes and social role-playing of servants and aristocrats depicted in plays like *L'Île des Esclaves* and *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard* and in the novel *Le Paysan parvenu*, he portrays a society where mobility is possible and clothing serves as both a reflection of newly acquired status and as a means to arrive. These scenes are accompanied by comments made by members of all classes stressing the importance of merit over birth and the haphazardness of social rank. Marivaux's works ultimately argue for the necessity of revising the hierarchies of rank and appearance, demonstrating the value of a society where status and its attendant symbols are acquired by means of merit. Many critics, however, have remarked on the conservatism of Marivaux's works, noting that the force of the master/servant role reversals in his plays is weakened by the servants' good-natured return to their proper roles in the end. Although Marivaux's portrayals are attenuated, carefully working within the conventions of the Italian Theater and the ideological limitations of his audience, their power to awaken new ideas in the minds of his public should not be underestimated.¹⁹



In *L'Île des Esclaves*, Marivaux depicts a master/servant role switch within the foil of a utopic, atemporal setting. First performed in 1725, the play takes place on an island inhabited by the descendants of former Greek slaves. The main characters are residents of Athens who are stranded on the island after a shipwreck: Iphicrate and his valet Arlequin, Euphrosine and her maid Cléanthis. At the beginning of the play, Trivelin, the leader of the island's slaves, imposes a three-year "course on humaneness" (*cours d'humanité*) on Iphicrate and Euphrosine that entails switching positions with their servants.²⁰ The gradual enlightenment of both servants and masters ultimately leads to a powerful reformulation of the relationship between rank, merit, and clothing.

When Trivelin orders the shipwrecked servants and masters to exchange identities and social roles in the second scene of the play, he tells them to take each other's names and, most importantly, to dress in each other's clothing. In addition, Trivelin takes Iphicrate's sword, raised in a threat to kill the insolent Arlequin, and gives it to the valet, an exchange that is significant not only because the sword is an instrument of the master's power, but also because it is a symbol of his social rank. More than just a theatrical element, this exchange is a manifestation of the equivalence between an individual's rank and clothing that dominated French society before the eighteenth century: to be a master or a servant means that one dresses in a certain manner. The direct connection between rank and appearance is made explicit by Trivelin early in the scene, when he explains that he knew that Cléanthis was a servant by what she was wearing: "I knew your condition from your clothing."²¹ The clothing switch, which takes place offstage, allows for the dramatic re-entrance of the characters wearing the signs and symbols of another class.²² Subverting the traditional correspondence

between rank and appearance, the clothing and role changes in this play provide a forceful visual demonstration that clothing can reflect desired rather than actual status.

Marivaux further destabilizes the notion of external signs as legitimate and privileged indicators of rank by demonstrating that aristocratic codes of comportment can be emulated. The role-playing of Cléanthis and Arlequin demonstrates that aristocratic discourse and mannerisms can be acquired just as easily as elegant clothing. In one scene, they decide to pass their time by engaging in gallant conversation. Cléanthis coaches Arlequin according to the upper-class models she has studied, proposing that they stroll while conversing. Filled with clichéd versions of elegant discourse, their conversation reveals the artificiality of aristocratic speech, both in content and as a social marker:

Arlequin: Do you notice, Madame, the brightness of the day?

Cléanthis: It is the most beautiful weather in the world; one would call this a tender day.

Arlequin: A tender day? I resemble the day then, Madame.

Cléanthis: What? How is it that you resemble the day?

Arlequin: Geez, how could someone not be tender, when alone with your charms?²³

Pleased with his amorous wit, Arlequin repeatedly shouts and jumps for joy, causing Cléanthis to chastize him for ruining their civilized conversation. Despite Arlequin's foolish antics, this scene offers a powerful portrayal of servants strolling, conversing, and passing for members of the upper classes in public places, activities that many believed domestics were undertaking in 1725. With similar irony, Marivaux goes on to emphasize the success of the servants' aristocratic role-playing in scenes where the two enthusiastically subject Iphicrate and Euphrosine to the same harsh criticism and poor treatment that they had endured at the hands of their masters.

Throughout the play, the clothing and role changes are given greater social significance by means of the characters' reflections on the system of social hierarchy. During her stroll with Arlequin, Cléanthis comments on the role that chance plays in determining an individual's social status: "In the past, I was nothing but a slave; but finally here I am, a lady and a mistress, dealt as good of a hand as any other: this happened by chance; is it not chance that makes everything come about?"²⁴ In the penultimate scene, she questions the values upon which the social hierarchy is based. Dismissing the idea that being rich or noble makes one individual worth more than another, she proposes that an individual's merit should determine his or her social rank: "One must have a good heart, virtue and reason; that is what is necessary, what is admirable, what distinguishes, what makes one man worth more than another."²⁵ At the end of the play, after both masters and servants declare their understanding and forgiveness of one another, Trivelin sends them back to Athens with a final declaration that summarizes these reflections: "Differences in condition are nothing but a trial from the gods."²⁶

The relationship between merit, rank, and appearance is at the crux of the final scenes of the play. Significantly, it is Arlequin who initiates the characters' eventual return to their original roles. After a humbled Iphicrate acknowledges his wrongdoing and asks for Arlequin's forgiveness, Arlequin admits that his comportment would not

have been any better than that of his master. Faced with Iphicrate's repentance and the memory of his own vengeful behavior, he declares himself "unworthy" of Iphicrate's clothing, proclaiming it "too big" for himself and his own "too small" for his master as the two dramatically re-exchange costumes on stage.²⁷ Rather than a return to the *status quo*, this ending proposes a revision of the hierarchical structures of clothing and class evoked at the beginning of the play. If Arlequin cedes his master's clothing and identity, it is only because he feels he does not merit them. The role switches and egalitarian discourse find fusion in the symbolic significance of Arlequin's gesture, which ultimately demonstrates that class and its attendant markers can, and should, be acquired by merit.

While the immediacy of the conclusions drawn from *L'Île des Esclaves* is limited by the abstract framing of the master/servant role reversals, the games of identity in *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard* provide a diegetic mechanism that allows for an exploration of issues surrounding the potential discrepancy between rank and appearance in Parisian society. In this play, the exchanges of clothing and identities are initiated by the masters in order to facilitate their amorous pursuits. Silvia, upon learning that her father M. Orgon wants her to marry a man she has never met, decides to switch places with her maid Lisette so that she can observe Dorante freely and decide if she wants to marry him. Independently, Dorante decides to carry out the same switch with his valet Arlequin and arrives at the Parisian home of the Orgon family dressed as the valet Bourguignon. In this dramatic manner, clothing and the rank that it implies become the key element of the social mask that the characters must see through. Silvia and Dorante's experience demonstrates that a person's apparent rank may not reflect their true value, and that, whether by fate or by manipulation, lowly clothing can "disguise" a person of merit.

Opening with the theme of masks, the play revolves around an examination of the disparity between *l'être* and *le paraître*, or who an individual actually is versus who he or she appears to be in the theater of society. For Silvia, the process of discovering the real Dorante beneath the mask is inextricably linked with testing his ability to see beyond the external signs of rank to her inner qualities. She admits to her father and brother, Mario: "Frankly, I would not be displeased if he took a liking to the character that I am playing, I would not be sorry . . . to trouble him about the distance that will be between us . . . this would help me to figure out Dorante."²⁸ Infatuated with the woman he thinks to be Lisette, Dorante finally admits his true identity along with his love to the disguised Silvia at the end of the second act. Still unsatisfied, Silvia wants Dorante to propose to her dressed as a servant, an action that she considers to be the ultimate demonstration of his love and virtue. As she explains to her father and Mario: "The trouble that his decision is causing him is only making him more admirable to me: he thinks that he will hurt his father by marrying me, that he is betraying his fortune and his birth . . . I want a battle between love and reason."²⁹ An expression of Marivaudian *sensibilité*, Silvia's words and actions are a testimony to the belief that the communication of hearts should know no class barriers.

Although Silvia wants Dorante to overcome apparent social barriers and fall in love with her for her intrinsic qualities rather than for her rank, she is deeply troubled by her own feelings for the man she thinks to be the valet Bourguignon. Fighting her emotions, she concedes that she is partial to Dorante, agreeing with his assessment that things would be different if he were rich and of a high rank. Faced

with the same dilemma, Dorante demonstrates an ability to transcend a rigidly class-based determination of marriage. Just as Silvia had desired, he declares his love and intent to marry her as Lisette in the penultimate scene of the play. Revealing that he succeeded in overcoming his own social prejudice to do so, he emphatically declares that he now realizes that the worth of an individual is more important than his or her social status: "I adore you, I respect you, there is no rank, birth, or fortune that does not disappear before a soul like yours; I would be ashamed if my pride were still holding out against you, and my heart and my hand belong to you." He continues: "merit is worth just as much as birth."³⁰ Yet the force of these egalitarian statements is weakened by the fact that there is no social barrier for Dorante to overcome in the end. As it turns out, he is in love with a woman of his own rank.

If the social hierarchy ultimately remains undisturbed in this play, it is because the characters are naturally drawn to members of their own class. Throughout the work, Marivaux consistently shows that the characters' true ranks shine through their disguises by means of their speech and comportments, acting as inescapable forces of attraction and repulsion. Upon meeting, Dorante and Silvia each sense the elevated social position of the other. Dorante immediately perceives Silvia's real status, asking: "What kind of a maid are you with your princess-like air?"³¹ While Silvia and Dorante are mutually attracted, they both have equally strong repulsions for the servants disguised as their intended spouses. Silvia clearly expresses her feelings about Arlequin to Lisette: "you can clearly see that this man doesn't suit me at all . . . I hate him enough without taking the time to hate him more."³² In depicting the strong forces that join members of the same class and separate those of different social conditions, Marivaux seems to be providing some reassurance that the social order naturally perpetuates itself. At the same time, he troubles this sense of order by showing that the characters' disguises work. Although the characters sense the true ranks of the other masqueraders, they never seriously doubt their apparent social positions.

The reactions of contemporary audiences reveal that the public was particularly sensitive to the dynamics of the master/servant role reversals. The April 1730 edition of the *Mercure de France* describes the public's disbelief that Silvia would be duped by Arlequin's disguise: "Here are the remarks that have been made about this comedy; we are nothing more than the echo of the public. They say: 1) that it is not plausible that Silvia could persuade herself that an oaf like Arlequin was the same Dorante that had been so favorably described to her . . . Shouldn't the mere sight of the false Dorante make one suspicious, above all Silvia, who is also disguised, and could easily suspect her fiancé of the same? 2) Arlequin, they say, does not evenly uphold his character; beautiful phrases follow vulgarities."³³ The critique is as striking for what it mentions as for what it omits. Sidestepping issues of the success of Arlequin's masquerade, critics argued that Silvia should have questioned his identity simply based on the knowledge of her own ruse. Similarly, although one would expect the public to point out that the vulgarity of Arlequin's speech should have revealed his true status, it instead concentrated on the fact that it was not believable that a servant could produce elegant discourse. The curious and faulty reasoning behind these arguments reveals much about contemporary mentalities, underscoring anxieties surrounding the potential for the manipulation of signs of social status.

In "Vraisemblance et motivation," Gérard Genette notes that the seventeenth-century public's assessment of the verisimilitude of *Le Cid* and *La Princesse de Clèves*

had very little to do with its perception of the probability that a certain situation or comportment could have arisen in reality. Instead, he argues that the public relied on implicit notions of conformity and propriety, or of what they thought *should* happen according to their sense of social and moral order, in order to judge the verisimilitude of a literary or theatrical work.³⁴ Along these lines, the reproaches of Marivaux's audiences arose not from their rejection of the possibility of master/servant masquerading, but from their categorical refusal to believe that such masquerading could actually work, a denial that highlights concerns about the possibility for social confusion at the time. As Patrice Pavis notes: "The audience is troubled by the possible difficulty in distinguishing a master from a valet . . . it is even more troubled by the refusal of valets to see themselves as naturally inferior to masters."³⁵

It is significant that the public's critiques center on the relationship of Silvia and Arlequin, never mentioning any objections to the interactions of Dorante and Lisette. As the commentary of the Marquis d'Argenson suggests, the public fixated on the masquerading of Arlequin because it had more disturbing social implications: "What is repugnant, and what is fairly happily saved, is that the fiancée is attracted to a man she thinks is only Bourguignon, and Dorante takes a fancy to a woman he thinks is only Lisette; the first intrigue is assuredly more shocking, since a gentleman will love a chambermaid more easily than a well-born girl will let herself feel something for a lackey, no matter how likeable he may be."³⁶ Although Dorante's egalitarian declaration of his love for Silvia dressed as Lisette would seem to have the same shock potential, his intention to marry a woman who he thinks is a servant is ultimately less threatening to the social order. Further, to the apparent relief of the public, these statements are never put into practice. Maintaining a careful balance between the proper and the improper, the shocking and the soothing, the play effectively pushes the limits of its audience by suggesting the possibility of a legitimate attraction between individuals of different social status.

Freeing the author of the aesthetic and temporal constraints of the theater, the novelistic genre of the pseudo-memoir provides a realistic framework that allows for the most developed articulation of Marivaux's ideas on class mobility and sartorial freedom. *Le Paysan parvenu* recounts the story of the peasant Jacob's conscious manipulation of sartorial signs that facilitates his dramatic socio-economic rise in contemporary Paris. Starting out as a servant in his lord's urban household, Jacob systematically changes his clothing and social rank to reach the level of the *haute bourgeoisie* before the unfinished novel breaks off. Jacob's tale mirrors the ascension of real peasants such as Poisson de Bourvalais, who began his career as a lackey and quickly made an enormous fortune selling provisions to the army before being imprisoned for embezzlement in 1716.³⁷ Validating and contributing to these contemporary success stories, the novel effectively attempts to shape social attitudes by portraying mobility in a positive manner.

Throughout the novel, Marivaux portrays Jacob's process of learning to read vestimentary signs, an education that eventually inspires his own sartorial manipulations. Arriving in Paris from Champagne, Jacob is quickly exposed to the transformational powers of clothing. His master's wife gives him a full suit of clothing, undergarments, and a hat two days after he has joined the household. "Plain and without livery," this costume does not clearly reveal his rank as that of a servant. His mistress immediately notes the dramatic change in his appearance, telling a gleeful Jacob: "you

have lost your village air.”³⁸ Jacob soon learns firsthand the benefits of his apparent transformation. After his master dies and he is forced to leave his service, he crosses the Pont-Neuf and sees a woman in need. On a bridge in the center of Paris, the woman, Mlle Habert, immediately takes him for “a respectable boy” and engages him as a servant upon hearing of his misfortune.³⁹

It is Mlle Habert who further encourages Jacob to change his outward appearance. Aware of his origins, yet eager to marry him, she helps him to pass as one of her relatives, M. de la Vallée, when they secretly move into the pension of Mme d’Alain. When the two finally marry, Jacob officially becomes a member of the bourgeoisie and effectuates his ultimate transformation. Like a stereotypical servant of the time, the day after the wedding he announces his intent to become a financier and continue his ascent to the ranks of the aristocracy. Thanks to his wife’s generosity, by the end of the day he has acquired not only a sword and belt, but also a dressing gown that had belonged to Mme d’Alain’s deceased husband, and most importantly, a new suit of clothing that a tailor provided at a discount. Proud owner of this “coat, jacket, and breeches, made of fine, solid-colored cloth, lined with red silk” as well as stockings, a shirt, and a hat with silver binding, Jacob ecstatically describes his own transformation. In order fully to appreciate his metamorphosis, he splits his persona into the subject “I” and the object that he is looking at, “Jacob,” emphasizing the success of his creation of an entirely different entity by means of his clothing: “before dinner I experienced the joy of seeing Jacob transformed into a cavalier.”⁴⁰ Through the symbolism of these vestimentary details, Jacob attains the appearance of a member of the upper classes. The fine cloth and red silk lining of his suit, the silver binding on his hat, and his sword all clearly announce to his fellow Parisians his stature as that of a gentleman.⁴¹

Seeing through the formal clothing of the local grocer and sensing the aristocratic origins of the impoverished M. d’Orville, Jacob is the only character in the novel who is able to look past outward appearances to make a correct assessment of an individual’s status. Not yet savvy about the potential for discrepancy between rank and appearance, other characters do not seem to question an individual’s clothing and the rank that it implies, even when it is contradicted by comportment and manners. The metamorphoses of Jacob and other characters show that an individual can benefit from manipulating vestimentary signs, or that clothes can literally make the man. Far from criticizing these tactics, Marivaux suggests that ascension is the right of any individual with the intelligence and creativity to “arrive.” Directly putting contemporary social attitudes and hierarchies into question, he dramatically stages Jacob’s trial in the court of public opinion at the moment of his marriage to Mlle Habert. Forced to defend himself against accusations that his lowly rank is an “affront” to Mlle Habert’s family, Jacob effectively shows the prejudicial assessments of his social status to be unjust in a rousing address to a personified Paris: “I ask all of Paris, as if it were here, what is this great affront that I am making?”⁴² At the end of Jacob’s speech, the magistrate and his entourage unanimously decide to allow the couple to marry. Extending the fictional courtroom to the private realm of the reader, this direct address challenges the public to draw the same conclusions.

As in his plays, at the end of the unfinished novel, Marivaux appears to retreat from any potentially radical ideas he proposed. At the end of part five, he announces the impending failure of Jacob’s games of appearance. Surrounded by aristocrats and wealthy individuals in elegant and opulent costumes at the Comédie Française, he

regrets “my little outfit of silk and my little bourgeois tidiness” and worries about revealing his lowly rank through his speech. He laments: “I had jumped too quickly; I had just been made a gentleman, I still didn’t have the subaltern education of gentlemen of my sort, and I trembled at the thought that one knew from my appearance that this gentleman had been Jacob.”⁴³ Jacob effectively makes a fool out of himself by accompanying his responses to the inquiries of d’Orsan’s friends with a series of comically deferential bows, frenetic gestures which provoke the humiliating laughter of the gentlemen.

If Marivaux leaves his reader with the image of Jacob’s ultimate failure to pass as an aristocrat, he also suggests that repairing this failure is simply a question of time. Significantly, in depicting Jacob’s lack of preparedness, Marivaux anticipates the public reaction to the novel. In his 1737 critique, the abbé Granet questioned the verisimilitude of Jacob’s success: “a young peasant leaving Champagne, coming to Paris, putting on his livery, pleasing his mistress, her chambermaid, seeing him, I say, brilliant in his repartees, displaying under the shell of artificial simplicity the most fine and delicate wit? Truly, is this not, considering the normal order of things, a monster of beauty?”⁴⁴ In 1756, the public seems to have been more prepared for the peasant’s success. In the novel’s apocryphal conclusion, Jacob rises to the highest echelons of society: he marries an aristocrat, becomes the farmer general of Champagne, and moves into the château of his native village. In an ultimate gesture of deference to Marivaux, the anonymous author of the sequel shows faith in the possibility for self-transformation that was only hinted at twenty years earlier.



On August 28, 1717, seven years prior to the first performances of Marivaux’s earliest Italian Theater plays featuring social cross-dressing, Watteau presented *Le Pèlerinage à l’île de Cythère* as his reception piece to the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture. This work is one of the most accomplished and undoubtedly the best known of his *fêtes galantes*, a genre of painting created by Watteau that features elegant figures, dressed in the costumes of shepherds and theatrical characters, chatting, dancing, and playing music in natural settings. Although many critics have commented on the difficulty of interpreting these scenes, most agree that Watteau’s *fêtes galantes* were largely inspired by the activities of the contemporary elite.⁴⁵ At the time, aristocrats and members of the upper classes were enjoying parties in bucolic settings that often centered around plays and masquerades, festivities that seem to be perfectly evoked in *fête galante* paintings. Much like the works of Marivaux, Watteau’s paintings serve as a dynamic nexus from which to interpret contemporary social attitudes and practices. While the elite masquerade was inspired by a desire among members of the upper classes and the aristocracy both to reaffirm and overcome existing social hierarchies, the consistent mixing of class codes in Watteau’s portrayals ultimately serves to sublimate expressions of social difference and tension. Providing a pictorial counterpoint to Marivaux’s role-plays, the confusion of clothing and classes in the *fêtes galantes* can be seen as a powerful visual articulation of the author’s egalitarian discourse.

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, many aristocrats regularly retreated to country residences, following the model of Louis XIV at Versailles. René Démoris believes that this practice designates an attempt on the part of nobles

to reassert their superior social position in face of the ostentatious shows of material wealth being made by the upwardly mobile classes in the city: "in a non-urban domain, the aristocracy had the opportunity for comportments that radically distinguished it from the bourgeois. In the city, aristocratic superiority was becoming more and more of a fiction, if it was not based on money."⁴⁶ Retreating to the country was an integral part of "living nobly," a leisurely form of existence that revolved around conversation, gallantry, and artistic pursuits.⁴⁷ Because the elegant country sojourn served as a mark of social distinction, upwardly mobile individuals who were eager to be perceived as and accepted by members of the elite classes increasingly sought to imitate such practices. Pierre Crozat, a successful financier and patron of Watteau, joined numerous bankers, manufacturers, and merchants in creating his own version of an aristocratic pleasure park on his estate at Montmorency. As scholars have widely noted, the leisurely activities that took place there may have directly inspired Watteau's *fête galante* scenes.⁴⁸

During the years when Watteau was painting, the most famous of these elite country parties were held on noble estates at Sceaux, Chantilly, Chatenay, and Saint-Cloud.⁴⁹ Festivities often centered around plays known as *parades* performed by the hosts and their guests. A young magistrate named Thomas-Simon Gueullette did much to popularize the *parade*, organizing the first performances in Paris in 1707 and soon moving them to his country estates at Charenton and Choisy.⁵⁰ Noble and upper-class actors seem to have enjoyed the ambiguity of status that their theatrical costumes afforded them, some choosing to remain in costume for the entire day. Gueullette describes the games of identity cultivated by his friend Pierre Pasquereau: "With the name Bertrand and dressed in the clothing of a real peasant, he imitated with such naturalness and accuracy this type of person in speech, in song, and in dance that, after changing his face and his clothing, when he dined with people who had never seen him before, they did not recognize him, and when he was unmasked, so to speak, they could not believe that he was the same person they had seen that afternoon."⁵¹ This spilling over of theater into everyday life underlines the contemporary fascination with the potential for play between reality and appearances, to which Marivaux's *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard* attests. Pasquereau's mixing of registers powerfully exposes the role-playing aspect of all social interaction, particularly that of aristocrats, whose code of *honnêteté* emphasized the necessity of using artifice and masks in social relationships.⁵²

The vogue of the masquerade quickly extended to the Parisian public. Beginning in 1713, masked balls were held several times a week at the Opéra. These events proved so popular that the Comédie Française began holding its own masked balls in 1716. Attended by members of all classes, these balls temporarily allowed individuals to escape the dictates of their rank. The poet René de Bonneval reveals this desire for social escape when he speculates on the true identities of participants in an Opéra ball: "This shepherdess so simple in her clothes and in her manners is perhaps a princess who wants to relieve herself for the evening of the respect that is owed her rank. This other woman whose glittering attire announces a distinguished person is nevertheless nothing but a bourgeoisie who aspires to attract the attentions of the highest lords."⁵³ As Bonneval indicates, masked balls allowed participants to liberate themselves briefly from confines and codes of their class to enjoy a freedom of personal expression usually denied them. Much like the Bakhtinian carnival, the eighteenth-

century masquerade afforded individuals much-needed moments of social, sexual, and psychological liberty. Most importantly, by dispensing with artificial barriers and constraints, these masquerades provided a formal framework for individuals of different classes, sexes, and ages to commingle. The role switches and class reversals had the effect of temporarily unifying participants by leveling any social disparities that existed between them.

Watteau's *fêtes galantes* perform the social mixing and equalizing of the masquerade at the representational level. Showing a confusion of classes and vestimentary signs, these paintings present the viewer with images of aristocrats dressed as peasants and peasants dressed as aristocrats in a combination of theatrical costume, contemporary fashion, and seventeenth-century clothing. Defying interpretation, his figures subvert the equivalence between appearance and status, standing as dramatic symbols of the artificiality of dress codes and rejecting the social value ascribed to vestimentary signs. In this way, Watteau's visual recreations of the masquerade assign new and fixed meanings to concrete social practices. His portrayals give permanent value to the momentary leveling of class distinctions through disguise, providing images of individuals of different social status standing side by side. Significantly, Watteau's works were mostly purchased by the bourgeois and socially marginal, including artists, financiers, merchants, government officials, and members of the new elite such as Pierre Crozat and Jean de Jullienne, a wealthy textile manufacturer and trader.⁵⁴ Popular with the socially ambitious because they reflected the activities and the aesthetics of the contemporary aristocracy, these paintings also served to reaffirm aspirations for self-improvement by providing positive and compelling images of self-fashioning and social harmony.

The works from Watteau's proto-*fête galante* period announce the mix of sartorial signs and social statuses seen in his later canvases. Paintings like *Le Contrat de mariage* and *La Mariée de village* (c. 1712; figs. 1 and 2) depict aristocratic participation in provincial celebrations, presenting images of peasants and villagers dressed in their best clothes with aristocrats mingling among them. In *Le Contrat de mariage*, we see peasant figures gathered under the tree on the right, the men in simple clothing and the woman facing the viewer in characteristic peasant costume. The more distinguished dress of the two most prominent couples in the left foreground indicates that they are members of the upper classes who have joined the rustic festivities. As Sarah Cohen has pointed out, the dance and gestures of these figures provide another indication of their social status, with the couple on the left striking aristocratic dance postures and the couple in the right foreground engaged in a country *branze*.⁵⁵ The couple in the foreground summarizes the social mixing and sartorial confusion seen in the painting. The woman wears a lacy, elegantly tailored dress and the man has a more countrified appearance, while the flamboyant bows on his coat, breeches, and shoes indicate that he is dressed in theatrical peasant costume. The juxtaposition of theatrical costume and real fashion in this painting underlines the costume-like nature of all clothing, negating the significance of the sartorial distinctions between figures and completing the impression of consonance and unity transmitted by their collective gestures and semi-circular gathering.

While *La Mariée de village* shows a clearer definition and separation of members of different classes, the composition allows for an equally forceful repudiation of distinctions between aristocrats and peasants. The bride and groom, seen from the



FIGURE 1. Antoine Watteau, *Le Contrat de mariage*, c. 1712. Museo del Prado, Madrid.



FIGURE 2. Antoine Watteau, *La Mariée de village*, c. 1712. Stiftung Preussische Schlösser und Gärten, Berlin-Brandenburg, Bildarchiv.



FIGURE 3. Antoine Watteau, *Le Plaisir pastoral*, c.1715. Musée Condé, Chantilly. Photo Giraudon.

back in the center of the painting, are joined by figures in plain village dress. The figures lined up on the right, men in straw hats and women with flowers in their hair, are members of the village wedding party who have dressed in their finest attire for the ceremony. The peasant figures are immediately surrounded by noble onlookers, the aristocratic ladies under the tree on the right of the painting and in the center background, well-coiffed and elegantly turned out in silk dresses complete with flounce and lace collars. The visual plays in the painting serve to connect these socially disparate figures. The elegant carriage in the left background transporting aristocrats joining in the festivities breaks into the viewer's line of perspective, becoming visually and symbolically fused with the wedding party. Further, the eyes and gestures of the aristocratic figures continually redirect our gaze to the villagers featured in the center of the painting. The viewer's shifting focus operates a physical linking of the figures, strengthening the visual impression of collective activity.

By means of their subjects and thematics, Watteau's *fêtes galantes* heighten the messages of class unification and commonality seen in his proto-*fêtes*. Evoking contemporary elite masquerades, paintings such as *Le Plaisir pastoral* (c. 1715; fig. 3) and *Les Bergers* (c. 1716; fig. 4) show aristocrats dressed as peasants with "real" peasant figures socializing alongside them. In *Le Plaisir pastoral*, the dancing couple in the foreground and the couple playing on the swing in the left background are members of the upper classes playing love games while dressed as shepherds and shepherdesses, as indicated by their elegant dance movements and the tailored styles, bright colors, and silky sheen of their clothing.⁵⁶ However, the couple seated on the left are peasants, with their plain clothing, simple air, and relaxed gestures. Watteau's later version of this painting, *Les Bergers*, shows a less clear distinction between peasants and aristocrats, strengthening the impression of a merging of individuals from different



FIGURE 4. Antoine Watteau, *Les Bergers*, c. 1716. Stiftung Preussische Schlösser und Gärten, Berlin-Brandenburg/Bildarchiv.

social backgrounds. While Watteau still depicts the seated couple as country folk, he adds a female figure to the left of the musician who is dressed in simple clothing, but wears a pearl necklace. Similarly, it is difficult to determine the social status of the musician, who has a disheveled appearance, yet wears a shirt with a ruffled collar and shoes with bows. As in many of Watteau's works, attempts to identify clearly the figures' social standing through facial expression and gesture are frustrated by their bodies' refusal to be read. The aristocratic ladies in both paintings as well as the reclining man in the foreground of *Le Plaisir pastoral* have their backs turned, defying the viewer's interpretation.

The erotic themes in these works add to their subversive social messages. In both paintings, the elegant rituals of aristocratic courting are juxtaposed with the crude sexuality of the peasant figures. The animal nature of peasant love is suggested by the bestial face of the male figure, who forcefully grabs the woman trying to refuse his advances. In *Les Bergers*, the open-legged pose of the man reclining in the foreground is literally exposed by the gesture of the dog showing his sexual parts to the viewer. Further, the phallic shape of the bagpipes adds to the overt sexuality conveyed by the poses and attitudes of the peasant group. The contrast of the brute eroticism of these figures with the refined formality of aristocrats dancing and swinging results in the dramatic leveling of peasant and elite courting practices. The implied comparison between the natural and the social underscores the fundamental artifice of aristocratic codes, revealing the end-point of peasant and aristocratic flirting to be one and the same. In this way, Watteau's *fêtes galantes* deconstruct the aristocratic pastoral as an aesthetic and social practice. Unveiling the illusory mechanisms of noble love-play, his

paintings reclaim the pastoral tradition by inserting real peasants into depictions of aristocratic shepherds, setting the stage for the democratization of the genre in the eighteenth century.

Watteau's reception piece, *Le Pèlerinage à l'île de Cythère*, realizes an equally potent revisioning of the aristocratic pastoral by presenting peasant figures in the center of the painting. As critics have noted, these figures may be aristocrats in disguise, evoking the costumes worn by participants in the popular outings to the park of Saint-Cloud or the masquerading characters on pilgrimages to the Isle of Love featured in a number of contemporary plays.⁵⁷ However, by refusing any clear cultural context or reference, the composition frustrates the relationship between sign and referent and ultimately leaves the viewer to take the images at face value. As in his previous paintings, Watteau employs a number of pictorial techniques to connect aristocrats and villagers. Surrounded by nobles dressed in elegant styles and fabrics, the peasants appear in the middle of a line of continuous movement that links the individual couples. The vertical line of the pilgrim's staff in the center of the composition, visually tying the aristocratic couple and the group of villagers below, further serves to conjoin the peasants and their aristocratic companions. In this work, the relaxed intimacy of the peasant group is harmoniously integrated with the formality of aristocratic gallantry, a testimony to the unifying force of love as an element of shared humanity.

As these interpretations suggest, Watteau's refusal of social categories is inextricably linked with his challenge of artistic hierarchies. Creating confused and complex compositions out of what were considered to be inferior subjects and themes, his *fêtes galantes* ultimately questioned the relevance of traditional hierarchies and oppositions.⁵⁸ Similarly, Marivaux defied dramatic conventions in his plays, ultimately renewing the *commedia dell'arte* and contributing to its French significance by giving explicit social meaning to his role switches and showing the successful role-playing of a servant in his 1740 play, *L'Épreuve*.⁵⁹ The portrayals of issues of clothing and class in their works were both the basis and the result of their transformations of accepted formal structures and characteristics. Playing with the mimetic power of the visual, the author and the artist exposed the artificiality of the rules of (self-)representation in art, literature, and society. If Marivaux was criticized for depicting situations that were too realistic, Watteau pushed the limits of the public through his creation of new realities. The works of Marivaux and the paintings of Watteau ultimately testify to the fact that generic notions of verisimilitude often have less to do with aesthetics than with cultural anxieties.

NOTES

I would like to thank Joan DeJean, Lynn Hunt, Sarah Maza, Bernadette Fort, the editorial board of *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, an anonymous reader, and participants in the University of Pennsylvania Cultural Studies Workshop for their comments on earlier versions of this essay. Mary Vidal provided invaluable guidance at the early stages of my research.

1. See Robert Tomlinson, *La Fête galante: Watteau et Marivaux* (Geneva: Droz, 1981).
2. See Franklin Ford, *Robe and Sword: The Regrouping of the French Aristocracy after Louis XIV* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1953), 3–21.
3. Daniel Roche, *La France des Lumières* (Paris: Fayard, 1993), 350–76.
4. Annick Pardaillé-Galabrun, *La Naissance de l'intime: 3000 foyers parisiens, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: P.U.F., 1988); and Daniel Roche, *Histoire des choses banales* (Paris: Fayard, 1997).

5. Roche, *La France des Lumières*, 167.
6. See Sarah Maza, *Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century France* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983), 30; Cissie Fairchilds, "Masters and Servants in Eighteenth-Century Toulouse," *Journal of Social History* 12 (Spring 1979): 371, 382; and Jean-Pierre Gutton, *Domestiques et serviteurs dans la France de l'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1981), 82.
7. Cissie Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies: Servants and their Masters in Old Regime France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1984), 77. See also Adeline Daumard and François Furet, *Structures et relations sociales à Paris au milieu du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: A. Colin, 1961), 18–9.
8. Fairchilds notes that half of the assets of servants who died between 1695 and 1715 were in *rentes*, personal loans at interest. See Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 79–80. See also Jacqueline Sabattier, *Figaro et son maître: Maîtres et domestiques à Paris au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Perrin, 1984), 282. In letter 98 of *Lettres persanes*, Montesquieu provides a sensationalized portrait of the ruthless, social-climbing lackey who supplants ruined magistrates and noblemen killed in war and takes over aristocratic houses by means of marriage.
9. Gutton (*Domestiques et serviteurs*, 199–201) gives the example of a lackey who used the funds bequeathed to him by his master to start a wine business. Masters were also known to place their servants in apprenticeships, thus enabling some to become proprietors of their own businesses. See also Sabattier, *Figaro et son maître*, 262–5. Although rare, marriages of ascension did occur, looming even larger in the minds of members of the upper classes who feared such social mixing and the *déclassement* which resulted from these unions. These fears inspired laws like the one enacted in 1730, which made it illegal for a young man to marry a female servant or for a master's daughter to marry or have sex with a male servant. See Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 181.
10. John Lough (*An Introduction to Eighteenth-Century France* [London: Longmans, 1960], 146) describes the widespread belief, created by the rise and fall of the Law System, that servants became masters overnight. See also Yves Moraud, *La Conquête de la liberté de Scapin à Figaro: Valets, servantes et soubrettes de Molière à Beaumarchais* (Paris: P.U.F., 1981), 77.
11. Maza, *Servants and Masters*, 9–11.
12. Examples of ordinances regulating livery extravagance abound in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The most notable ordinances enacted in the early eighteenth century include the laws of 1717–25. See Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 31.
13. Maza, *Servants and Masters*, 25, 175.
14. See Daniel Roche, "Les Domestiques comme intermédiaires culturels," in *Les Intermédiaires culturels. Colloque d'Aix-en-Provence* (Paris: H. Champion, 1981): 197–8, 200–1.
15. Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, 109.
16. Maza, *Servants and Masters*, 122.
17. Daniel Roche, *La Culture des apparences: Une histoire du vêtement (XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles)* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), 44, 59, 104, and 167. See also Roche, "Les Domestiques comme intermédiaires culturels."
18. Roche, *La Culture des apparences*, 61–2.
19. Lionel Gossman and Derek Connon suggest that Marivaux was consciously and cautiously working within the ideological limitations of his society as well as within the traditional frameworks of the Italian Theater in order to transmit more effectively the subversive social messages contained in his works. See Gossman, "Literature and Society in the Early Enlightenment: The Case of Marivaux," *MLN* 83 (May 1967): 330–1; and Connon, "The Servant as Master: Disguise, Role-Reversal, and Social Comment in Three Plays of Marivaux," *Studies in the Commedia Dell'Arte*, ed. David J. George and Christopher J. Gossip (Cardiff: Univ. of Wales Press, 1993): 127.
20. Marivaux, *L'Île des Esclaves*, in *Théâtre complet*, ed. Henri Coulet and Michel Gilot, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1993) 1:408. "Cours d'humanité." All translations are my own.
21. Marivaux, *L'Île*, 1:407. "J'ai bien connu votre condition à votre habit."
22. Derek Connon suggests that the clothing switch between Iphicrate and Arlequin most likely involved some sort of over-costume, as the change back to their original clothing takes places on stage (the first exchange takes place offstage between scenes four and five). The stage directions do not indicate that

a clothing switch takes place between Euphrosine and Cléanthis, although Trivelin explicitly orders this switch as well. Connon suggests that Marivaux sacrificed this clothing exchange to the continuity of the action, noting that there would have been very little difference between the costumes of the female characters in any case. See Connon, "The Servant as Master," 122–3.

23. Marivaux, *L'Île*, 1:419. "Arlequin: Remarquez-vous, Madame, la clarté du jour?— Cléanthis: Il fait le plus beau temps du monde; on appelle cela un jour tendre.— Arlequin: Un jour tendre? Je ressemble donc au jour, Madame.— Cléanthis: Comment, vous lui ressemblez?— Arlequin: Et palsambleu le moyen de n'être pas tendre, quand on se trouve tête à tête avec vos grâces."

24. Marivaux, *L'Île*, 1:420. "Je n'étais ces jours passés qu'une esclave; mais enfin me voilà dame et maîtresse d'aussi bon jeu qu'une autre: je la suis par hasard; n'est-ce pas le hasard qui fait tout?"

25. Marivaux, *L'Île*, 1:426. "Il faut avoir le cœur bon, de la vertu et de la raison; voilà ce qu'il faut, voilà ce qui est estimable, ce qui distingue, ce qui fait qu'un homme est plus qu'un autre."

26. Marivaux, *L'Île*, 1:428. "La différence de condition n'est qu'une épreuve que les dieux font sur nous."

27. Marivaux, *L'Île*, 1:425–6.

28. Marivaux, *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard*, 1:618. "Franchement, je ne haïrais pas de lui plaire sous le personnage que je joue, je ne serais pas fâchée de . . . l'étourdir un peu sur la distance qu'il y aura de lui à moi . . . cela m'aiderait à démêler Dorante."

29. Marivaux, *Le Jeu*, 1:648. "Ce qui lui en coûte à se déterminer ne me le rend que plus estimable: il pense qu'il chagrinerait son père en m'épousant, il croit trahir sa fortune et sa naissance . . . je veux un combat entre amour et raison."

30. Marivaux, *Le Jeu*, 1:655. "Je t'adore, je te respecte, il n'est ni rang, ni naissance, ni fortune qui ne disparaisse devant une âme comme la tienne; j'aurais honte que mon orgueil tint encore contre toi, et mon cœur et ma main t'appartiennent." *L'Île*, 1:656. "le mérite vaut bien la naissance."

31. Marivaux, *Le Jeu*, 1:621. "Quelle espèce de suivante es-tu donc avec ton air de princesse?"

32. Marivaux, *Le Jeu*, 1:632. "Vous voyez bien que cet homme ne me convient point. . . . Je le hais assez sans prendre du temps pour le haïr davantage."

33. *Le Mercure de France* (April 1730), 778–9. The critique was published several months after the first performance of the play on January 23, 1730. "Voici les remarques qu'on a faites sur cette comédie; nous ne sommes ici que les échos du public. On dit: 1) qu'il n'est pas vraisemblable que Silvia puisse se persuader qu'un butor tel qu'Arlequin soit ce même Dorante dont on lui a fait une peinture si avantageuse . . . La seule vue du faux Dorante ne doit-elle pas faire soupçonner du mystère, surtout à Silvia, qui se trouve dans le cas d'un travestissement, dont elle peut facilement soupçonner son prétendu? 2) Arlequin, a-t-on dit, ne soutient pas son caractère partout; des choses très jolies succèdent à des grossièretés."

34. Gérard Genette, *Figures II* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), 71–8.

35. Patrice Pavis, *Marivaux à l'épreuve de la scène* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1986), 240.

36. *Notices sur les oeuvres de théâtre (1733–1740)*, Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, ms. 3448–55. "Ce qui répugne, et ce qui est cependant assez heureusement sauvé, c'est que l'accordée se sent du penchant pour celui qu'elle ne croit que Bourguignon, et Dorante se sent du goût pour celle qu'il ne croit que Lisette; la première aventure choque assurément davantage, puisqu'un homme de condition aimera plus aisément une suivante qu'une fille bien née ne se laissera aller à des mouvements pour un laquais, quelque aimable qu'il pût être." Cited in Henri Lagrave, *Marivaux et sa fortune littéraire* (Saint-Médard-en-Jalles: G. Ducros, 1970), 49.

37. David Wakefield, *French Eighteenth-Century Painting* (London: G. Fraser, 1984), 22–3.

38. Marivaux, *Le Paysan parvenu* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1965), 32 (hereafter *Paysan*). "Uni et sans livrée"; "tu n'as plus l'air villageois."

39. Marivaux, *Le Paysan*, 55. "Un honnête garçon."

40. Marivaux, *Le Paysan*, 156–7. "Habit, veste et culotte, d'un bel et bon drap fin, tout uni, doublé de soie rouge"; "avant le dîner j'eus la joie de voir Jacob métamorphosé en cavalier."

41. See Roche, *La Culture des apparences*, 54, 126, 136, 189–90.
42. Marivaux, *Le Paysan*, 128. “Je demande à tout Paris, comme s’il était là, où est ce grand affront que je vous fais?”
43. Marivaux, *Le Paysan*, 240. “Mon petit habit de soie et ma petite propreté bourgeoise”; “J’y avais sauté trop vite; je venais d’être fait monsieur, encore n’avais-je pas la subalterne éducation des messieurs de ma sorte, et je tremblais qu’on ne connût à ma mine que ce monsieur-là avait été Jacob.”
44. *Réflexions sur les ouvrages de littérature*, 1 (1737), 145–51. “. . . un jeune rustre sortit de Champagne, venir à Paris, y endosser la livrée, plaire à sa maîtresse, à sa suivante, de le voir, dis-je, pétillant dans ses réparties, étaler sous l’écorce de la simplicité artificielle l’esprit le plus fin et le plus délicat? En vérité, n’est-ce point, à considérer l’ordre ordinaire des choses, un monstre dans le beau?” Cited in Lagrave, *Marivaux*, 27–8.
45. See Norman Bryson, *Word and Image: French Painting of the Ancien Régime* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), 58–88; Thomas Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1985) 45–74; Mary Vidal, *Watteau’s Painted Conversations: Art, Literature, and Talk in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century France* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1992).
46. René Démoris, “Les Fêtes galantes chez Watteau et dans le roman contemporain,” *Dix-huitième siècle* 3 (1971): 345.
47. See Vidal, *Watteau’s Painted Conversations*, 78; Crow, *Painters and Public Life*, 66–74; François Moureau, “Watteau in His Time,” Margaret Morgan Grasselli and Pierre Rosenberg, *Watteau 1684–1721* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1984), 494.
48. See Crow, *Painters and Public Life*, 55–6; Moureau, “Watteau in His Time,” 494–5; Donald Posner, *Antoine Watteau* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1984), 148.
49. Moureau, “Watteau in His Time,” 494.
50. Crow, *Painters and Public Life*, 53–4; Hélène Adhémar, *Watteau* (Paris: P. Tisné, 1950), 100.
51. J.-E. Gueullette, *Un Magistrat du XVIIIe siècle, ami des lettres, du théâtre, et des plaisirs, Thomas-Simon Gueullette* (Paris: Droz, 1938), 69. “Sous le nom de Bertrand et sous l’habit du vrai paysan, il copiait avec tant de naturel et de perfection les gens de ce caractère, pour le langage, pour le chant et pour la danse, que si, changeant de figure et de vêtement, on le faisait souper avec les personnes qui ne l’avaient vu que cette fois, elles ne le reconnaissaient pas, et lorsqu’on le démasquait, pour ainsi dire, ne pouvaient croire que ce fut le même qu’elles avaient vu dans l’après-midi.”
52. See Crow, *Painters and Public Life*, 66–74.
53. René de Bonneval, *Momus au cercle des Dieux* (Paris, 1717), 110–1. “Cette bergère si simple dans ses habits, et dans ses manières, est peut-être une Princesse qui veut se débarrasser ce soir des respects qu’on doit à son rang. Cette autre dont la parure éclatante annonce quelque personne distinguée, n’est pourtant qu’une bourgeoise qui prétend s’attirer l’hommage des plus grands seigneurs.”
54. Posner, *Antoine Watteau*, 121.
55. Sarah Cohen, “Un Bal continuel: Watteau’s Cythera Paintings and Aristocratic Dancing in the 1710s,” *Art History* 17 (June 1994): 172.
56. Cohen, “Un Bal continuel,” 173–4.
57. Moureau, “Watteau in His Time,” 498–501.
58. Mark Ledbury, “Intimate Dramas: Genre Painting and New Theater in Eighteenth-Century France,” in *Intimate Encounters: Love and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century France*, ed. Richard Rand (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997), 51–2.
59. Connon, “The Servant as Master,” 131.