*The Triumph of Love* Design 2019

*The Triumph of Love* was written by Pierre de Marivaux and was first performed in 1732. It tells the story of Phocion who dresses as a man and enacts a complicated game of love and deception to obtain the man she loves. Her companion, Corine as well as Harlequin and Dimas of Hermocrate’s household, assist in her plot. The unwitting Hermocrate and Leontine, siblings, fall prey to her lies while she wins the true object of her affections, Agis. The comedy explores gender roles and expectations placed on women in the game of love. The play was written during the Rococo period in France, a time when women were seen as lesser than men and were not in control of their own future. Girls like Phocion, even with her high status,“were expected to obey the will of their fathers and marry the persons chosen for them....and she was to be strictly obedient to the new husband.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

In the eighteenth century marriage moved from “an aristocratic model based on familial alliances to a bourgeois model grounded in conjugal love and individual choice.”[[2]](#footnote-2) No longer an extension of the political body marriage changed to a new privileging of privacy.”[[3]](#footnote-3) You can see this in how Phocion chooses to pursue a man whom her parents would disapprove of as he is her aristocratic competition. Marriage and sexuality was reconstructed to reflect “individual pleasure and fulfillment” which produced “a new sense of freedom” but at the same time added limitations in the form of “binding it to models of female modesty and virtue.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

Phocion may actually be a reflection of the play itself. Pierre de Marivaux was ahead of the curve with the idea that women choose who they want to marry and the cultural move to more sexual freedom. Louis XV’s reign actually saw a weakening of morals after Louis XIV rule.[[5]](#footnote-5) Sexual freedom came to the nobility and upper classes as “parental authority regarding marriage choices began to erode in the last half of the eighteenth century.”[[6]](#footnote-6) Because of this at “the beginning of the nineteenth century, children demanded, and expected, to select their own mates.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

An alternate way of looking at the play is that Marivaux had been making satire of the women of his day due to the fact that “both kings [Louis XV and Louis XVI], [were] dominated by women, [and] betrayed ‘the spirit of counsel, justice and reason’ that supposedly distinguished ‘the sovereign power’ residing in the person of the male sovereign.”[[8]](#footnote-8) Also, despite having more freedom in choosing a partner after the revolution of 1789 and the start of the women's rights movement and feminism in the nineteenth century,[[9]](#footnote-9) women were still not widely respected. “Women activists unsuccessfully demanded universal suffrage but “women contributed little to the public establishment and hence [could] have no direct influence on government.”[[10]](#footnote-10) They were also said to be“too emotional and easily misled.”[[11]](#footnote-11)

The change in government that caused these two ways of looking at things began as a result of Louis XIV and Louis XV contrasting rule. Louis XIV(1638-1715), the Sun King, ruled as an absolute monarchy. This meant that the king was all powerful, divined by God to rule.[[12]](#footnote-12) This meant he made the laws and made sure they were upheld with the aid of ministers and councils subject to his will. Parliament was largely ignored, nobles excluded from political office, and bourgeois office-holders promoted.[[13]](#footnote-13) The political culture of the Old Regime, revolved around the sacred body of the king.”[[14]](#footnote-14) Louis XV’s (1710-1774) domestic policy was influenced by favoritism and mistresses. The extravagance of court and the high cost of war took all of France’s resources.[[15]](#footnote-15)

The shift of privacy and freedom of choice I spoke of earlier happened as a result of the French revolution of 1789. When the revolution occurred there was a shift from an “iconic system centered on the body of the king to a logocentric universe that enshrined the word of the law.”[[16]](#footnote-16) pg 182 The political upheaval ended with the overthrow of the Bourbon monarchy that Louis XIV and Louis XV were apart of. The National Assembly emerged and a “new constitution nationalized the church's lands and divided the country into departments to be ruled by elected assemblies.”[[17]](#footnote-17) However the revolutionaries failed to create a fully stable form of government which resulted in Napoleon's dictatorship.

The Rococo period that I have based a majority of my design choices in, which emerged during Louis XV’s reign, was a time with intricate decoration and fashion with pastel colors as well as elaborate ornamentation and gilding being the trademarks of this era. The term ‘rococo’ is derived from the French rocaille (rock- or shell-work), a soft style of interior decoration, based on S-curves and scroll-like forms. Other rococo features include the use of fantastic ornament and pretty, naturalistic details.[[18]](#footnote-18) These styles emerged when Louis XV ruled as a small child. The bright colors and elaborate decorations were meant to please a child’s eye and they developed as a reaction against the formal, heavy atmosphere of Louis XIV's court.[[19]](#footnote-19) This was the Baroque period where things were just as ornamented but were not as delicate as the Rococo style. It was heavier and did not employ the use of brighter colors as the Rococo style did. The Baroque style was darker and the ornamentation more overwhelming which reflected the absolute monarchy of the time. During the revolution the Rococo style gave way to neoclassicism, a revival of classic antiquity of the classical period.[[20]](#footnote-20)

The costumes for this show will reflect the playfulness of the Rococo era with its over the top fashion and bright colors and contrast with other dark aspects to highlight Phocion’s deception and ruthlessness to get what she wants. Léontine and Hermocrate, the unwitting victims of Phocions plot, originally dress in a more drab color palette so that as they fall in love with Phocion they will add aspects of bright colors and over the top baubles to their outfits until they change into a full bright costume that will accentuate their attributes. The brighter colors and flashier baubles that Léontine and Hermocrate adorn themselves in, reflect the childlike fashion of the Rococo era and their juvenile behavior as Phocion reduces them to love-sick teenagers. Because Agis is attached to Phocion as a person as opposed to Léontine’s and Hermocrate’s more farcicle love (they do not fall in love with Phocion but more the image she projects to them), the additions to his costume will be less pronounced.   
 Corine, Harlequin and Dimas are all pawns in Phocion’s game and will be dressed in darker color palettes to convey their involvement in Phocion’s deception while Phocion herself will be adorned in a pastel palette to distinguish herself as one of the upper class but will have small hints of darker colors within her ensemble to mark her as the orchestrator of the deception. The costume design of this show will convey to the audience the complexities of Phocion’s deception as well as the love sick puppies she turns Léontine and Hermocrate into. Corine and Harlequin’s costumes will be complementary to tie them together as close accomplices while Dimas is meant to stand out from them as the moral compass of the show.

The hair and hair accessories of the upper class characters will tie in the Greek setting as well as the colonnade in the scenic design. The hair for the men will be curly and thick, no white wigs and the women will have curly hair as well with beaded headbands and decorations. Hermocrate’s hair will be severely slicked back and powdered at the start of the show so that as he falls in love it can become unruly. The colonnade I have pulled from the Roman Corinthian period as the columns from this period are the most decorated to match the Rococo theme. However the makeup for the show will be pulled from Rococo fashion. Whitened faces, bright blush and lipsticks etc.

**Phocion:**

I have placed Phocion in a flattering suit of blue-green silk to compliment Agis’s blue color palette as he is the target of her affections. She is adorned in a long coat with matching waistcoat and knee breeches.[[21]](#footnote-21) Her attire in the play screams her wealth and stature as well as proclaims her scheme. There are hints of darker colors amidst all of the pastels. A darker lip, a red handkerchief. These darker colors allude to her lying and scheming to get the man she desires. Her hair is a wig that matches her natural hair so that her bangs can be pulled out and blended into the wig. The wig will be shorter to look like a man's hair and it will be slicked back, though the curl to the hair will still be noticable, and powdered. Her face will be very lightly powdered to accentuate already pale skin. As an aristocrat she would not need to be in the sun often and would be quite pale as that was a symbol of status. Her eyes are natural and her lips tinted red to hint at her deception.

Phocion is also dressed as a man as stated in the script to fight for the man that she loves. This costume choice plays into my concept of gender roles in the game of love as it breaks the gender roles of the time as women dressing as a man could result in death. Women who dressed as men “were seen as disturbing the existing arrangements between the sexes.” They were trying “to escape the limitations that society imposed on them,”[[22]](#footnote-22) which is exactly what Phocion used her dress to do. Phocion’s willingness to do what she has to to get the man she loves, including dressing as a man shows her determination, strong will and intelligence which so strongly contrasts to other women of her time. Women of her time “were instructed to be chaste and obedient,”[[23]](#footnote-23) and even when they were given more liberty to choose who they marry they were still expected to heed the advice of others as they “needed a guide since society offered so many dangers.”[[24]](#footnote-24)

**Agis:**

I have chosen for Agis a more causal costume than Hermocrate to show his innocence and youth. He is of course well dressed but lacks a coat for a more casual and carefree look. As with the other male dressed characters he has a matching waistcoat and knee breeches but no coat.[[25]](#footnote-25) His blue color palette is complementary to Phocions to tie him to her as a legitimate love interest as opposed to Léontine and Hermocrate’s superficial love. His less ostentatious costume and the fact that he does not change into a more attention grabbing garb to attract Phocion speaks to the genuineness of his affection for her. This is in stark contrast to Leontine and Hermocrate whose love for Phocion is more farcical and based on lies. In regards to makeup and hair Agis’s makeup is natural, basic corrective with his lips lightly tinted a darker plum color. His complexion is also slightly darker than the other characters due to more time outdoors. His hair is not slicked back like Hermocrate but allowed to curl freely.

**Hermocrate:**

Hermocrate begins the show with a very subdued color palette of dark green and very plain clothing. Of course his clothes are of high quality but quite unimpressive. The staid coloring of his garments reflect the life he lives. He lives in seclusion with his sister and Agis away from the world, having only his work. Both costumes consist of a suit; a coat, waistcoat, and breeches.[[26]](#footnote-26)As with his sister’s costume, his changes as he falls for Phocion. His hair becomes unruly, his makeup more pronounced. Hermocrate eventually changes into a suit of bright green with a damask pattern. He has deep turn-back, embroidered cuffs and a longer length waistcoat with matching silk knee breeches.[[27]](#footnote-27) His pants are tighter and his clothes are brighter to attract the love of Phocion. Hermocrate’s bright pastels are pulled from the fashion trends of Rococo France and are representative of what love does to people. Love turns Hermocrate and Leontine into lovestruck kids who make stupid decisions.

His hair will start severely slicked back and tamed. It will be powdered and as the play progresses and he falls in love it will begin to become curly and unruly. His makeup will start very simple, just basic corrective. However, as with his hair his makeup will change to reflect his feelings. His face will be powdered with bright blush and redish pink lips.

**Leontine:**

Leontine starts the play with a simple purple dress. There are no embellishments and it is very plain. Her stays and stomacher are a solid color. The dress is well made but not showy like the pannier dresses of the time. This first costume shows her as a woman of wealth but not of fashion. She lives secluded from society with her brother and does not have the opportunity or desire to find a man. Her dress is nice but does not show off her figure and a shawl covers what would show of her chest. As the play progresses and Leontine begins to fall for Phocion this is reflected in her attire. It starts small with putting on makeup, taking off her shawl and adding some jewelry and hair accessories but grows to encompass her entire costume. Leontine’s second costume is much brighter in color and of a more flamboyant fashion trend: panniers. Her attire is now a vibrant lavender silk sack back dress with a beautiful floral pattern.[[28]](#footnote-28) This dress is also lower cut to show off her womanly assets to attract Phocion. Her stays and stomacher are now heavily embroidered with flowers to match the pattern of her dress.[[29]](#footnote-29) Leontine’s bright pastels are pulled from the fashion trends of Rococo France and are representative of the political climate of the time in that Louis XV reign saw a weakening of morals. Her makeup will change from natural to bright as she falls in love. Her face will become powdered with bright blush, red lips and pink eyeshadow. Her eyeliner will also become more pronounced as well.

I have made these choices for Leontine to show her progression from self contained spinster to a woman in love. These flashy changes as with Hermocrate’s are meant to show the audience how love makes you act a fool as well as show the power Phocion has over them in such a short amount of time. They go to such lengths to woo Phocion and look like idiots doing so. These changes in their attire and the foolish way they conduct themselves to seduce Phocion also reflect the culture of that time period as I mentioned previously with the shift in what was proper.

**Harlequin:**

Harlequin’s character is dressed in bright colors and clashing patterns. His makeup is over the top and his hair is powdered white, much more so than anyone else. Bright blush accentuates his cheeks and rouge darkens his lips. I chose his more obnoxious outfit to make him stand out as the jokester, as harlequins have always been in court. The diamond pattern on his pants is an ode to the classic harlequin attire while the scarlet fabric of his coat marks him as part of Phocions plot. His ensemble also consists of a coat, an embroidered waistcoat and knee breeches.[[30]](#footnote-30) He is an active member in her scheming as well as in the seduction of Corine. The bright red of his coat shows just how much he is involved in the scheme as he works for both sides of lies and deception. He spies for Hermocrate and is paid of by Phocion to assist in her plot. His makeup and hair, like his costume, is much more over the top than anyone else's. His hair and eyebrows will be powdered white as will his face. His lips are blood red to match his coat and his blush is a bright pink.

**Corine:**

Corine, I have placed in a subdued red suit to distinguish her from the aristocratic characters of Leontine, Hermocrate and Phocion. This subdued orangish-red is also to tie her to Harlequin with his much brighter red palette. This color, as well as her lower neckline, also represents her desire for Harlequin as she is seen sneaking off with him multiple times throughout the play. Her hair will also be a wig that matches her natural color so that her bangs can be pulled out and blended into the wig. Her hair will be pushed back and in a low ponytail. Corine’s makeup is fairly plain. She has a natural complexion with just enough makeup to make her features visible to the audience. Her lips will be lightly tinted pink as well. This minimal makeup will separate her from the upper class characters as will her attire.

**Dimas:**

I put Dimas in well worn clothes with grass and dirt stains in an earth tone palette. As the moral compass of the story I have put him in an earth tone palette to show how he is more grounded and closer to earth. His clothes also show his social class and occupation as gardner. His role as the moral compass will be accentuated by his homey, approachable clothing which will portray him as a wise old man. His hair will be tied back in a low ponytail and his makeup will be to make him look a little dirty as if he has been working in a garden. This makeup will also be needed on his hands as well. He will have a straw hat I have chosen to look like the ones portrayed in ancient Greek vase paintings.

**Scenic:**

For my scenic design I have chosen to pull most of my inspiration from Rococo era gardens to match the lavishness of the costumes. Pink marble is used for the platforms as well as the colonnade to stay in the pastel color palette of the rococo era as well as to represent the tender feelings of love Phocion provokes as part of her scheme. The platforms are made of broken up marble in a spiral pattern to represent the complex game of love that Phocion plays. The elaborate detailing on the facings and railings of the platforms is pulled from the architecture that was so popular in 18th century France, a soft style of interior decoration, based on S-curves and scroll-like forms. Other rococo features include the use of fantastic ornament and pretty, naturalistic details.[[31]](#footnote-31)  
 The colonnade, while being of marble to match the Rococo era aesthetic, is pulled from ancient Greece. I chose to pull from Roman Corinthian columns as those were the most detailed to match the extreme ornamentation of the Rococo architecture used. The set will also have a vast amount of shrubberies to make it look more like a garden. Some of these shrubberies however will be moveable and have discreet holes in them for Harlequin, Dimas and Corine to stick their heads through while spying. I have also chosen to use LED flower lights in the non moving shrubs to be used as a part of the lighting plan. These lights will slowly get brighter as Agis falls for Phocion and the game of love comes to a close.

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