

The Novel and Novelties: Marketing La Mode
Folger Shakespeare Library
Fall 2006
J. DeJean

What follows is surely at least partly provisional. I wanted participants to know in advance when we will meet so that they can arrange their schedules. I also wanted to give you an idea of the works we will read. My goal in this seminar will be to call your attention to problems rather than to have you read quantities of material. I hope that each participant will become interested in various kinds of material—newspapers other than the *Mercure galant*, for instance—and want to get involved in an individual project or projects to present to the seminar as a whole. I also want us to keep in mind at all times the three main categories of material with which we will be dealing—novels, newspapers, and visual representations of fashion (prints, paintings)—in order to think about how all these novelties were in a sense interchangeable for a late 17th-century audience: they were all treated as “news” and therefore as somehow peculiarly “real.”

There will be a bulk pack that contains most of the readings on the schedule. You may also want to obtain the following four titles:

La Fayette, Madame de (Marie-Madeleine Pioche de La Vergne). *La princesse de Clèves. Chronologie et préf. par Antoine Adam*. [Paris]: Garnier-Flammarion, [1972, c1966].

Perrault, Charles. *Histoire de la marquise-marquis de Banneville / François-Timoléon de Choisy, Marie-Jeanne L'Héritier, and Charles Perrault; edited and introduced by Joan DeJean*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2004.

Desjardins, Marie Catherine Hortense (Mme. de Villedieu). *Mémoires de la vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière / Mme. de Villedieu; [préparée par Micheline Cuélin, avec la collaboration de Jacques Chupeau, Jean Lafond, Francois Weil]*. Tours: Éditions de l'Université François-Rabelais, 1977. [This edition is out of print. There will also be a xerox in the bulkpack.]

Préchac, Jean de. *Contes moins contes que les autres; précédés de, L'illustre Parisienne / Jean de Préchac ; édition critique publiée par Françoise Gevrey*. Paris: Société des textes français modernes, 1993. [There will also be a xerox of part I in the bulk pack.]

September 29

Introduction: The Novel and Fashion Before and After 1678

Lafayette, La Princesse de Montpensier

____. La Princesse de Clèves

Handout for discussion

Final hour: preview costume books in the Folger collection

October 6

Costume books to fashion prints

Print ephemera and fashion advertising

The Spectator on men in nightgowns

Final hour: each participant will do a 5-minute presentation on a fashion image or a costume book

October 13

How do we know what a new fashion looked like, especially before the age of the fashion plate?

Lettres en vers and Causes célèbres

Villedieu, Henriette-Sylvie de Molière

Final hour: fashion and news before the Mercure

November 3

Le Mercure galant: Advertising fashion and the novel

The extraordinaires from 1678

Selected stories

The new look for 1678: kimonos, manteaux, nightgowns, déshabillés

2 articles on men in nightgowns

Final hour: Ways in which 1678 was a Watershed

painting

Roy Strong

November 10

Learning to read the nouvelle: Le Mercure and La Princesse de Clèves “La Vertu malheureuse”

Final hour: Stories in the Mercur: fact or fiction for their original audience?

November 17

Marquis/Marquise de Banneville as a book and in Le Mercur

“La Belle au bois dormant” in the Mercur

Final hour: presentations on how the context in which a work is published influences the way it is read.

December 1

How do we know what a new color looked like?

Préchac, L’Illustre Parisienne, Pt.I
Le Gris-de-lin

Final Hour: Participants’ work? Presentations on a question relating to color?

December 8

A new body type?

Marketing coffee and fashion together
Fashion prints
W. Schivelbusch, Tastes of Paradise

Final Hour: 17th-century coffee literature (Blégny, Du Four, La Roque)

December 15

Participants’ work?

Discussion of other works, each of which will be read by several participants?

Possible works include:

Durand (Bédacier) La Comtesse de Mortane

Du Noyer, Lettres galantes

English periodicals in the Folger or Library of Congress

Fairy tales

And, finally, at least one session will take place at the National Gallery of Art. We will probably go twice, on two Friday mornings (November 10 and December 8 are possibilities) from 10:45-12. On one visit, we will look at French and English portraiture to compare the ways in which fashion is dealt with and to compare the ways in which individuals are represented (body language, poses, body types). On the other, we will visit the print and drawings collection to think about ways in which fashion is depicted in prints that are not explicitly marketing fashion as fashion plates do.

I gather that all participants read French easily and have planned the syllabus accordingly. Most works are available in translation, if necessary.

I will leave about a dozen issues of the Mercure galant on reserve for participants to consult on a shelf at the Folger. The complete publication is available in microfilm at the Library of Congress. It is also available in many other libraries, should participants wish to begin familiarizing themselves with it before the seminar begins.