

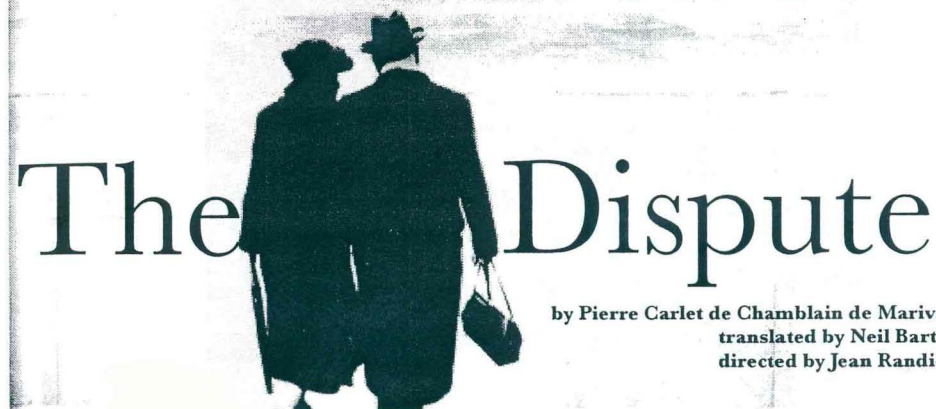
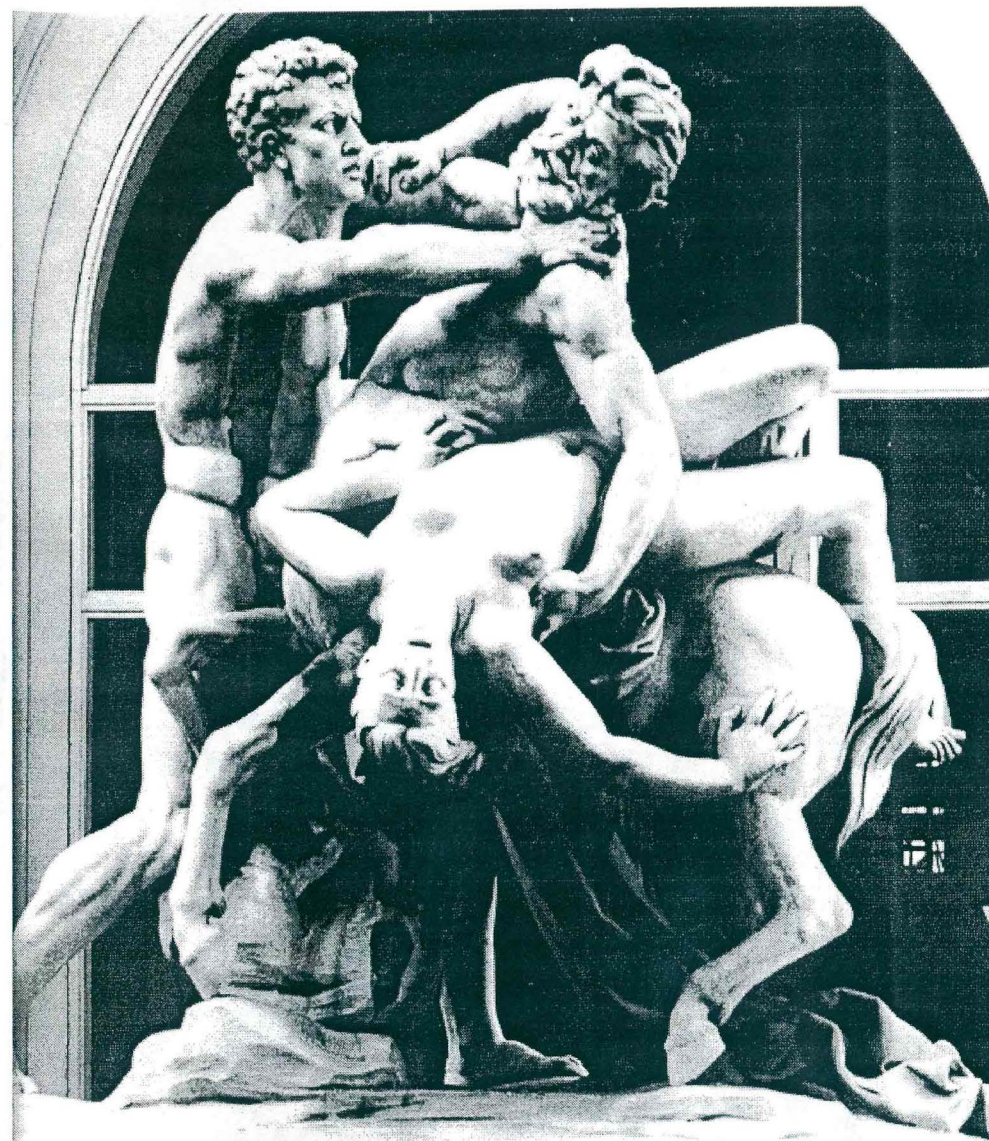


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Benjamin Wood, Dana Reitz, Linda Hurley,
Barbara Bell, Caridad Svich, and Maya M.I.A.
Arulpragasam for 10 DOLLAR, and to all our
"special friends."



The Dispute

by Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux
translated by Neil Bartlett
directed by Jean Randich

*Now cease my wand'ring eyes,
Strange beauties to admire,
In change least comfort lies,
Long joys yield long desire....*

*Nature two eyes hath giv'n,
All beauties to impart,
As well in earth as heav'n,
But she hath giv'n one heart.*

The Second Book of Lute Songs of John Dowland



The Dispute, or, What's up with all these questions?

Where are we going?

What am I seeing?

Do you know how to talk?

Where were you when I never knew you?

What new thing is this?

Are you a person?

Not only the subject matter of Pierre Carlet de Marivaux's *The Dispute* revolves around a question, namely, the heated debate over who was the first to be inconstant in love, the man or the woman, but also the warring dance of curiosity, experimentation, and discovery. First performed in Paris on 19 October 1744, the play anticipates the social and political ideas which would eventually lead to the French Revolution in 1789. The Enlightenment's restless questioning grips all the characters. Under the abusive conditions of the Ancien Regime, this Prince finds nothing amiss in raising four foundlings in isolation, in fact, he's quite thrilled he can recreate the Garden of Eden and get his own results.

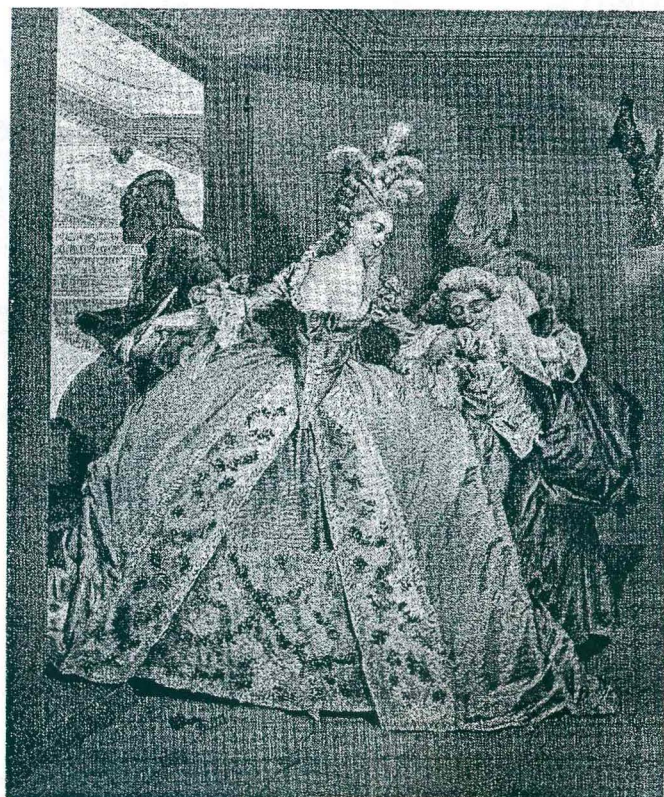
The Dispute has been recently rediscovered as a subversive theatrical gem. Written at a time when children were regarded as miniature adults, the play makes assumptions we no longer share. The human being is a social animal. Who today would argue that a person should be reared in absolute isolation? Further, the Prince has the children raised by two black servants, a brother and a sister, chosen for the color of their skin, thus assuring that the two servants are isolated and deprived of an erotic life as well. And this is all in the name of a "scientific experiment" into the genetic dispositions towards constancy of the male and the female of the species.

But it is also a teasing piece of theater, an 18th Century reality show, a naughty court version of the *Real World* and *Survivor* rolled into one, staged by the Prince in the elaborate seduction of Hermiane. Voyeurism is key: the role of the audience is staged and questioned, and Marivaux propels us into seeing all the world's a stage. Even more uncomfortably he reveals it to be a stage upon which unseen surveillance is more often the rule than the exception. This, of course, was exactly the conditions under Louis XV. The children of what we can only assume to have been French peasants are the guinea pigs of the monarchy. And slyly enough, Marivaux gives them the same flaws he saw in the royal audience: the women are vain and treacherous, the men disloyal and easily played. In a world in which the ability to intrigue could decide between life and death, women are revealed to be masters. But in classic Marivaux fashion, he hides his knives beneath a jeweled surface, restoring order in the end: Vices, Virtues, both have both.

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Narcissus from Ovid's Metamorphoses:

There was a pool, silver with shining water,
To which no shepherds came, no goats, no cattle,
Whose glass no bird, no beast, no falling leaf
Had ever troubled....

Here Narcissus,
Worn from the heat of hunting, came to rest
Finding the place delightful, and the spring
Refreshing for the thirsty. As he tried
To quench his thirst, inside him, deep within him,
Another thirst was growing, for he saw
An image in the pool, and fell in love
With that unbodied hope, and found a substance
In what was only shadow....

Everything attracts him
That makes him so attractive. Foolish boy,
He wants himself; the loved becomes the lover,
The seeker sought, the kindler burns. How often
He tries to kiss the image in the water,
Dips in his arms to embrace the boy he sees there,
And finds the boy, himself, elusive always,
Not knowing what he sees, but burning for it,
The same delusion mocking his eyes and teasing.
Why try to catch an always fleeing image,
Poor credulous youngster? What you seek is nowhere,
And if you turn away, you will take with you
The boy you love. The vision is only shadow,
Only reflection, lacking any substance.
It comes with you, it stays with you, it goes
Away with you, if you can go away.

Address to the Theologians on the Liberty of Man

Answer me this, you theologians, either canny or stupid, who tax us with crimes at your whim:
Who put in me the two passions which warred within me, the love of God and the love of
sensual pleasure? Was it nature or the devil? Choose. But would you dare to assert that
either one is more powerful than God Himself? If they are both subordinate to Him, it must
be God Himself who ordained that these passions should be in me, who am His creation.
But—you reply—God gave you reason to enlighten you. Yes, but not in order to determine
my will. Reason certainly helped me perceive the two passions which enveloped me; that's
how I concluded finally that, since everything came from God, so also had these two passions
in all their force. But this same reason which guided me didn't help me to choose.
But—you'll continue—since God had created you mistress of your own will, you were free to
opt for good or evil. A pure play on words! This free will and this so-called liberty have no
force of their own: they only operate in response to the force of the passions and the appetites
which drive us.

-Therese philosophe (1748)

THE DISPUTE

by Pierre Carlet de Marivaux

translated by Neil Bartlett

Hermiane...
The Prince...
The Guests ...

Mesrou...
Carise...
Eglé...
Azor...
Adine...
Mesrin...
Meslis...
Dina...

Director ...
Set Design ...
Costume Design ...
Lighting Design ...
Sound Design ...
Assistant Director ...
Stage Manager ...
Assistant Stage Manager ...
Costume Design Assistant ...
Properties Design ...

Tech Crew
Lighting Board Operator ...
Sound Board Operator ...
Stage Hands ...
Wardrobe ...

Makeup and Hair ...

Katie Miller
Max Wolkowitz
Iris Dauterman,
Andrew Kaluzynski
Alex Bleeker
Carlee McManus
Sophie Hinderberger
Sebastian Naskaris
Sara Harvey
Mac Young
Ryan Smith
Annabel Lalonde

Jean Randich
Mike Rancourt and Jean Randich
Kiri Langseth-Schmidt
Tor Puckett
Brian Schultis
Alex Rosenberg
Anna Burnham
Jackie Hall
Bill Patry
Kelli Karsten and Caitlin Loehr

Rachael Healey
Brian Schultis
Quinn Lewis and Stephen Reinstein
Bryony Thompson, Johanna
Neufeld, Emma Givens, Maya Eller
Bryony Thompson and Bill Patry

