

THE NEW PORTRAIT DÉGUISÉ: SOCIAL IDENTITY OF THE BOURGEOISIE IN  
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE, SELECT WORKS BY JEAN-MARC NATTIER

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A Thesis

presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School

at the University of Missouri-Columbia

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

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by

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MAY 2014

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The Undersigned appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

THE NEW PORTRAIT DÉGUISÉ: SOCIAL IDENTITY OF THE BOURGEOISIE IN  
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE  
SELECTED WORKS BY JEAN-MARC NATTIER

presented by Danielle Sarah Gibbons

a candidate for the degree of master of arts,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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## Dedication

I dedicate my thesis work to my wonderfully supportive family and friends who continually encouraged me throughout my studies. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents, Bennie and Patricia Gibbons whose guidance and many words of wisdom have helped me through this long journey. To my sister Michelle, who continually supported her 'big' sister and never failed to give her thoughtful opinions. To my good friend and fellow Southern-California native, Melissa Muñoz, who was always there when things got rough and understood how much I missed the beach. I am especially appreciative of, Dr. Patricia Anne Johnson for her mentorship and academic counseling. To my family and many friends, you have all been my biggest fans, and for that I cannot thank you enough.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Michael Yonan, for his outstanding guidance, friendship, patience, and providing me with an excellent atmosphere and opportunity in conducting my research. I would like to thank Dr. Anne Rudloff Stanton, Dr. James A. van Dyke, and Dr. Kristin Schwain who have continually been supportive and encouraging, allowing me to incorporate my own research interests within their courses. I would also like to thank Dr. Carol Lazzaro-Weis for allowing me to sit in for her courses on eighteenth-century French literature, from which greatly aided my research.

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ABSTRACT

Unlike much of the writing on rococo artists of the eighteenth century, Jean-Marc Nattier's (1685-1766) work has remained largely understudied. The French painter, who was notably associated with portraiture of the first half of the century, has historically been seen as the creator of simple mythological creations for the elite women of Louis XV's court. Although this may be the case, he did in fact contribute to a surge in portraiture that followed the tradition of allegorical styles of the past. Nattier was known for this style, artfully turning his sitters into Greek and Roman gods or goddesses placed within the theatrical worlds of mythological settings. This led to his longstanding position as one of the leading portraitists within the world of the Parisian high society and court—a place where one's image and representation to the public were not always meant to stay true to reality. Much like the allegorical depictions of Louis XIV and XV as Apollo, or Madame de Pompadour as Venus, these characteristics would be transferred from mythology and applied to reality through images.

The creation of an identity and image of oneself was a critical component of eighteenth-century French society. Influence from courtly deportment, theatre, and class differentiation, produced ideal situations of class ambiguity that were continually dealt with in all social settings. I would propose that Jean-Marc Nattier's œuvre served as the grounds by which we might consider how aristocratic traditions in portraiture were transferred from the elite to the merchant class.

## **Chapter 1. Introduction: Portraiture and Jean-Marc Nattier**

Historically, portraiture has been a genre with the greatest appeal to both patrons of art and historians seeking to study art. The idea of coming into contact with a person long dead, a direct encounter with them, lends it its appeal. Any viewer, whether contemporary to the painting or not, is often left with certain questions: who was the sitter, why were they deemed important enough to have had a portrait made of them, and probably the most elusive, can the image that is being presented be taken as truth? The idea of truth is taken up by many scholars when discussing portraiture. Critics, theorists, and the creators of these paintings continually attempted to define what truth really was and to what extent it was of importance when evaluating a work.

Of course, the accoutrements surrounding the figure also need to be explored in an attempt to better understand who the person was and what they were trying to convey through their pictures. Scepters, crowns, and canopies, for example, clearly mark the image as one of royalty. But all cases are not as obvious. One must also take into account the small details that are artfully included or even excluded. This is particularly important with portraiture as one's image is never left to chance, or coincidence. Details have their purpose and while they may be overlooked by our modern eyes, it is clear that their meaning would not have been unnoticed by the contemporary viewers of that time.

The Oxford English Dictionary of 2004 defines portraiture as 'a representation or delineation of a person, especially of the face, made from life, by drawing, painting, photography, engraving etc.; a likeness.' These two terms, 'delineation' and 'from life'

seem to be words that become problematic when discussing Jean-Marc Nattier's (1685-1766) body of work. Issues of delineation from the sitter's true likeness and to what extent these liberties were taken, often make identifying some of his sitters very difficult. Often, identification is left to the few comments made by critics or written documentation of connections between motifs and a particular person or family. Determining the sitter's identity is crucial. Having a portrait that cannot be specifically identified would serve little more than decorative purposes.

Portraiture prior to the twentieth century referred solely to an image or material object, such as relief sculpture. The word portrait, on the other hand, noted the action of portrayal or depiction that resulted in an image of a known person.<sup>1</sup> The image which was produced was claimed to represent truth and was believed to be a representation of the interior or spirituality of the person. However in modern terms, one tends to associate the idea of truth with the exterior and resemblance to the person being portrayed. One also assumes that the person being viewed is an identifiable individual, who was present at some point during the production of the image. Much in the same ways that images can be manipulated, falsified, or forged, it is important to note that some of these same issues arise when viewing painted portraits or sculptures. Because this form of representation is viewed as a type of documentation, there is often a literal correspondence between the portrait and the subject. There is the inherent tendency to interpret both the individual and event that took place. In short, it becomes clear that the modern viewer expects an exact resemblance in the form of the portrait, which signifies

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<sup>1</sup> Catherine M. Soussloff, *The Subject in Art: Portraiture and the Birth of the Modern* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 5.

that the genre relies historically on upholding the idea of the individual who can be recognized.<sup>2</sup>

It was during the middle of the nineteenth century that scholars began to reevaluate the genre of portraiture, which proved to be of great importance in reconsidering portraiture critically. Modernist notions of the individual became central to the topic of portraiture when critics and scholars began to view all the different ways in which portraits could accommodate artistic expression without sacrificing the sense of the sitter's individuality.<sup>3</sup> In short, the individuality of both the sitter and the artist were now being considered. However, we can trace aspects of this nineteenth century importance of naturalism as far back as imagery produced during the French king Charles V's reign. This suggests that, at least in the case of France, there was an evolving push towards highlighting and recognizing a clear likeness between the sitter and final image. Although this was the case, one can recognize that eighteenth-century painting nevertheless often included artificiality and implausible elements. Artistic liberties and visual agendas overruled—these elements, in addition to varying degrees of 'truth,' have very much complicated ones understanding of the sitter and their social position, as I will further relate to Nattier's portraits.

Eighteenth-century French portraiture serves as an example of these visual complications. Especially in my assessment of some of Nattier's work, the artist's œuvre

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<sup>2</sup> For further examples see Souslaff's discussion on Modern and Postmodern ideas of resemblance, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King: A Prehistory of Portraiture In late Medieval France* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 12.



provides to be an ideal case study in examining issues of truth and fantasy amid seemingly 'realistic' artistic representations.

Unlike much of the writing surrounding rococo artists of the eighteenth century, Nattier's work has remained largely understudied. The French painter, who was notably associated with portraiture of the first half of the century, has historically been seen as the creator of simple mythological creations for the elite women of Louis XV's court. Although this may be the case, he did in fact contribute to a surge in portraiture that followed the tradition of allegorical styles of the past. Nattier was known for this style, artfully turning his sitters into Greek and Roman goddesses placed within the theatrical worlds of mythological settings. This led to his longstanding position as one of the leading portraitists within the world of the Parisian high society and court—a place where one's image and representation to the public were not always meant to stay true to reality. Much like the allegorical depictions of Louis XIV and Louis XV as Apollo, or Madame de Pompadour as Venus, these characteristics would be transferred from mythology and applied to reality through images.

The creation of an identity and image of oneself was a critical component of eighteenth-century French society. Influence from courtly deportment, theatre, and class differentiation, produced ideal situations of ambiguity that were continually dealt with in all social settings. I would propose that Nattier's œuvre has unjustly been overlooked in discussions of eighteenth-century French painting and more importantly, in how art served as a vehicle of self-definition, primarily for the merchant class. Painters like Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684-1721), François Boucher (1703-1770), and Jean-Honoré

Fragonard (1732-1806), have been placed at the forefront of scholarship, in part due to the scholarly trends of the nineteenth century.

These artists were presented as possessing the ‘rococo’ aesthetic.<sup>4</sup> At the very least, one would assume that Nattier would have been more closely grouped with these artists, than he historically has been. Nattier was commissioned by the court, painted portraits of Madame de Pompadour as Diana, he was well sought after, and it has even been documented that elite patrons were known to have waited months for a portrait.<sup>5</sup> His popularity continued well into the 1760s. His portrait paintings were commissioned by both aristocracy and the bourgeois, and clearly show that the artist was in high demand and successful, especially during the years of 1735-1750. In fact, in 1741 the Swedish ambassador, Carl Gustaf Tessin, remarked that it was terribly hard to obtain a portrait by the artist, because he was constantly being solicited.<sup>6</sup> In being such a sought after artist during this period, it is curious that there have been no extensive English scholarly studies about Nattier.

The information known about the artist comes from his daughter and biographer Marie-Catherine Pauline Tocqué; his obituary writer, Charles Palissot de Montenoy; the collector, Pierre-Jean Mariette; and the author of *Dictionnaire des artistes* published in Paris in 1776, l’abbé de Fontenai. All of these contributors to written documentation of

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<sup>4</sup> The Goncourt Brothers and their several texts on the eighteenth century seem to have created a historical narrative of the ‘personalities’ associated with the rococo. Interestingly, they omitted Nattier from their discussion. Edmond and Jules Goncourt, *L’Art Du Dix-Huitième Siècle*. Vol. 1, 2, 3. (Paris: A. Quantin, 1906).

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Marc Nattier, *Madame de Pompadour en Diane*, 1746. Oil on canvas. 100.3x80.6cm. (Private Collection).

<sup>6</sup> Xavier Salmon, *Jean-Marc Nattier, 1685-1766*. exh.cat. (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1999), 26.

Nattier's life have underlined that his disposition to draw was what encouraged his father, the portraitist Marc Nattier, to send him to the Academy in 1703.<sup>7</sup> During his artistic formative years, Nattier's work was almost entirely influenced by Charles Le Brun, Peter Paul Rubens, and his uncle Jean-Baptiste Jouvenet. In 1717, the artist received his first commission to paint the official portraits of Catherine I and the tsar, Peter I of Russia. Both of these portraits mark a break from the enterprise of the Academy in which the artist reduced his former vast landscapes and began using elegant accessories and draperies to envelope the newly animated, reflective coloring of the faces of his sitters.

It was not until after 1720 that the artist devoted himself to portraits, since previously his aspiration was to become a history painter. Curiously, Nattier began producing portraits around the time of the John Law scheme, which led to the economic collapse in France.<sup>8</sup> It is possible that the financial crisis led Nattier to venture into portraiture—as it would have been a means to make a quick profit and redeem the losses

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>8</sup> The Banque Générale was a private bank, but three-quarters of the capital consisted of government bills and government-accepted notes. It was the first central bank of the nation. John Law, a Scotsman, was an able adventurer in finance, who succeeded in impressing the French government with his scheme for the issue of paper money. He acquired from France the territory then called Louisiana, which he proposed to colonize—an enterprise which became famous under the name of “The System,” afterwards known as the “Mississippi Bubble.” The East India and China companies were later absorbed into it, and it was thereafter known as the “Compagnie des Indes.” In 1718 Law became Director-general of the “Banque Royale,” of which the king guaranteed the notes. The Company and the Bank were combined, and in 1720 Law was made Comptroller-general of Finance. For a while the “System” prospered and great fortunes were made in speculation; but the over issue of paper money brought on the catastrophe, and in the same year the “System” collapsed, with financial ruin to its shareholders. Law's estate was confiscated, and he was driven from France.

he experienced during the crisis.<sup>9</sup> In doing so, it may be likely that Nattier continued within the genre because of the emerging merchant-class market, one that expanded his clientele. His work is emblematic of the rococo style and his creations were not seeking to defy or distinguish themselves from contemporary artists. However, Nattier's color palette seems to be very particular to his work and was negatively noted in various critical remarks.

A number of his pictures are of sitters that wished to be depicted as vestals, water nymphs, and goddesses like Hebe or Diana, all of which were not specific to Nattier. Other artists were also working with similar subjects. Boucher, for example, did a number of pieces depicting Diana, allegories of spring, and takes on Venus. Nattier's renditions of these allegories and mythologies seem to differentiate themselves primarily in their purpose of not only depicting these mythological guises, but also revealing the identity of the sitter through the titles of the work. One can see that other painters had dealt with very similar compositions and subjects, such as: Louis-Michel Van Loo's *Femme en vestale* (Fig 1), Pierre Le Sueur's *Femme en source* (Fig 2), and Marianne Loir's *Femme en Hebe* (Fig 3). However, Nattier was marked as the painter of 'ladies.' In 1748, the author of the *Observations sur les arts*, who was probably Charles Léoffroy de Saint-Yves, marked that in his opinion, it should not be surprising that the female

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<sup>9</sup> Bates and Guild Company Publishers, *Nattier: The French School*, part 30 vol. 3 (Boston: Bates and Guild: 1902), 23. In 1719 Nattier took Messieurs Couturier and Desvieux's advice (both directors of the Indian Company) to sell his drawings of Ruben's work to Law in order to try to save his own finances. Unfortunately he sold all of the works to Law for a mere 18,000 livres which was paid in bank-notes—of which became worthless over the course of two months. Shortly thereafter a family lawsuit which resulted in the imprisonment of Nattier's brother in the Bastille took place. His brother committed suicide before learning of his sentence leaving Nattier in financial ruin.

population loved to have their portrait made by the artist. "...no one had the gift of making them more life-like and their attitude and face as graceful."<sup>10</sup> Nattier enjoyed overall success up until the early 1750s when Baron Louis-Guillaume Baillet de Saint-Julien and Abbé Froment Garrigues were the first to criticize him. They complained that his work lacked truth and used very mannered and forced attitudes.<sup>11</sup> However, the artist's reputation did not begin to be affected until Diderot voiced his opinions. The Salons were the venue in which Denis Diderot offered his opinions about the merits of the artist. In 1763, the critic announced tersely that, "If Nattier had once been a good portraitist, at present he was nothing now."<sup>12</sup>

The backlash against Nattier could be the result of several factors. Firstly, these comments were made during the time of the declining style of costumed-history portraits, mythologies, and allegorical portraiture in general.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, the critique of his

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<sup>10</sup> Salmon, 26. Also see Abbé Froment Garrigues, *Sentiments d'un amateur sur l'exposition des tableaux du Louvre et la critique qui en a été faite* (Paris, September 4, 1753), intr.-12.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 26. "En 1763, le critique annonçait laconiquement que si Nattier avait été autrefois un bon portraitiste, à présent il n'était plus rien."

<sup>13</sup> By the 1750s this style began to fall out of favor. However, it was a slow transition; important people were still having their portraits made in this style. Critics like Charles-Nicolas Cochin were ridiculing the *portrait déguisé* style. In his fictional memoir where he addresses the *Mercure de France*, he writes under the name of "Société de gens de lettres de l'année 2355," saying: "One cannot conceive how one can adopt such a large quantity of different clothing. One sees those that seem contrary to decency, and ladies who are almost naked, with a simple chemise that leaves their neck, arms, and thighs uncovered. Apparently these were the clothes they wore *en négligé* [state of undress] in their apartment during the summer. In this dress, which is not one at all, joins a piece of cloth of silk-blue, violet, or another color that serves no purpose of covering: it passes behind the person and reappears on a thigh. It is hard to image how this adjustment would not fall to the ground, not being attached to anything at all, or that it would not be embarrassing to wear, as it seems to be several yards of fabric. Some of these ladies style

repetitive style may have stemmed from the fact that Nattier was under pressure to produce multiple commissions for a multitude of patrons. The artist had often been called upon to execute the same composition at different times, in which case he would simply modify the face of the sitter or make simple variations.<sup>14</sup> While the latter reason seems to suggest a lack of uniqueness or creative talents on the part of the artist, it lends to our understanding of the booming art market of the time and the production rate Nattier was maintaining. Nevertheless, these qualities left the artist open to criticism.

While the scope of my research is limited to a fraction of the artist's complete oeuvre, this body of work focuses on issues of performance and identity seen in a selection of Nattier's portraits. I will be analyzing how they relate in broader terms to eighteenth-century France and the social ambiguities that were created with the new merchant class. Nattier's work was more than fancy historiated-portraits, mythological or allegorical compositions, but rather served as an extension of the new fluid, and at times ambiguous, identities of the aristocracy and the new bourgeoisie.

I would like to suggest a new approach in determining how Nattier's portraits may have functioned within these new social conditions. Scholars have often focused on the following when discussing his work: the repetitive formal elements that are seen throughout his oeuvre, the illusionary effects of objects and subjects that blurred the line between reality and that which is fabrication, and how female sitters became synonymous

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their hair with flowers, others with reeds, with ears of wheat or other ornaments of their fantasy that they mingle with pearls." See Charles Nicolas Cochin, *Recueil de quelques pieces concernant les arts : extraites de plusieurs Mercuries de France*. (A Paris : Chez Ch. Ant. Jombert), 151-154.

<sup>14</sup> Salmon, 26.

with allegorical portraiture. All of these discussions have been influential in my own research and are present in my argument. However, these past discussions have been limited to selected motifs and portrait ‘types’ or singular paintings.

First, I would like to suggest that all of these elements discussed by other scholars were a culmination that served not only the purpose of one sitter but were being used broadly by his female sitters. Secondly, I would like to suggest that not all of Nattier’s patrons were of noble or aristocratic lineage, which not only complicates the genre of portraiture, specifically allegorical portraiture, but also the artist’s relationship with a new type of clientele. Thirdly, I would like to make a connection between the types of portraits that were being commissioned by both aristocratic and bourgeois women. It is clear that aristocrats had created and upheld a long history of portrait types, but what happened when the bourgeoisie took on these representations for themselves? Nattier’s painting served as the visual field in which the struggle and attempt to define oneself was played out.

In this study I hope to shed light on another approach that may be taken when discussing Nattier within French eighteenth-century painting. I contend that the connection between the aristocratic and the bourgeois woman has been overlooked, namely because of the lack of attention Nattier’s work has received in general. With the type of portrait artist Nattier came to be categorized as, and the writings of both critics and authors, the artist seemed to have been relegated to the background of eighteenth-century history fairly early on. I have organized my discussion of his works by image

‘types.’ These include repeated images of allegorical, mythological, and maternal scenes over Nattier’s entire œuvre.

The first of this group are the *en source* or water nymph allegorical images. These typically include one figure that is pictured in a natural setting. There is always some sort of water source whether it is a river, stream, or body of water nearby. Sometimes, the figure leans onto an urn that spills water, pours water from a ewer, or gestures to the source. This discussion will include: *Marie-Anne de Bourbon, dite Mademoiselle de Clermont, aux eaux minérales de Chantilly*, 1729; *Élisabeth de Flesselles en Source*, 1747; and *Madame Victoire incarnant l’Eau*, 1751 (Figures 4, 5, 6).

The second group includes the mythological image of *Diane* or Diana. The female sitter is depicted with bow and arrow along with her huntress animal skin. This discussion will include: *Carlotta Frederika Sparre en nymphe de Diane*, 1741; *Constance Gabrielle Magdeleine Bonnier de la Mosson sous les traits de Diane*, 1742; and *Madame de Maison-Rouge sous les traits de Diane*, 1756 (Figures 7, 8, 9).

The third and final group includes images of mother and daughter. Both mother and daughter are pictured together and are often depicted in the process of adorning themselves with various accessories. However, the focus of beautification is always on the daughter. This discussion will include: *Portrait présumé de Marie-Thérèse-Catherine Crozat, marquise du Châtel, et de sa fille Antoinette-Eustachie*, 1733; and *Madame Marsollier et sa fille*, 1749 (Figures. 10, 11).

By examining these portrait types one will learn the following things: the bourgeoisie made a conscious effort to mimic or copy exact portrait types in an attempt to



associate their image and patronage with the aristocracy. Once this occurred, the aristocracy did not simply discard the motif but continued to have themselves represented in the same way—Nattier enabled this occurrence in his participation in the new art market.

This analysis will feature portraits by the artist from roughly the years 1729 to 1756 and will attempt to consider how aristocratic traditions in portraiture were transferred from the elite to the merchant class. While some portraits may have been used to associate the merchant class with the characteristics of goddesses or allegories, it is rather the careful balance of reality and artifice that was used in an attempt to associate themselves with the aristocracy.

## Chapter 2. Historiography: Jean-Marc Nattier— Eighteenth-Century Scholarship to Present

### I. Nattier and Marie-Catherine Pauline (Madame Tocqué)

One of the best sources available regarding the life of Nattier was written by his own daughter Marie-Catherine Pauline, also known as Madame Tocqué.<sup>15</sup> It is interesting that she decided to write her father's biography, as traditionally this would have been written by the artist himself if not by an outside entity to the family. There is documentation that on February 7, 1767 Charles-Nicolas Cochin gave a lecture at the Academy about Nattier's life by Madame Tocqué.<sup>16</sup> Yet, the text does not match any of the accounts nor the length of Pauline's biography later published in the *Mémoires inédits sur la vie et les œuvres des membres de l'Académie Royale de peinture et de sculpture publiés d'après les manuscrits conservés à l'École impériale des Beaux-Arts* in 1854.<sup>17</sup>

A more problematic element arrives when reading the introduction to the *Mémoires Inédits*, whereby the editor states that, "Authorized by the wish that the Academy deigned to testify, we have the honor of presenting an abbreviated life of M.

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<sup>15</sup> Pauline was Nattier's eldest daughter. She was married to Louis Tocqué, one of her father's students, and wrote her father's biography. All of the early scholarship that was written about Nattier marks Pauline as their primary source of information concerning the artist's early life.

<sup>16</sup> Salmon, 312.

<sup>17</sup> L. Dussieux, ed. et al., *Mémoires Inédits Sur La Vie et Les Ouvrages Des Membres de l'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture*, vol. 2 (Paris : J.B. Dumoulin: 1854), 348-364.

Nattier, whose main facts are taken from a manuscript of his hand.”<sup>18</sup> On the following page, a lengthy explanation is given as to the brevity of the biography, considering Nattier had been very ill by this time, and was unable to complete the manuscript. The editor then goes on to assure the reader that none of Nattier’s frank text has been omitted, but that a complete restructuring of the text was needed and that reconstruction was approached with the greatest accuracy regarding facts and eras.<sup>19</sup> As carefully as the Academy attempted to approach this incomplete manuscript, it still complicates one’s understanding of which elements came from the artist himself in his own manuscript and which were potentially added by his daughter or the Academy. Still, as this written work is the earliest documentation of Nattier and his life, it has subsequently been heavily used in scholarship.

The text opens with basic information about the artist, his birth, his inclination for paintings, and his father’s, Marc Nattier, determination to help in the advancement of his son’s talents and how he was sent to the Academy ‘as soon as he could hold a pencil’.<sup>20</sup> In 1715, apparently even Louis XIV took note of the young fifteen-year old’s talents. Nattier’s drawing of the portrait of Louis XIV by Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659-1743), which was subsequently used for engravings, warranted the king’s attention in which the king

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 348. “Autorisé par cet empressement que l’Académie a daigné témoigner, on a l’honneur de lui présenter un abrégé de la vie de M. Nattier, dont les principaux faits sont tirés d’un manuscrit de sa main.”

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 346.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 351. “D’abord que Jean-Marc Nattier, celui de ces deux artistes dont on [é]crit la vie [Nattier had another brother, they both were artists], fut en âge de tenir le porte crayon, son p[è]re l’envoya a l’Academie, ou, peu de temps après, il gagna le prix du dessin.” Nattier’s mother was also an artist. Marie Courtois was a miniaturist.

states, “Monsieur, continue to work this way and you will become a great man.”<sup>21</sup> Two years later, he was given the commission to paint Peter the Great. Throughout the biography, special attention is given to Nattier’s commissioned portraits by the French royal family. Another example of Nattier’s interactions with the royal family is seen in the recounting of how the queen had seen Nattier’s portraits of the Nesle sisters—later they were both referred to as Madame de Chateauroux and Madame de Flavacourt—and she had been struck with their exact resemblance to the two girls. Apparently they created quite a sensation at court and the queen would soon after commissioned Nattier to paint a portrait of her daughter Henriette and later Adelaïde.<sup>22</sup> The biography goes on to describe the “universal applause” Nattier received for his portrait of the queen, and the pronounced success he had painting numerous “personages belonging to the nobility.”<sup>23</sup> His talents among the nobility are described as being in high demand, even so much so, that other European courts were aware of the artist’s talents.

What seems to be stressed throughout the text however, is the artist’s personal crises. He lived through financial ruin, first with the financial collapse in France and then again after realizing his seemingly well-off wife, Mademoiselle de Laroche, was in fact not financially secure because her family had also been affected by the financial catastrophe. The final paragraphs, of what one may assume to be Nattier’s words, make it clear that his life was never as prosperous or as successful as it seemed. His fortune

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 354. “Monsieur, continuez à travailler ainsi et vous deviendrez un grand homme.”

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 357.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 359.

and reputation are described as having “never [been] so great as it seemed,” and the artist admits to his lack of financial planning for his old age.<sup>24</sup>

Either in the words of his daughter, himself, or a culmination of the two, a tribute to his virtues is included, which highlights Nattier’s nature and purity in being a good father and true friend. Nattier is again presented as having been a caring man, something that unfortunately played into his inability to reach worldly success. The artist is said to have blamed himself for careless investments, unfortunate bargains, and his willingness to help people financially who never repaid him. One is left with the impression of a man who endured not only eventual public criticism for his work, but who experienced a plethora of domestic and personal sorrows: from his financial struggle to support his invalid wife, who left him a widower and nine children to care for; to the death of one of his sons, who had shown promise of continuing on in the artist’s footsteps.

This work tends to follow the standard model for artist biographies of the time in which anecdotes, not necessarily factual, were intended to depict a particular image of the artist. The motif is clearly followed in the depiction of Nattier as ‘special’ and ‘mythical’ in his very early talents, specifically with his interaction with Louis XIV during his teens. As I have mentioned above, special care was also taken to highlight the plight of Nattier’s personal and financial life. This is not to suggest that these events did not take place, but the extent to which these details were made important cannot be overlooked. Because Nattier’s father was already a portrait painter and member of the Academy, I would suggest that these points of struggle in the artist’s life were a means to warrant not only

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 359.

his success separate from his father, but also as a means to explain the decline in his career.<sup>25</sup>

## II. Nattier and Denis Diderot

Evidence of the reception of Nattier's works began early in 1737 with the first widespread publication of the work he exhibited at the Salon that year. It was in the publication *Mercur de France*, 1737 that he was designated, "student of the Graces and the painter of Beauty."<sup>26</sup> Substantial criticism of his works comes most notably with Denis Diderot (1713-1784), though other critics and contemporaries were mentioning the artist's work as well. The first Salon that featured written critique of the artist's work by Diderot was the Salon of 1759.<sup>27</sup> It had been two years since the prior exhibition where artists like Van Loo, Vien, Boucher, Pierre, Challe, Natoire, Bachelier, La Tour and Baldighi had received some of the highest praise. However, the Saloniers of this particular year remarked that art had fallen in general since the end of the era of Louis the Great—that now there was far too much "...*papillotage*, too much frivolousness..."<sup>28</sup>

The term *papillotage*, derives from the word *papilloter*; to blink; flutter; or flicker. In the

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<sup>25</sup> M. Hofer (Jean Chrétien Ferdinand), *Nouvelle Biographie générale*, vol. 37 (Paris: Firmin Didot Frère, 1855-70), <http://archive.org/details/nouvellebiograph37hoef/>, 507-8. Marc Nattier was born in 1642 and died in October 1705. He had a relatively known reputation and was received as a member of the Academy on June, 27, 1676.

<sup>26</sup> Salmon, 303.

<sup>27</sup> Denis Diderot, *Salons* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 29. Nattier is seventy-four years old by this time.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 30. "Cependant la *Lettre* [letter that was written anonymously criticizing the works of MM. de l'Académie] dit que l'art est bien tombé depuis le siècle de Louis le Grand; il y a maintenant trop de papillotage, trop de frivolité ; et l'auteur oppose Boucher à La Sueur." For further discussion of *Papillotage* and its connection to the feminine *toilette* see Melissa Hyde, *Making Up the Rococo Francois Boucher and His Critics* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2005), 95.

context of painting, this came to refer to the flickering and reverberating light of surface area. With its deceptive and distracting surface qualities, it had a negative connotation with rococo art. It was seen as an interference of the pictorial coherence and intelligibility required for a good history painting and was associated with negative coquetry—namely, the flirtatious batting of the eyes. Nattier’s submissions to the Salon that year figured into the large number of portrait paintings, though he did not receive the same praise as his colleagues who were working in the same genre.<sup>29</sup>

One of Nattier’s vestal type portraits, entitled *Une Vestale* (fig 12), was not highly regarded by Diderot. He writes:

Here is a Vestal by Nattier; and one would expect youth, innocence, candor, tousled hair, large drapery folds that are brought up to the head and mask a portion of the face; a bit of pallor, for pallor is well suited to piety (and tenderness). None of this, but instead an elegant coiffure, an artificial pose, all the affectation of a woman at her *toilette*, and eyes full of lust, I will say nothing more.<sup>30</sup>

Diderot not only writes Nattier’s portrait off as having been too contrived, but he also aligns the female figure with the *femme du monde*, the everyday superficial woman at her *toilette*—a place that would not have been associated with the traditional vestal virgin.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 30. Between forty and fifty portraits were submitted, mostly these were of men (often artists). Most of the models refused to give their name. Within the portraits of women, Madame de Pompadour’s portrait is noted.

<sup>30</sup> Denis Diderot, *Diderot Essais sur la peinture: Salon de 1759, 1761, 1763* (Paris: Hermann), 94. “Voici une Vestale de Nattier; et vous allez imaginer de la jeunesse, de l’innocence, de la candeur, des cheveux épars, une draperie à grands plis, ramenée sur la tête et dérochant une partie du front; un peu de pâleur; car la pâleur sied bien à la piété (et à la tendresse). Rien de cela, mais à la place, une coiffure de tête élégante, un ajustement recherché, toute l’afféterie d’une femme du monde à sa toilette, et des yeux pleins de volupté, pour ne rien dire de plus.”

<sup>31</sup> Kathleen Nicholson, “The ideology of feminine ‘virtue’: the vestal virgin in French eighteenth-century allegorical portraiture” in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna

In contrast, the two female figures situated in the background of the composition are perhaps more ‘vestal’ in their appearance. Dressed in white—flowers, pearls, and the low *décolletage* seen with the main figure have been omitted from their costume.

Through Diderot’s critique, the sentiment of Nattier’s lack in depth is not lost.

Furthermore, the severity in which Diderot judged Nattier’s work was not only apparent to the French reader but was also an attitude that he disseminated through personal letters aside from the publication of the Salon critiques. In 1759, a Swedish artist by the name of Per Gustave Floding (1731-1791), who had been in Paris for three years, wrote to Carl Gustaf Tessin updating the Swedish politician of his stay in France. The artist wanted to extend his three year stay and in hopes of doing so, he sent notes on all of the artists and the accounts of the Salon happenings of that year. In the letter he sent to Tessin, he made clear his excited anticipation for a brilliant Salon and later sent a catalogue along with the critiques. Tessin resented the critical comments made regarding Boucher, Nattier, and Van Loo by Diderot and others and claimed that they were wrongly made.<sup>32</sup> He even threatened to unsubscribe to the *Mercure de France* where they had been published. This is an interesting reaction to the critique of Nattier’s work and although Tessin would continue to champion Nattier’s portraits, this account serves as an

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Woodall, 59. Nicholson cites the commendable and dignified behavior that was associated with the vestal. The same decorum of the vestal is seen in publications of the time, notably Madame de Lambert’s 1727 *New Thoughts on Women* and her *A Mother’s Advice to Her Daughter* (1728). In one passage, Lambert cautioned, ‘The reign of virtue is for life...Keep in mind that you will only be beautiful for a brief period of time, and not [beautiful] for one much longer; that when women lose their allure, they maintain themselves only by fundamentals and estimable qualities.’ Therefore, the superficialities of beautification are not encouraged and the realities of fleeting beauty are used as a means to parallel the loss of virginity.

<sup>32</sup> Diderot, *Salons*, 33.



example of how far reaching the French eighteenth-century art critic's writings had become. It may also provide an understanding as to how the perpetuation of an artist's merit, or lack thereof, hinged on the words of the critic.

Diderot was far less severe toward portraitist La Tour. Though La Tour was not mentioned in the Salon of 1759, he does make an appearance in Diderot's critiques of the Salon of 1761. Diderot remarks, "The pastels of M. de La Tour are always how they should be. Among those he has exhibited this year, the portrait of the Roman *Crébillon* (fig 13), the naked head, and *M. Laideguive* (fig 14), notably, add much to his reputation."<sup>33</sup> That same year of 1761, Diderot had but two lines to contribute to his discussion of Nattier's work. "The *Portrait de feu Madame Infante* (fig 15) dressed in hunting clothes is detestable. Does this man here have no friend who tells him the truth?"<sup>34</sup> Diderot's comments about both artists situate their artistic merits on opposite ends of the spectrum. La Tour is presented as superior through his ability to consistently produce successful portraits, of which, Diderot has come to expect with the already

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 126. La Tour is not mentioned in the Salon of 1759. Apparently there were many works that were never shown that year. The *Mercure de France* of May 1760 wrote that they regretted not being able to see any (Diderot, *Salons*, 30). However, the *Feuille nécessaire* describes them with confidence: "M. Delatour [*sic*] est toujours le même dans ses pastels." Diderot writes in his critic of the Salon of 1759 that, "La Tour avoit peint pluseiurs pastels qui sont restés chez lui, parce qu'on lui refusoit les places qu'il demandoit" (Diderot, *Salons*, 67). It seems probable that the artist did exhibit his work, but either because he did not exhibit a large amount, or that they did not make an impression on critics, there are contradicting accounts of their presence.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 116. "Le *Portrait de feu Madame Infante* en habit de chasse est détestable. Cet homme-là n'a donc point d'ami qui lui dise la vérité?" Pierre de Nolhac later writes in his 1905 monograph of the artist that he finds this comment made by Diderot unjust and that the critic judged the painting too severely.

established reputation of the artist. However, in the short words of the critic, Nattier is presented as an artist who is out of touch with the realities of the quality of his work.

By 1763, Nattier was seventy-eight years old, but this did not dissuade Diderot of his harsh critiques of the artist's final submission to the Salon, *M. Nattier avec sa famille* (fig 16). In his longest and most patronizing critique written about Nattier, Diderot states:

This man was once a very good portraitist, but he is no longer. The portrait of his family is blurry, that is to say weak and overdone. Monsieur Nattier, you do not know your children's own faces; certainly they are not like these. The costume is well observed in your *Chinois* and in your *Indienne*.<sup>35</sup> If you only wanted to teach me how one dresses in China and in India, be content, you have done so. The good man Nattier is old and rambles. In actuality he painted his wife and children from memory, or the painting is old; as the former is dead, and the latter are grown. Nattier in his heyday was the painter of women. He always painted them as Hebe, Diana, Venus, etc. All the portraits resembled each other, one thinks that they are always looking at the same figure.<sup>36</sup>

Diderot's harsh criticism marks not only his continued discontent with Nattier's work, but situates the artist's work within his larger criticism of rococo. The words 'weak' and 'overdone' establish the connection between the artist and the current discourse on the frivolity and feminine qualities of rococo paintings of that time. Blurry in his brush work, the portrait of his family does in fact depict areas in his composition in which the

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<sup>35</sup> There were two other paintings exhibited in the Salon of that year. One of a Chinaman holding an arrow and another of an Indian woman.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 206. "Cet home a été autrefois très-bon portraitiste, mais il n'est plus rien. Le portrait de sa famille est flou, c'est-à-dire faible et léché. Monsieur Nattier, vous ne connaissez pas les têtes de vos enfants ; certainement elles ne sont pas comme cela. Le costume est bien observé dans votre *Chinois* et dans votre *Indienne*. Si vous n'avez voulu que m'apprendre comme on était vêtu à la Chine et dans l'Inde, soyez content, vous l'avez fait. Le bonhomme Nattier est vieux et radote. Il a en effet peint sa femme et ses enfants de mémoire, ou bien le tableau est ancien ; car la première est morte, et les autres ont grandi. Nattier dans son bon temps était le peintre des femmes. Il les peignait toujours en Hébé, en Diane, en Venus. Tous ses portraits se ressemblent, on croit toujours voir la même figure."

clear definition between fabrics and objects are difficult to discern. The apparent blurriness of his composition and Diderot's mention of weakness, also serve in the clear disassociation between Nattier's work and that of a history painter. His work therefore lacked the visual coherence and intelligibility that would have been required of any good history painter. Diderot also pointedly marks the theatricality of Nattier's painting highlighting his use of 'costume' in two other paintings exhibited. If positive words are attempted to be gleaned from his critique, they would be that Nattier was successful in his depiction of dress in China and India. However, this also aligns with another criticism of rococo and its negative association with the theatre, performance, and feminine deceit. It also suggests that Nattier's talents were limited to the depiction of beautiful women and various costume—two qualities that came to define the artist.

However, a more sympathetic and perhaps more accurate history of the painting is found in the *Mercure de France* in October of 1763, where a connoisseur, who we believe to be l'abbé de La Porte, writes a review of the piece stating:

Monsieur Nattier, famous in the art of lending grace to Nature without distortion, did not need this talent in order to preserve the image of a woman who had been taken from him by death for several years now, where those who knew her regretted more the loss of her charm than her beauty.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Salmon, 293-95. [*Sic*] "M. Nattier, célèbre dans l'art de prêter des grâces a la Nature sans la faire méconnaître, n'a pas eu besoin de ce talent pour nous conserver l'image d'une femme que la mort lui a enlevée il y a plusieurs année, et dans la perte de laquelle tous ceux qui la connoissoient ont eu à regretter encore plus les charmes de l'esprit que ceux de la figure. Le Tableau qui contient le Portrait de feu Madame Nattier, dans le plus bel âge, celui de l'Auteur et des enfants très jeunes qu'il avoit alors, qui paroît par là avoir été fait, ou au moins commencé il y a long-temps, est le seul de ce Peintre que l'on ait exposé au Sallon [at this time it had been forgotten that two other works were shown, one China man and one Indian]. Son âge et les infirmités qui l'accompagnent ordinairement, ne le dispensent que trop de concourir avec de plus jeunes Emules. On doit lui tenir compte aujourd'hui, de ses travaux passés et du succès qu'ils ont eux."

La Porte goes on to explain that Nattier probably began the painting in his younger age, but that one must not forget his past work and the great success he once had.

If the previous Salon critiques had not already solidified Nattier's reputation as a 'simple portraitist' there is no doubt that Diderot's last words about the artist did more than just that. Nattier is portrayed as a senile man who continues on in his old age as an unsuccessful portrait painter. The negative assumption that his earlier work comprised of the trivial repetition of his sitters is transferred to the artist's rendition of his family. Much in the same way that he had been criticized for not having accurately portrayed his sitters, he is again accused of inaccurately capturing the physiognomy of his own family. And while Diderot simultaneously acknowledges Nattier's once talent, he also does not fail to reiterate the limited types of portraits the artist produced during his career.

### III. Nattier Studies During the Late-Nineteenth Century and Early-Twentieth Century

Although more contemporary scholarship focusing on Nattier is very limited, several later scholars have made a point of including, if not focusing entirely on, the artist in their writings. One of the earliest written works on the artist appeared in 1902. The publisher Bates and Guild released short volumes in their series, *Masters in Art*, on a monthly basis. The Nattier volume featured forty black and white illustrations, and all of the biographical text about the artist was taken directly from Pauline's biography. While this is evidence that the artist was being written about three years prior to the first substantial monograph by Pierre de Nolhac (1859-1936), and pointedly in English, it does not add any additional information or argument to the discussion of Nattier. The text

takes word-for-word the translated version of Pauline's biography and what would later be the introduction in Nolhac's monograph.

However, after the conclusion of Nattier's abridged biography in the Bates and Guild volume, a series of short essays by various authors is included. Most of these date to the late 1800s and early 1900s, and were parts of larger works that dealt with the eighteenth century, French artists, or portraitists.<sup>38</sup> These writings reiterate some of the same criticisms seen time and again about the artist which would later reappear in modern publications. That he inaccurately portrayed women as beautiful and that, "He would paint an ugly woman and depict her features so accurately that the most scrupulous examination failed to discover any untruthfulness, yet nevertheless those who saw the portrait only would deem her beautiful."<sup>39</sup> The superficial beauty and skill in this beautification of women are the only acknowledged talents attributed to Nattier. He is portrayed as not having been a great painter or one of quality, one who was too mannered and only momentarily popular because of his royal connections as portraitist to the royal house of France. The final portion of the Bates and Guild text, written by Eleanor Lewis, gives an overview of Louis XV and his family.<sup>40</sup> She points out that while Louis XV was handsome along with his daughters, his wife Marie Leszczyńska was not. This

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<sup>38</sup> Authors and titles that are included: Arsène Alexandre, "Histoire Populaire de la Peinture"; Andre Perate, "Chef D'œuvre"; P. Hedouin, "Mosaïque"; Charles Blanc, "Histoire des Peintres de Toutes les Ecoles"; W. Burger, "Gazette Des Beaux-Art : 1860"; Oliver Merson, "La Peinture Française au XVIIe et au XVIIIe Siècle"; Paul Mantz, "Gazette des Beaux Arts : 1894."

<sup>39</sup> Bates and Guild Company Publishers, 29.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 33. Eleanor Lewis, "The Cosmopolitan: 1897."

alludes to Nattier's portrait of Leszczyńska, and possibly why she appears more attractive in his portrait and not in written accounts.

The paintings that are included in the publication are entirely limited to the royal Bourbon family, though aside from the plate descriptions featured at the end of the text, there is no discussion or in depth analysis of these works.<sup>41</sup> Arsène Alexandre's contributing essay featured a comment that may shed light on why only these particular pieces were featured in the publication rather than others with her judgment that, "...portraits of Louis XV's charming daughters, [were] unquestionably his most important works."<sup>42</sup>

#### IV. Nattier and Pierre de Nolhac

Nolhac, who was the curator of the museum at the Palace of Versailles beginning in 1892, took a great interest in Nattier's work for many reasons. The château of Versailles had, and currently still has, one of the largest collections in the world of portraits painted by the artist thanks to Louis-Philippe 1<sup>er</sup> of France (1773-1850), who established the musée d'Histoire de France in 1837.<sup>43</sup> The museum is set in the wings of the château that had once been all but abandoned. Rather than live in these quarters, as was traditional for the king, Louis-Philippe organized and regrouped a vast number of

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<sup>41</sup> Paintings included: *Madame Adelaide sous la figure de Diane*, 1745, *Marie Leszczyńska, reine de France*, 1748, *Marie-Anne de Bourbon, dite Mademoiselle de Clermont, aux eaux minérales de Chantilly*, 1729, *Madame Infante, duchesse de Parme, en habit de cour*, *Madame Sophie à Fontevrault*, 1748, *Madame Henriette en habit de cour jouant de la basse de viole*, 1754, *Madame Louise à Fontevrault*, 1748, *Louise-Henriette de Bourbon-Conti*, 1744, *Madame de Pompadour*, 1748, and *Madame Adelaide faisant des noeuds*, 1756.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 27. Arsène Alexandre, "Histoire Populaire de la Peinture."

<sup>43</sup> Also referred to as The duc d'Orléans.

portraits and history paintings, many of which were commissioned by some of the artists of that time, and transformed the space into a museum. The museum became a national reconciliation tool of all political persuasions. He presented a history of France beginning with Clovis, of the fifth and sixth century, up to his own accession.<sup>44</sup> As well as the museum's substantial collection of Nattier's work, at the end of the nineteenth century Nolhac was responsible as curator, with identifying, classifying, re-hanging, and bringing attention to the forgotten artist and his œuvre.<sup>45</sup> This would have been within Nolhac's specialization of the eighteenth century, as the historiography of Versailles and the attempt to restore the palace were complimented by Nattier's body of work and the interior spaces which were represented in his paintings.<sup>46</sup> Nolhac's monograph on Nattier was written in 1905 and was revised twice in 1910 and again in 1925, but his interest was not only limited to the artist.<sup>47</sup> In general, Nolhac was very interested in the eighteenth century and he published several books on Louis XV and Mme. de Pompadour, Marie Leszczyńska, the gardens of Versailles, and François Boucher, to name a few.<sup>48</sup>

Nolhac's monograph is divided into four chapters: "The Early Years of Nattier", "The Popular Painter", "The Royal Family Painter", and "Nattier's Last Years". The text

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<sup>44</sup> "Le Musée Historique de Louis-Philippe: La Creation," Musée de l'Histoire de France Château de Versailles.  
[http://www.museehistoiredefrance.fr/index.php?option=com\\_musee&cid=4&view=detail&his=museeHistorique](http://www.museehistoiredefrance.fr/index.php?option=com_musee&cid=4&view=detail&his=museeHistorique).

<sup>45</sup> Salmon, 12.

<sup>46</sup> As curator, Nolhac began to restore Versailles to its appearance before the Revolution beginning in 1892 with his appointment as curator.

<sup>47</sup> Pierre de Nolhac, *Nattier, Peintre de La Cour de Louis XV* (Paris, 1910).

<sup>48</sup> He also wrote several books about Marie Antoinette, and quite a few about the gardens and structure of Versailles.

concludes with both a list of Nattier's paintings which had been engraved, as well as a list of all of the works shown at the Salon beginning in 1737. Nolhac seems to present Nattier factually, crediting all of his biographical information to Pauline's text of the artist, and letters and documents contemporary to the artist. He does not suggest that Nattier was a prodigy or that his career was an easy one, but presents the artist as a man born into an artistic family who was expected, along with his brother, to follow the family tradition. Nolhac saw the opportunity to invite readers and scholars to reconsider the artist and give Nattier the merit Nolhac believed he warranted. However, Nolhac's efforts were in vain and Nattier continued to have the reputation of the complacent portraitist that critics of his time had dubbed him. Scholarly research written in the wake of Nolhac's monograph did not appear again until 1996.

#### V. Nattier Studies after 1990

In 1996 Kathleen Nicholson wrote an essay entitled, "The ideology of feminine 'virtue': the vestal virgin in French eighteenth-century allegorical portraiture." The subject of the vestal virgin touches on two of Nattier's paintings: *Mme. de Caumartin en Héb e*, 1753 (fig 17) and *Une Vestale*, 1759 (fig 12). In her essay, Nicholson notes that many of the allegorical portraits of the time were used for ornamental purposes, thus, they would not have been contemplated for the psychological nuances that were a mark of fine portraiture. This suggests that the likeness of the sitter may not have been all that important if viewed in terms of the decorative scheme of a room. She also marks the negative connotation between women and portraiture in general during the time period. The attention to appearance and or the vanity of presenting oneself were qualities that



women were said to ‘manipulate,’ presenting mirrors of themselves that were less than true to reality.

In turn, portraiture became the domain of women and more specifically allegorical portraiture. Nicholson cites Philip Conisbee’s observation that promoting an image of high society was a way to elevate the subject to a plane of mythic nobility.<sup>49</sup> However, Nicholson argues that Conisbee’s simple observation does not take into account the concerns of gender. In her opinion, allegory articulated the struggle between the values of expectations held by society and the women’s own aspirations. A new space of representation was opened to women who had previously been limited in their selfhood and identity. In short, the sitter could reconfigure their selfhood or identity as a process of continual invention.

While Nicholson discusses these ideas of women’s selfhood and identity, they are limited to the vestal virgin motif, and Nattier’s two works are used as simple examples of these types of portrait. However, her preliminary discussion of allegorical portraiture and women’s roles as the main consumers of these types of painting can clearly serve in better understanding a number of Nattier’s images of aristocratic, as well as bourgeois women, and the motives of their patronage.

Around this time, Donald Posner published an article in 1996 in the *Metropolitan Museum Journal*. The article, “The ‘Duchess de Velours’ and Her Daughter: A Masterpiece by Nattier and Its Historical Context,” was the product of a shortened version of a talk that had been presented by the professor at the Metropolitan Museum

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 57.

two years prior.<sup>50</sup> This seems to be the first time in which one sees scholarship that does not take on the typical biographical focus that was seen in previous works, with the exception of Nicholson, but rather a focus on Nattier's painting and the historical context. In this case *Madame Marsollier et sa fille* (fig 11) is addressed by Posner as he explores the ways in which the history of the painting, Marsollier's background, and the eighteenth-century *toilette* functioned together. He makes an extremely interesting argument that the sitter used her association with Nattier as a way to showcase her buying power and thus financial wealth.

Posner presents documentation of Marsollier's background, namely from the duc de Luynes' accounts, to further the idea that Marsollier was an example of the merchant class using art to celebrate their new social privileges. He also examines Marsollier's choice to include her daughter in the portrait, mimicking other paintings of the time and works by Nattier. Posner argues that while Nattier may, "not deserve, the luster it [his career] had in his heyday...his paintings are not without very genuine and historically important merits..."<sup>51</sup> His work on the *Marsollier* painting serves as an important foundation to my own thinking and touches on the overarching idea of the painted image provides a means to mark social status. The argument presented in his article focuses on Marsollier's connection with a painter of the court and the ways in which she attempted to assemble certain iconographical signs that would align her with aristocracy. In chapter four, I will build upon this idea looking more closely at how she mimicked previous

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<sup>50</sup> Posner's discussion was part of series of public lectures organized by Marian Burleigh-Motley, entitled "Rediscoveries" in 1994.

<sup>51</sup> Donald Posner, "'The 'Duchesse de Velours' and Her Daughter: A Masterpiece by Nattier and Its Historical Context" in *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 31, 131.

paintings by Nattier and other artists, as well as how she was not singular in her attempt to use the same methods of self-declared standing within society.

One of the more current influential works to date concerning Nattier and his œuvre is the catalogue entitled, *Jean-Marc Nattier 1685-1766*, published in 1999 by the Château de Versailles et Trianon.<sup>52</sup> The exhibition was the first modern comprehensive appraisal of Nattier's art, and the thoroughly researched catalogue by curator Xavier Salmon is the first in-depth study of Nattier since Nolhac's monograph in 1905. However, both of these works were written in French and have not been translated, nor have any attempts been made to make them accessible to the English reader. Given that Nattier has generally been overlooked in art historical scholarship, the exhibition was the most recent attempt to call for further investigation and discussion of Nattier's art and that time period.

Salmon's catalogue begins with an ode to Nolhac who had been the curator of Versailles' collection starting in 1892. Both Salmon and Nolhac seem to have been the only two curators in the collection's history that found Nattier's work to be worthy of a substantial exhibition. The text follows the standards of any scholarly catalogue. He introduces the artist's early life—again heavily based on Pauline's biography of her father, his role as a portraitist, his workshop, and concludes with an epilogue. The catalogue also features eighty-seven color plates by the artist, a chronology, and a

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<sup>52</sup> Posner mentions a catalogue raisonné of Nattier's work that was beginning to be prepared in 1996 by Joseph Baillio for a publication by Georges Wildenstein (Wildenstein Institute in Paris, France). This catalogue has yet to be completed and is still marked as a 'forthcoming' publication on the institute's website. It could be that the institute postponed their release, as Salmon's catalogue was released in 1999.

catalogue of all of the drawings, paintings, engravings, bronzes, porcelains, and books that were sold by the artist three years before his death. Salmon argues that Diderot's remarks in his first Salon review were the catalyst in the overwhelming disinterest scholarship had taken toward Nattier and his work. By the late 1730s, Nattier was viewed as a fashionable portraitist for high society; although, his mythological style portraits had already been deemed as being outdated about twenty or thirty years prior by the critic Roger de Piles (1635-1709), who attributed its fashion to the female patrons who still enjoyed the style.<sup>53</sup> However, Salmon seems to align himself more with the argument set forth by Posner in his 1996 article. Salmon argues that commissioning a spouse's portrait from Nattier was a conspicuous way in which a rich bourgeoisie could celebrate their social status and privilege. While I agree with Salmon's argument, and therefore Posner's, I would add that in addition to the simple superficial show of status and privilege, there were greater issues of self-identity being played out through these images concerning the subject of social rank.

The fluidity and illusion of identity so central to rococo art is taken up by Mary D. Sheriff in her 2011 article, "The King, the Trickster, and the Gorgon: Jean-Marc Nattier and the Illusions of Rococo Art." This article which appeared in the *Studies of Eighteenth Century Culture*, examines the ways in which illusion causes the spectator to simultaneously believe and question the painted image they are viewing. Her argument that the Gorgon Medusa rather than Venus served as a bedrock principle in rococo, offers not only an explanation for the presence of the Greek monster in eighteenth-century

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<sup>53</sup> Philippe Bordes, "Jean-Marc Nattier Versailles" review in *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 142, no. 1164 (Mar., 2000), 184.

French art, but also aligns some of the contradictory attributes associated with Medusa to rococo.<sup>54</sup> Even though the representation is clearly not real, the desire to understand and define the image as true overtakes logic. Sheriff argues that the image or principles of Medusa serve as the foundation of rococo historical paintings. The transformation, and thus fluidity of material which occurred with the gaze of Medusa, was also transferable to the characteristics of rococo. With the subjects of reality and illusion, Sheriff focuses on Nattier's 1718 reception painting of *Perseus Turning Phineas to Stone with the Head of Medusa* (fig 18). Her discussion not only highlights the unprecedented subject matter in French tradition, but also the simultaneity of reality and illusion. She marks visual inconsistencies in the painting that leave the viewer in a continuous state of limbo in their attempt to logically understand where visual elements begin and end; start and finish.

Sheriff ties together the transformation that appears on the canvas, the transformation of the French court with the death of Louis XIV, ultimately to the transformation of Nattier's career from history painter to portraitist. The same repetition, displacement, and alternation of reality and illusion seem entirely transferable to Nattier's portraits, and in turn to my discussion of class.

In my contribution to the discussion of Nattier, I will approach a selection of the artist's portraits in broader terms. That is to say that these contemporary studies of but a few works, if not one, by the artist in fact bring up issues that occur more frequently within the artist's body of work. Nicholson's discussion is applied to my understanding of possible ways in which Nattier's portraits functioned as a space of selfhood and

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<sup>54</sup> Mary Sheriff, "The King, the Trickster, and the Gorgon: Jean-Marc Nattier and the Illusions of Rococo Art." In *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture* 40 (January), 2011.

identity for women. Posner's discussion is applied to how the commissioning of Nattier himself functioned as a marker of economic success for the merchant class. Salmon provides important bibliography and records of the paintings discussed, particularly of their provenance. Sheriff's discussion of reality and artificiality is applied to the created identity produced by the patronage of the merchant class. Thus, still keeping with the established arguments of conspicuous consumption of the merchant class and issues of reality and illusion, I will analyze how these elements were used at the same time to define and establish, yet also to mask and fabricate.

### Chapter 3. Watteau and Eighteenth-Century Portraiture: Antoine Watteau in Relation to Nattier and Portraiture of that Century

#### I. Nattier and Watteau

When discussing the art of the eighteenth century, one artist prevails in defining almost the entire interpretation of rococo art: Antoine Watteau (1684-1721). His *fêtes galantes* from the early eighteenth century have continuously been used as the hallmark of rococo. For decades the artist has occupied the position in history as the pioneer who served as an example to artists like Boucher and Fragonard, and thus took on the role of the ‘father’ of rococo. While he certainly took part in sparking a movement that was based more on color, contrasting the waning baroque style, Watteau’s grand legacy also cast a shadow on many lesser-known artists of the time, namely artists like Nattier.

It seems that Watteau was destined to take on this role within the history of rococo. In 1712, his second attempt to win the *Prix de Rome* resulted in his acceptance as a full member of the Academy. Five years later, he delivered his reception piece, *Pilgrimage to the Isle of Cythera* (fig 19). That same year, the French Academy specifically created the term *fête galante* to better describe Watteau’s work and the artist was met with great success. Watteau’s popularity spanned much further than eighteenth-century art. The *Watteau dress* came to mark women’s dresses that were so often seen in his *fête galante* paintings, and notably in his *Gersaint’s Shopsign* (fig 20). Watteau gained his mythological omnipresence, mainly with the establishment of his reputation as painter, during an emerging art market. At least twenty-five biographies and poems were

written about the artist well before the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, his reputation was well established early on. A revival of his work occurred during the British Regency (1811-1820), and by far the most important factor to continuing his legacy, was nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writing and scholarship.

Julie-Anne Plax's essay, "Interpreting Watteau across the Centuries," examines how the artist's reputation and fame have shifted over time and how his reputation itself acquired its own history. She divides her discussion into four major sections: the making and marketing of Watteau, the anti-rococo degradation of his work, the mythologizing revival of Watteau, and the modern Watteau scholarship. Plax roots her interpretations of Watteau through the writings about his work, both contemporary to him, as well as more modern scholarship. The final goal was to understand how people perceived and interpreted his work based on the cultural, social, and political frameworks in which his paintings functioned. She also examines what his work meant to people at different times.

Plax notes that these early accounts of Watteau's life were written by those who were extremely vested in the artist's success and status. Collectors, fans, and friends were the authors of these works and it is clear that a strong effort was made to insure a positive posterity for Watteau. Being well-versed in explaining and interpreting art, as well as collecting, was a marker of social status—the ability to do so gave authors the power to cultivate the culture in which one associates with eighteenth-century France.

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<sup>55</sup> Julie-Anne Plax, "Interpreting Watteau across the Centuries" in *Antoine Watteau: Perspectives on the Artist and the Culture of His Time*, Mary D. Sheriff, ed. (Rosemont Publishing & Print Corp, 2006), 28.



The creation of this cultural mascot thus affirmed an author's own social status but also affirmed the level of importance given to Watteau. One of these 'tastemakers,' as Plax describes, was Pierre Crozat (1665-1740) who introduced the artist to many of his influential friends, creating a string of networking contacts that would foster Watteau's career. Written works and enormous outputs of prints created successful publicity in favor of Watteau. Jean de Juillienne (1686-1766), who was director of fabric and tapestry production at the Royal Gobelins Manufacture, decided to create a project whereby a good portion of Watteau's work would be copied through engravings.<sup>56</sup> They were subsequently sold to print shops, advertised in the *Mercure de France*, and several artists, notably Boucher, made engravings after them. While the venture was not financially successful, it did however, produce a massive output of all things Watteau, which I believe would have continued to circulate and serve in the posterity of the artist.

His connection with Edme-François Gersaint (1694-1750) also proved to be profitable in the promotion of his art. Not only was the *Gersaint's Shopsign* a work that could be viewed by the public even when the shop was closed, the close friend of Watteau also wrote a biography of the artist which he kept amongst his catalogue entries. As Plax marks, "Under the guise of educating collectors—the audience who would have read the sales catalog—Gersaint promoted Watteau's artistic reputation and his own reputation as well."<sup>57</sup> Watteau seemed to have been repeatedly used as the vehicle in the establishment of authors', biographers', and connoisseurs' own promotion of status. This

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 28. The Royal Gobelins supplied luxury tapestries, paintings, engravings, furniture, and other goods for royal residences.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 30.

would have gone hand-in-hand with the new capitalistic market that encouraged the conspicuous consumption of luxury goods.

Watteau also tended to quietly skirt the criticisms of rococo art during the latter half of the eighteenth century. There was a strange dissonance between what critics were saying about rococo, with its artificiality and association with decay and the feminine, and his remaining popularity. Old friends like Anne-Claude-Philippe, comte de Caylus (1692-1765) began faulting the artist for his style. In his 1748 biography presented to the Academy, le comte de Caylus praises the artist for his talents and charm, but defines his work as trivial.<sup>58</sup> Watteau is often criticized for his association with the rococo, but simultaneously praised for the beauty in his work, and it is perhaps through his amicably exceptional relationship with the Academy that Watteau's reputation was able to withstand the criticism he did receive. However, his association with rococo was not at the forefront of most critiques. Watteau is described as an artist that was great, but also one that lacked formal academic training and method, as he did not fit the category of history painter. In comte de Caylus' biography, he remarked that, "They [his paintings] do not express the activity of any passion and are thus deprived of one of the most affecting aspects of the art of painting, that is, of action."<sup>59</sup> Action being one of the tenets of history painting placed Watteau in the predicament of being a talented artist, but one that was never fully realized because of his inability to produce successful history paintings. As Plax notes, this was due in part to the academic reform of history painting

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.,30.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 32. Originally cited from Edmond and Jules Goncourt, *French Eighteenth-Century Painters* (Paris: Quantin: 1906), 26.

that occurred roughly after 1745.<sup>60</sup> The resurgence in history painting came after many years of neglect in favor of ‘lesser’ genres and was an attempt, on the part of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, to reinstate the noble genre. These changes all came with the neoclassical movement that occurred during the mid-to late-eighteenth century, and although one would assume that Watteau’s inability to fit, not only the style and subject of neoclassicism, would ostracize and ultimately undermine his reputation, very little criticism is made.

Diderot, who is known for his scathing reviews of rococo artists who did not align with the moralizing subjects which he favored, writes very little about the faults of the artist and his work. In his *Notes on Painting* that were published in *Correspondence littéraire*, which were published in 1765, Diderot only mentions Watteau in passing. The critic was more interested in contemporary artists but states, “Strip Watteau of his sites, his color, the grace of his figures, that of their clothing; then look at the scene depicted, and judge for yourself. The arts of imitation require something that is savage, crude, striking, enormous.”<sup>61</sup> Diderot suggests that Watteau’s work lacked a certain rusticity or savageness; the melodramatics that were viewed in genre scenes that moved the viewer or conveyed a message of morality. He does not align Watteau with the corrupt or the erotic. His statement concerning the artist’s color palette, bucolic location, and costumes of his figures, conversely do place Watteau within the anti-rococo discourse. Stripping the artist of these things, as Diderot claims, would leave nothing in the way of a moralizing lesson for the viewer.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>61</sup> Denis Diderot, *Diderot on Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 222.

Watteau is not very impressive in the eyes of Diderot, yet his critique shies away from harshly criticizing him as he does Boucher for the very same faults. “I don’t know what to say about this man [Boucher]. Degradation of taste, color, composition, character, expression, and drawing have kept pace with moral depravity. What can we expect this artist to throw onto the canvas? What he has in his imagination. And what can be in the imagination of a man who spends his life with prostitutes of the basest kind?”<sup>62</sup> With this statement, Diderot distinguishes between Watteau and Boucher, singling Boucher out not only for his faults in color and composition, but in addition, his character and morality. What elements Diderot was willing to overlook in Watteau’s work, as merely the absence of a moral lesson, have become, along with subject matter in Boucher’s work, the image of flagrant eroticism. Diderot’s statement not only implicated Boucher’s personal character much in the same way he did Nattier’s, he also brings to light his own biases, which are seen in his comparisons between Maurice-Quentin de La Tour (1704-1788) and Nattier. Although Watteau was part of the discourse of anti-rococo, whereby his work did not constitute a serious art, “...pastoral scenes; fairs; and village weddings are pleasing and amusing and should have a place in personal collections; but they are not the same as history paintings,”<sup>63</sup> according to Étienne La Font de Saint Yenne (1688-1771).

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>63</sup> See La Font de Saint Yenne, *Sentimens sur quelques ouvrages de peinture, sculpture et gravure* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970), 74-75. “Joignez y encore la représentation des actions humaines les plus simples, et les plus familiers, soit à la ville ou à la campagne, scènes pastorales, fêtes champêtres, foires, nœces de village, enfin jusqu’aux cuisines, aux tavernes, aux écuries sujets favoris et ignobles des Flamands, uniquement recherchés pour y admirer une séduisante imitation, une fraîcheur et une fonte

In more modern writings starting during the nineteenth century, where there was a revival, or revisiting of Watteau's work and the eighteenth-century in general, the very things that had been condemned by the anti-rococo movement of the latter half of the century were now celebrated in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Watteau was written about nostalgically and his work was at the forefront of the idealized representation of eighteenth-century society. Plax explains this new interest in the rococo as having occurred with the aristocratic *émigrés* who returned to France after 1815. They maintained the rococo style that was associated with the ancient regime as a way to demonstrate their own social position separate from the bourgeoisie.<sup>64</sup> One sees a clear pattern in the need to associate oneself with rococo style, as it evoked not only the social realm of the upper class during the nineteenth century, but was also doing so during the eighteenth century, as will be seen in the portraits by Nattier. In a short paragraph by Pierre de Marivaux (1688-1763), this need to outwardly express oneself as being part of the upper echelon of society was not an aspect that was missed. "The bourgeois of Paris is a hybrid animal, resembling the great noble in outward show, and the lower classes in character. Generally speaking you will find him frank and friendly, but you must not try

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merveilleuse de couleurs, une suavité de pinceau, etc. Tous ces objets présentés à nos yeux avec l'artifice et la magie pittoresque, doivent nécessairement amuser nos regards, et avoir place dans nos cabinets. Mais il n'en est pas de même des tableaux d'Histoire."

<sup>64</sup> Carol Duncan, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: The Rococo Revival in French Romantic Art* in *Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts* (New York: Garland Pub, 1976), 55. Duncan notes that during the Bourbon Restoration, old nobility was determined to re-establish itself. The eighteenth century served as nostalgia of a time in which the height of nobility was still in existence. It was called upon in an effort to re-create the atmosphere that represented the hey-day of a class that had lost its social and political luster.

and touch his purse.”<sup>65</sup> This suggests that the merchant class defined themselves by two things, their appearance and their monetary power. Thus, in the same ways that rococo art was equated to the wealthy and powerful of the eighteenth century, one can see how emulation by the eighteenth-century merchant class had been used and was continuing to be used in the nineteenth century as a form of self-definition.

As much as the eighteenth century was being celebrated, discussion of Nattier was still a rarity. Though, a clear comparison between Watteau and Nattier was made in 1856 by Pierre Hédouin (1820-1889). In his monographic essays under the title of *Mosaïque*, Hédouin not only criticizes Nattier for being superficial, an amateur painter, and unrealistic, but he also makes a point of Watteau’s superior talents to that of Nattier’s:

As likenesses Nattier’s portraits were said to be excellent, although it was admitted that he beautified even beauty itself. This method of painting, which contributed so largely to his success, especially among the ladies of the court, is not in my opinion true art as I understand the word. But after all, his talent, like that of the more gifted Watteau, was in perfect harmony with the spirit and the taste of the times in which he lived.<sup>66</sup>

While Nattier was talented and a product of his time, he is nevertheless pointedly ‘less’ gifted in his talents than Watteau. Romantic writers of the nineteenth century establish the association between the literary genre of romanticism with Watteau, writing of loss and melancholy. Plax notes that the Bohemian culture, which consisted of the bourgeoisie and the lower classes, sought refuge on the rue de Doyenné, which served as

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<sup>65</sup> Louis Ducros, *French Society in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: G. Putnam’s Sons, 1927) 188. Originally quoted from Marivaux, *Le Spectateur francais*, ii. 17.

<sup>66</sup>Bates and Guild Company Publishers, 29.

the disillusioned world created by romantic authors of poetic inspirations of the eighteenth century who celebrated the lives of Watteau and other artists.<sup>67</sup>

However, it was the Goncourt Brothers, Edmond (1822-96) and Jules (1830-70), who truly solidified Watteau's place in history a few decades after. Their image of the eighteenth century was shaped by Watteau and his successors, all of which followed their celebration of love and poetry. Between 1873 and 1874, the Goncourt brothers published their three-volume text entitled, *L'Art du dix-huitième siècle*. The title of their work is misleading in that it suggests an exhaustive objective study of the eighteenth century. However, the reader is met with something along the lines of a series of short monographs about a selection of favorite artists. The first volume is comprised of monographs on Watteau, Chardin, Boucher, La Tour, Greuze, and the Saint Aubin brothers. Nattier is neither included in this volume nor is he in the two subsequent volumes, which again indicates that this work was not a far-reaching study that aimed to encapsulate the century, and also points to the precedents in the exclusion of Nattier throughout history. Rather, this subjective writing organized artists based on Jules' and Edmond's personal tastes and feelings toward particular artists. What is created is a contemporary collection of their homages to certain artists and the attention that is given to Watteau or Boucher, for example is absent for Nattier. This was particularly detrimental to Nattier's legacy as both a successful artist and his mere existence within the canon of rococo art. The Goncourt brothers were extremely influential in their

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<sup>67</sup> Plax, 35. "The rue du Doyenné was in an old, abandoned neighborhood, and the quarters that these poets occupied had interior decoration that dated from the time of Louis XVI. The occupants began to affect a "rococo" lifestyle; they adopted the eighteenth-century practice of amateur theatrics and *fêtes*."

publications and they positioned themselves as the only authorities of the eighteenth century. While they were knowledgeable of the century's art, they were adding to an already established literature about Watteau.

Nattier is presented in early literature and criticism as being an artist who created for profit; he painted stock-type portraits because that was his *niche* and he made his livelihood doing so.<sup>68</sup> However, Watteau is presented as possessing creative brilliance, as the source and fixed point in which an entire movement stemmed. Thus, it seems as though artists that closely related to his style or were associated with him early on experienced historical fame. In *L'Art du dix-huitième siècle*, Watteau is given the title of grand poet of the eighteenth century.<sup>69</sup> Chardin is the painter of morals.<sup>70</sup> Boucher represents the taste of which he expresses, personifies and embodies.<sup>71</sup> La Tour is the creator of life-like portraits.<sup>72</sup> These only represent the artists included in volume one, but it is clear that each artist plays a role. They each are presented as representing some aspect of rococo art, all figuring back to Watteau. And though Nattier should factor into the narrative somewhere amongst these artists, it seems as though La Tour (1704-1788) had taken the place in his role as the 'portraitist.'

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<sup>68</sup> One see this repetition with Oliver Merson's 1901 article "La Peinture Française au XVIIe Siècle," featured in the Guild and Bates Company publication, 31. "Nattier had, be it admitted, moments of superiority, especially when, as portraitist to the royal house of France, he painted his noble portraits of the queen and princesses in court dresses or in the garbs of mythology. These works, if not of the sincerest art, are at least stamped with distinction and truly royal elegance." Merson's following comment suggests that Nattier was only successful because of his royal connections.

<sup>69</sup> Goncourt, *L'Art du dix-huitième siècle* 3.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 318.



I would suggest that the Goncourt's preference to include La Tour, rather than Nattier stemmed from La Tour's position at the Academy, his own use of marketing, and his clientele. La Tour held the prominent position as honorary *councillor* only five years after he was received into the Academy. He also held the prestigious position as portraitist to the king from 1750 to 1773 and was a favorite of the court. Nattier also held commissions within the court, but the majority of his work was comprised of ladies of the court. In 1763, La Tour wrote to the Marquis de Marigny regarding his thoughts on Nature, Vision, and Manner, and being the favorite of the court that he was, obviously La Tour believed that his opinions on such subjects were worthy of consideration by the *Director des Bâtiments*.<sup>73</sup> One sees in La Tour's letter an exhibition of the difficulties, and therefore the merits of pastel, all of this tends to solely justify the high price of his portraits of the king and the court. In it, he marks the variations to be noted concerning the organ of sight and the ways in which each artist sees the same object differently. He argues that a successful artist should not be judged based on his ability to reproduce nature in an exactness that perfectly imitates nature, but that nature varies and so should the variations in depicting it.<sup>74</sup> La Tour was very active within the Academy and was praised for his ability to convey the sitter's true self through his pastels. After having completed a pastel portrait of Belle van Zuylen (1740-1805) in Holland, Zuylen stated in

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<sup>73</sup> Robert Goldwater, ed. *Artists on Art: from the XIV to the XX Century* (New York: Pantheon Books), 170. The Marquis de Marigny, who held all power over artistic work until 1773, was Madame de Pompadour's brother. He became *Director des Bâtiments* in 1751 and supported the grand manner, however his private collection and taste included Boucher, Natoire, and Greuze.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 171. See this page for the full letter and description of how habit, manner and lack of talent may be determined.

one of her own letters that, “La Tour’s mania is to want to include [in the picture] all that I say, all that I think, and all that I feel.”<sup>75</sup> The artist is depicted as capturing more than mere vanity but rather the essence of his sitters. In a letter upon his return to Paris, La Tour wrote Zuylen a lengthy discussion about the difficulties of pastel and how it is almost impossible to retouch or correct:

Poets and musicians can come back to their best works when their efforts at improvement have put out the spark which had given a sublime effect; but in my pastels all is lost when, for an instant, I let myself drop into a different mood; the unity has been broken. The painter in oils can recover his mood with a little bread dough and some alcohol.<sup>76</sup>

Again, La Tour marks the extreme difficulty of working in pastel which simultaneously elevates his own talents in his ability to not only use this medium, but use it in such a perfect way. He also aligns the artist’s mental state and mood, suggesting that the use of pastel requires a consistency that other mediums, such as oil, do not require.

Therefore, with La Tour one sees that with his active role in the Academy, by marketing himself as an extraordinary artist who had a command over his medium unlike any other, and his capacity to portray his sitters in ways that exceeded their mere appearances, La Tour created, to some extent, his own celebrity. One does not see this same self-promotion or marketing used in the case of Nattier. Nattier is never claimed as having used a difficult medium, nor is there anything written about the virtuosity in his execution apart from its surface beauty. Consequently, the inclusion of La Tour in the

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 171. Belle van Zuylen was also know as Isabelle de Charrière and Madame de Charrière. She was a Dutch writer during the Enlightenment.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 172. Note to reader: bread and alcohol were, and still are, used as ways to clean oil paint. Bread can be rubbed against the surface of a painting to remove stains and marks. Alcohol or turpentine can be poured onto a small rag or cotton swab and placed near a pigment to slowly absorb that pigment to ‘erase’ it.

Goncourt's text rather than Nattier, was one that probably came natural given the publicity La Tour afforded himself and his work.

In the 1911 Encyclopaedia Britannica, it is noted that Watteau, "...in his treatment of the landscape background and of the atmospheric surroundings of the figures can be found the germs of Impressionism."<sup>77</sup> Not only was Watteau presented as revolutionary for his time, it is suggested that his work was already following stylistic tenets that would not fully develop for another one-hundred and fifty years. He is described as the initiator of the style of Louis XV and interestingly is represented as the pure version of the more licentious sentiments of Lancret, Pater, Boucher, and Fragonard who would follow him. The small paragraph reserved for Nattier in the Encyclopaedia, of the same year, speaks less about the beauty or success of his work but more about the artist's life. The same information that is perpetuated from Pauline's biography of her father is seen here along with the locations of a few paintings.<sup>78</sup> Interestingly there are no attempts to liken Nattier to Watteau given that the artists overlapped for about five to six years aside from Hédouin's short dismissal of Nattier's talent. At the very least, one would expect to find something about how Nattier was influenced, or how he followed a tradition set forth by Watteau, a connection made for most eighteenth-century painters.

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<sup>77</sup> *The Encyclopaedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature and General Information*, Eleventh Edition, vol. 28 (New York: The Encyclopaedia Britannica company: 1910-1911), 418. This was a 29-volume reference work developed during the transition from British to American publication. Watteau is given over one page of reference as opposed to Nattier's entry in the Encyclopaedia that same year which comprises one paragraph.

<sup>78</sup> *The Encyclopaedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature and General Information*, Eleventh Edition, vol. 19 (New York: The Encyclopaedia Britannica company: 1910-1911), 273.

In Watteau's short life, he was viewed as a master and thus far there have not been any serious works that dispute this title. However, the same cannot be said of Nattier, who experienced relative success during the beginning of his career, but whose legacy never seemed to have been able to ameliorate after the commentaries made by Diderot.

## II. Eighteenth-Century Portraiture

Both Nattier's and Watteau's legacies had to contend with the fact that their work did not constitute history painting, though in Watteau's case he is only mentioned in passing by anti-rococo authors for this very reason. With Watteau's acceptance into the Academy, his designation within the hierarchical genres was one of ambiguity that created a challenge to the already established hierarchies of painting. Even so, the Academy maintained a clear distinction between his work and narrative history painting, placing his work into the class of *fête galante* and genre painting.<sup>79</sup> Nattier was also excluded from the genre of history, though his initial aspirations were clearly to be a part of this category, seeing as his uncle Jean Jouvenet (1644-1717) had been a history painter himself. Nattier was received into the Academy in 1718 as history painter; however, he eventually resolved to portraiture by 1720, working in the same genre as his father. To better understand the hierarchy in which Nattier maneuvered, one must first understand the genre hierarchy put forth by the Academy. Participating as a member of the

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<sup>79</sup> Mary Sheriff, "Introduction: The Mystique of Antoine Watteau" in *Antoine Watteau: Perspectives on the Artist and the Culture of his Time* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), 23. Sheriff points to the Academy minutes on the date of Watteau's acceptance marking the Academy had crossed out Watteau's original title and replaced it with "feste galante" (*fête galante*). In omitting the specific name of the event or scene depicted, they also excluded the piece from being considered a history painting.

Academy and showing ones work in the yearly, sometime biennial, Salons in fact required navigation through multiple boundaries and distinctions of demarcated ranked classes, all of which were in a state of flux during the eighteenth century. Prior to this time period, the experience of public viewings of high-art was non-existent. Art was not for the masses, but rather the select individuals and groups who held power and commissioned the very production of these pieces. Thus, the ambitions of the artist were based on the aesthetic demands of the elite. However, with the inclusion of the public spectator and art critic, artists began to have to deal with a whole new set of opinions that could either help or hinder their artistic careers.

The formulation of hierarchies in art were initially conceived during the sixteenth century and continued until the early nineteenth century. History painting held precedence over all other genres and was given importance not only for being formally and technically the most challenging to create, but also for the required substantial knowledge the artist had to possess in subjects like history, literature, mythology, and biblical stories. Thus, intellectual effort was distinguished over the manual craft. Typically produced on a large scale, these paintings were hung according to their importance above all other works during the Salon exhibitions. Though by the 1740s, due to the new buying market of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie, who were newly residents of their own Paris apartments, history painting and the grand manner fell out of favor within these classes simply because it was too large in size and ponderous in character for

the new intimate spaces.<sup>80</sup> Nonetheless, for the sake of tradition, both the Academy and Salon continued to give prestige to the genre over others. Portrait painting followed, then scenes of everyday life, also referred to as *petit* or *grande* genre, landscapes, animal paintings, and finally still life. Within this genre hierarchy was the hierarchy of size, as was previously mentioned history paintings and those that followed were usually much larger and placed relatively high for viewing, while smaller paintings like still life would be placed lower at eye-level.

Along with the visual hierarchies that were in existence, the eighteenth century was also a time in which the art critic came to be influential. Within another hierarchy, the public's opinion became important. Critics were writing about literature, music and the theatre, and as Thomas Crow points out, the fate of productions at the *Comédie française* were directly related to the spectator's reactions during the performance.<sup>81</sup> The public's importance did not go unnoticed by artists and soon any learned man had ambitions to play the role of critic. As Jean-Bernard, l'abbé Leblanc (1707-1781) writes in 1753:

The desire to make a name is the only motive behind such work [critiques]; the public interest is no more than a pretext. They [critics] want to be read, and they choose this genre over another because they have seen these critiques succeed.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Note that by this time with the death of Louis XIV the elite were making their way back from Versailles to the city.

<sup>81</sup> Thomas Crow, *Painters in the Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 14. The success or failure of a play depended on the reactions of the *parterre*, a section of the audience that was placed closest to the stage and whose tickets were relatively inexpensive. This section of the audience was typically very opinionated and would make their likes and dislikes known even during the show.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

It is interesting that Leblanc would make a statement that would question the motives of the critic, seeing as he was one himself. It is likely that he distinguished himself as a true connoisseur who did in fact have the authority to critique art, seeing as his patroness was Madame de Pompadour. However, the strong surge of written critique of the visual arts did not occur until around the 1740s. This is in part why much of the commentary and critiques concerning Nattier's works begin late in the artist's career and life.

Viewing eighteenth-century portraiture within the context of genre hierarchy, the critic, and the new market it becomes clear just how the genre became a source of complicated definitions. While the placement of art works within the Salon was to some extent a product of necessity—smaller works needed to be placed at eye level in order to view them, while larger paintings were placed higher because they could be viewed from such a distance, there seems to be a literal play of cultural terms being demonstrated in this arrangement. If one thinks in terms of social and cultural classes, history painting has always been associated with the noble, the aristocratic, and people of power. Whereas, still life may be associated with the lower-class, for it is a subject accessible to all which depicts objects, though not always the case, easily identifiable to any viewer. Portraiture, seems to lie somewhere between these two distinct oppositions of the noble and the common. Thus may have served as the grounds for self-definition by the bourgeoisie, who also found themselves in a similar limbo in defining their social significance. The sentiment of upholding these distinctions is seen in a 1773 writing by the critic Milord Lyttelton:

The sublimity of a simple tale is not that of an epic. The good family father, the return of the nurse, the village bride, all make charming scenes. But should you

transform these humble actors into Consuls or Roman matrons, or in place of the invalid grandfather suppose a dying Emperor, you will see that the malady of a hero and that of a man of the people are in no way the same, anymore than are their healthy constitutions. The majesty of a Caesar demands a character which should make itself felt in every form and movement of the body and soul.<sup>83</sup>

Though this was written toward the end of the century, one sees a clear connection between La Font de St. Yenne's stance two decades prior for religious and historical painting and the firm importance given to the hierarchy.<sup>84</sup> As is known, Nattier initially wished to enter the Academy as a history painter. His work leading up to his admittance to the Academy and his reception piece, all aligned with his intentions.<sup>85</sup> However, by 1720, Nattier was working almost exclusively as a portrait painter and the only evidence of any last attempts to return to history painting may be seen in his 1723 *Jacques Fitz-James, duc de Berwick* (fig 21), in which his daughter described the

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<sup>83</sup> Antoine Renou, *Dialogues sur la peinture* (Paris: Tartouillis, 1773), 42-3. "Le sublime d'une fable n'est pas celui d'un poème épique. Le bon père de famille, le retour de nourrice, la mariée, sont des scènes charmante ; mais transformez ses acteurs en Consuls et en Dames Romaines, au lieu [au lieu] de ce paralitique [paralytique], supposez encore un Empereur expirant, et vous verrez que la maladie d'un hero et d'un homme du peuple, comme leurs santés ne doivent pas être la même chose. La majesté des Césars demande un caractère de grandeur qui doit se faire sentir dans la forme et dans les mouvements de l'ame [l'âme] et du corps." This was a dialogue between several critics : Milord Lyttelton, Monseigneur Fabretti ; prélat Romain, and Monsieur Remi, Marchand de Tableaux.

<sup>84</sup> La Font de Saint-Yenne, *Reflexions Sur Quelques Causes de L'état Present de la Peinture en France* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970), 12. "Après avoir donné aux Peintres Historiens le rang et les éloges qu'ils méritent, que ne puis-je les prodiguer a ceux d'aujourd'hui, et les élever, ou du moins les comparer à ceux du siècle passé! Siècle heureux ! Où le progrès et la perfection dans tous les Arts avoient rendue la France rivale de l'Italie!"

<sup>85</sup> Nattier copied all of the Rubens pieces in the Gallerie du Palais du Luxembourg which were later engraved between the years of 1702-1704. In 1717 he painted *La Bataille de Poltava* which was commissioned by tsar Peter I of Russia and depicted the victorious battle between Peter I and Swedish forces. That same year he painted Catherine I and Peter I portraits and the following year his reception piece, *Persée, assisté par Minerve, pétrifie Peinée et ses compagnons en leur présentant la tête de Méduse*.



painting as, "...un très-grand tableau allégorique de la famille de M. de La Motte, trésorier de France."<sup>86</sup> With the number of figures and the ambitious character of the active composition, it is clear that Nattier was still heavily influenced by Peter-Paul Rubens (1577-1640) and his experience having copied the artist's work in the galerie du Luxembourg. If one views his portrait *Le Comte Maurice de Saxe* (fig 22) alongside this painting, it is evident that Nattier had incorporated his portrait style directly into a history genre composition. Subsequent paintings by the artist would never again feature the same large composition of multiple figures and activity.

Eighteenth-century France was a historical peak in the proliferation of portraiture, not only in two-dimensional forms but also in sculptures. The great formal portraitists of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century by artists like Nicolas de Largilliere (1656-1746) and Rigaud found their baroque style replaced with the new rococo. In fact, the great history paintings of the past were no longer being produced as they once had been in France and the 'lower' secular genres began to flourish such as still-life, genre scenes, and portraiture. And although the traditional hierarchy was still officially in place, these typically minor genres were extremely fashionable. The flourishing of this new secular style of rococo was due in part to the new decorative nature of art. Paintings formed an intimate part of the rococo interior space where scenes of great battles and portraits of kings were unfitting, especially for the private apartment of a Parisian elite or wealthy bourgeoisie. Rather the new space and new buyer were interested in the beautiful, in the well-crafted, and above all the personalized. Within these terms,

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<sup>86</sup> Dussieux, 354.

portraiture functioned as a system within the mechanism of shaping and defining terms of class, rank, and gender.<sup>87</sup>

Along with the new fashionable tendency for portraiture, one cannot ignore the critical reaction that had begun as early as the sixteenth century with Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo's (1538-1592) criticism that the debasement of portraits could be found in the representation of merchants rather than heroes.<sup>88</sup> Within the seventeenth century one sees in Charles Sorel's (1602-1674) *Description de l'île de portraiture*, the argument that presentation of 'self' had become more important than higher societal values. In his book, Sorel creates a futuristic dystopia of a society in which the artist is the aggressor of the fantastical island of portraiture. One unique obsessional activity occupies the inhabitant of the village as they are all either portraitist or sellers of art: They are dedicated to the commerce of the image, production, diffusion, and the exploitation of the portrait. Sorel describes the rue des peintres héroïque:

The largest and most beautiful was the heroic painters, where many people purposely came to be painted, because most of those who undertook the great journey, in search of happiness at the island of portraiture, had done so with an excess of vanity and ambition and the belief that they deserved to have their memory preserved eternally just as much as the greatest heroes of antiquity.<sup>89</sup>

Thus, the desire to have oneself painted was a mark of unwarranted self-importance.

Sorel describes a series of different types of painters, these were the painters of: the

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<sup>87</sup> Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head :Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 4. Pointon's text focuses on English Portraiture during the eighteenth century, however many of the same points can be transferred to how portraits were being displayed in French interiors.

<sup>88</sup>Shearer West, *Portraiture* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 85.

<sup>89</sup> Charles Sorel, *Description de l'île de portraiture : Et de La Ville Des Portraits (1659)* (Geneva : Droz, 2006), 74.

masked or disguised, love, burlesque and comic, satire, the censured, the indifferent, female portraitists and vain ambitious women, and wise and cunning women.

Interestingly, Sorel's discussion of the masked and disguised makes the point of the creation of illusion. The author describes seeing people with the most beautiful hair, figures, and costumes, all of which did not belong to them. In one scene he writes, "Some Judges were dressed as Courtiers, some effeminate Courtier were dressed as men of war and armed."<sup>90</sup> Sorel notes that whether they wanted to trick the painter or other men, they all wanted their portrait to reflect what they appeared to be, regardless of whether it was truthful.

In his discussion of wise and cunning women, Sorel describes these women as, "...mostly creating portraits of others: but if they only had small deformities and if those did not impede their desire to have themselves painted, they skillfully attempted to disguise everything."<sup>91</sup> While his discussion is not exclusive in critiquing women's use of illusion, clearly women who do use these means as a way to present themselves are viewed as wise and cunning rather than simply masked or in disguise like their male counterparts. There is an element of trickery associated with the female sitter. Sorel's mixture of fantasy and criticism of portrait painting demonstrated his opinion of the falsehood of pictorial and verbal depictions.

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 77. "Quelques magistrats étaient habillés en courtisans; quelques courtisans efféminés étaient équipés en homes de guerre, et armés de toutes pièces."

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 90. "Elles faisaient plutôt le portrait des autres : mais si elles avaient seulement quelque petite difformité et que cela ne les empêchât pas d'avoir la curiosité de se peindre, elles tâchaient de déguiser tout adroitement."

This falsehood in pictorial representations of a sitter is directly related to personal identity and the ways in which it is constantly ambiguous. Just in the ways that physical appearance, likes and dislikes, morals, and reputations change, so too can a person's identity according to Richard Brilliant.<sup>92</sup> Though with a person's death or through portraits that overtly state that the figure you are viewing is indeed a specific person, personal identity becomes fixed. However, with the serialized portrait types often used by Nattier, there is a specific need for a written affirmation of the sitter's identity. The defining relationship between the subject and the portrait become problematic when this reference does not exist. As is the case in numerous paintings by Nattier, titles indicating who the sitter was were not always present during and immediately following the paintings completion. That is to say that a portrait was not necessarily given a proper title. Thankfully, through the exhaustive catalogues by Nolhac and Salmon, letters and accounts have been used to aid in identifying and correcting previously misidentified sitters, a crucial aspect in discussing the tendency of certain motifs being used amongst different social classes.

Though Brilliant does not address the eighteenth century specifically in his discussion of self-fashioning and fabricated identities, he does take examples of portraiture throughout history. Relevant to my discussion of Nattier, he looks at the interplay between subject and social roles or masks. The artificiality of portraiture in which a person is packaged and presented as another is seen in Brilliant's discussion of Jean George Vibert's (1840-1902), *In the Image of the Emperor*, late nineteenth century

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<sup>92</sup> Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991), 59.

painting (fig 23). The painting depicts the derivative of a misleading attempt to self-fashion oneself as another. In it, a man stands dressed in a clerical costume as he combs his hair with one hand and holds a mirror in the other. He carefully examines the bust of Napoleon in an attempt to model his hair just like the Emperor. On the wall behind him is a painting of Napoleon. Thus, the viewer is left with an image that seems to convey a clear message of emulation through transformation. Brilliant marks, that with this painting by Vibert, the connection between artist and subject in the creation of deception is joint.<sup>93</sup> Though in this case emulation is explicit to the viewer, it is a topic that must be considered when viewing any portrait. One's desire to resemble another person is at one point a mark of admiration, but also can become a mark of self-delusion.<sup>94</sup> The aspiration to resemble someone to the point of being misidentified as being this person, suggests that one is playing a role. In many of Nattier's portraits, the bourgeois female sitters were not so much attempting to be mistaken to be another person, but as I will discuss, were using calculated self-fashioning in order to place themselves within the same artistic style that had once been exclusive to aristocracy. Thus, they were not being mistaken as being one particular person; in essence they were being mistaken as being someone within that class.

The topic of playing a role as a means to resemble another is taken up with the discussion of Joshua Reynolds's (1723-1792) portrait *Sarah Siddons as the Tragic Muse*, 1784 (fig 24). In this case, the concept of being 'like' another is approached both in

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.,85.

terms of the role the sitter takes and the potential for the artist to create that role.

According to Francis E. Sparshott:

The metaphor is Reynolds', and not ours. But is it his alone, or is it Mrs. Siddons' as well? Was she posing as the Tragic Muse, or did she merely pose and leave the Muse bit to the artist? And, if she was posing as the Muse, did she merely dress for the part, or did she throw herself into the role? We are encouraged to ask this because we know she was an actress. And because we know that she was the foremost tragic actress. And because we know that she was the foremost tragic actress of her time we go on to ask: is this a picture of an actress acting, or of an actress not merely seen as, but thought to be, the inspiration of the stage?<sup>95</sup>

One sees some of these same concepts of role-playing by actresses or performers in several of Nattier's portraits. For instance in his, *Portrait présumé de Marie-Anne Comasse*, 1755 (fig 25), a young woman who was a dancer in her father's troupe, but who later married Christian IV (1722-1775), is depicted.<sup>96</sup> She dons a cream-colored dress that is wrapped in blue satin and pearls. Her corset is detailed with lace and pearls and features a bow at the center. This same attire is seen as far back as his 1735 portrait *Madame Dupleix de Bacquenocourt, née Jeanne-Henriette de Lalleu* (fig 26) who was the wife of the famous governor general of the East India Companies, thus placing her within the class of the bourgeois financiers. This portrait does not feature the corset or the blue satin but is more of a monochrome palette. The same composition is completely

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 85. Originally quoted from, Sparshott, "'As", or the Limits of Metaphor', *New Literary History* 6 (1974), 75-94.

<sup>96</sup> *Portrait présumé de Marie-Anne Comasse*, 1755. Oil on canvas, 80x63.5cm. Signed and dated on the tree trunk to the left : *Nattier/fecit. 1755*. (German, Private Collection). Marie Anne Camasse was the daughter of actor Jean-Baptiste Camasse and Eleonore Roux. She is said to have charmed the Duc of Deux-Ponts (Christian IV) and had three of his children and married him. Louis XV was also charmed by her and provided her with an education.

recycled in his 1756 portrait of the Marquise de Poyanne.<sup>97</sup> Interestingly, there is a use of the same dress and similar composition, in this case by two women of the bourgeois class and one who had been of a lower class by origin, but who had married into aristocracy.<sup>98</sup> Her original profession as dancer and entertainer may lend, according to Brilliant's case study of Reynolds's painting, to the mimetic use of costume. Perhaps this was simply a form of role-play, not of theatre characters, but of the general presentation of women who were of the class in which Marie-Anne was newly admitted.

In addition to playing a 'role' or attempting to 'look' like another, is the fabrication of identity and the place in which one presents this new identity. Aside from the superficial mimicking of appearance, fabrication of identity more succinctly is found in the exchange of meaningful, though not necessarily true, indications of status, class, or roles that establish a person's social identity.<sup>99</sup> These are created by one person and understood by another for their face value. Brilliant's chapter, "Fabricated Identities: Placement," deals with issues of impersonation and how the represented social-self often breaks down when it is grossly exaggerated or misinterpreted. Not only does the sitter rely on their own ability to be a convincing version of 'who' or 'what' they intend to convey, but the portrait artist is also essential in the formulation of the subject's social identity. As Harold Rosenberg (1906-1978) wrote:

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<sup>97</sup> *La Marquise de Pyanne*, 1756. Oil on canvas, 78.7x63.5, signed and dated on the bottom right: *Nattier Pinxit/1756*. (Sold by Sotheby's in New York May 16, 1996, lot 108).

<sup>98</sup> "Zweibrucken" Zeno.org, Meine Bibliothek. In 1751, Charles IV, married,morganatically, Marie-Anne Camasse which complicated the passing on of his Duchy but in 1792 they were able to carry the family name.

<sup>99</sup> Brilliant, 89.

Portraiture involves a consensual ritual encounter which is both trusting and wary: the subject submits to the artist's interpretation while hoping to retain some control over what that interpretation will be. The history of portraiture is a gallery of poses, an array of types and styles which codifies the assumptions, biases, and aspirations of the society.<sup>100</sup>

Thus, the final image conveyed in the portrait is a product of collaboration between the patron and the artist, they have commissioned. It is clear that the sitter's that came to commission Nattier did so with the reference of his previous portraits in mind. They were aware of his portrait 'types' and with whom these motifs were associated—in this case, the aristocracy and nobility. Perhaps they did not have much to say in how they were portrayed, as Nattier typically represented his sitters in almost the same ways; however, they consciously made the choice to have this particular artist portray them knowing full well what the resulting image would look like and how closely it would relate to his previous works and thus a particular class of people.

Along with early-sixteenth century complaints of the lower-classes taking part in portraiture, Shearer West also addresses the topic of the formation of the bourgeois identity through portraiture. West marks that although a clear definition of the merchant class or the bourgeoisie was relatively difficult to define prior to the seventeenth century, by the nineteenth century, there was a clear identifiable merchant class that had their own sense of identity. This amorphous definition of who constituted as merchant class and where exactly they fit into the social hierarchy was still an issue during Nattier's time. Based on Louis Ducros' book *French Society in the Eighteenth Century*, French society could be divided into roughly four classes of people: The Court and Nobility of the

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 90. Paraphrase was taken from the essay 'Portrait of Meditation of Likeness' that accompanies the catalogue, *Portraits. Richard Avedon* (New York, 1976).



Sword; Lawyers, Financiers, and Doctors; the bourgeoisie; and the remaining populace.<sup>101</sup> The bourgeoisie were loosely defined as those who had made their fortune from their labors, whether by commerce, property, or other professional occupations. Professional Lawyers, Financiers, and Doctors seem to have been one step above the bourgeois class.<sup>102</sup> These were people that, in spite of their wealth and display of it, did not possess the long standing family titles, properties, and notably association with the court and nobility.

These social conditions aided in the production of portraiture within a class, where historically there had never been such precedence. Portraiture was no longer the province of the few select in society, but was open to a broader class profile of the wealthy, who could afford along with it the conspicuous consumption of luxury goods. Nobles and the court disdained this class, especially when their wealth was exceeded by the bourgeoisie, leaving them with the sole power associated with their titles. The eighteenth-century Swiss artist Henry Fuseli (1741-1828) also expressed distaste for the new monetary power the merchant class had and their vain desire to commission portraits. The professor of Painting at the English Royal Academy stated:

Since liberty and commerce have more leveled the ranks of society, and more equally diffused opulence, private importance has been increased...and hence portrait-painting, which formerly was the exclusive property of princes, or a tribute to beauty, prowess, genius, talent, and distinguished character, is now

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<sup>101</sup> See Ducros for further discussion on the social hierarchy of France during the eighteenth century, 152.

<sup>102</sup> These professions while not deemed bourgeois were also not placed within the class of nobility or the court. Writings of these professions tend to define them by profession or the term *haute bourgeois*, higher than the simple bourgeois.

become a kind of family calendar, engrossed by the mutual charities, of parents, children, brothers, nephews, cousins and relatives of all colours.<sup>103</sup>

This new class called for a new type of portraiture, often times this focused on the domesticity of the sitter if they were female, or their trade if they were male. They could also take on the attributes of portraits of aristocracy, as one sees in Nattier's portraits in which the sitter attempts to associate themselves with the elevated sitter that came before them. Such portraits would include evidence of affluence through the furnishings and wardrobe with special attention given to the beautification of the sitter. Although these attributes were the source of criticism in the overt demonstration of possessions and wealth, these portraits reflected the merchant class and their new power and influence.

The beauty of the sitter's portrait is a tradition that dates to fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy beginning first with the profile view that alluded to the profiles found on Roman coins.<sup>104</sup> As West points out, the character of the nose, chin and forehead, which were marks of beauty of the time, were highlighted through this positioning of the sitter. During the sixteenth century the three-quarter and half-length portraits came into fashion. It was during this time that the sitter became less individualized and the likeness of the figure was less important in relation to how beautiful they looked. These 'beauties' became something of a collectors piece through which their decorative qualities outweighed their accuracy. West compares the collection practices of Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza (1444-1466) and other Italian aristocrats to the collections seen during the seventeenth and early-eighteenth century in other European

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<sup>103</sup> West, 86. Originally quoted from: Fuseli Lecture IV, in Ralph Wornum, ed., *Lectures on Painting by the Royal Academicians* (London, 1848), 449.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

countries. In England, for example, portraits by Peter Lely (1618-1680) at Hampton Court were produced with a special attention to similarities between the women rather than their differences.<sup>105</sup>

With the attention given to the beauty of the figure, allegorical portraiture came into fashion. West states that this fashion did not come into play until the second half of the eighteenth century in England and France. Interestingly, we can see that Nattier employs both of these trends in his paintings. The serialized beauties and lack of individualization is also paired with the use of allegorical portraiture in many instances, though his use of allegory begins to fall out of fashion, as is seen in Diderot's exhaustive comments about the artist's repetition of Diana and Hebe. West notes that some scholars have suggested that by representing women in allegorical guises that the simple genre of portraiture could then ostensibly be raised to that of history painting. However, because the sitter plays the role of muse or goddess and is not what would be a historical representation of the actual character, this would only partially link the two genres based on subject matter alone.

The physical space in which portraiture operated, whether in the private home or in a public venue produced meanings specific to that time. However, in both cases visibility was a key factor—who was granted access to the painting almost certainly determined how the piece was intended to function. One of the main functions, as will be seen in the case of the bourgeois merchant class, was the display of wealth. Possessing any sort of wealth or power are attributes that must be put on display if one intends to

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.,152.

establish or create the class and rank to which they intend to be associated with. As Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929) notes, esteem is awarded on evidence.<sup>106</sup> Of course, modestly hiding or omitting material possessions can easily complicate the way in which one understands and defines a person's place within society. Nonetheless, portraiture was entirely a genre meant to be seen by others and made up the canon of reputability in the consumption of an 'excellent' good that in turn became evidence of wealth.<sup>107</sup>

Marcia Pointon points to the placement of portraits within a domestic interior space, marking that portrait painting along with landscape painting were often situated in overdoors.<sup>108</sup> While her discussion is focused on the interiors of English residencies, the same design element was being used in France during the eighteenth century. The Hôtel de Soubise serves as one example in which one sees the importance of portraits and mythological scenes being used not only with overdoor paintings but also in their use on ceiling canvases. Sherry McKay asserts that hierarchy affirmed through design had direct implications for the Salon de la Princesse designed by Germain Boffrand (1667-1754). In her evaluation of the space, McKay argues that a space that would have once been exclusively navigated by aristocracy, which was now being used by the *haute bourgeoisie*, became a location in which many of the same familiar tropes of aristocratic

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<sup>106</sup> Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*. (New York: Vanguard Press).

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>108</sup> Pointon, 18.

representations were either directly used or translated into terms of the new rituals of the bourgeoisie.<sup>109</sup>

Unfortunately, many of the paintings I will be discussing by Nattier, were not documented as having been displayed in one particular place after its original completion. With the exception of one, known to have been made as an overdoor painting, Pointon's discussion lends more as an example of where such paintings would have been placed within the interior space. Often times for Nattier's work, a simple notation was made as to whose collection the piece belonged to or in what Salon it was shown in. Rarely are specific accounts of their whereabouts, in relation to the interior spaces they were placed, ever given. In his series of water nymphs, *Marie-Anne de Bourbon, dite Mademoiselle de Clermont, aux eaux minérales de Chantilly*, was mentioned in Chantilly to be in the bedroom of M. le Prince par Dulaure in 1786.<sup>110</sup> It was seized sometime during the Revolution but returned to the prince de Condé, Louis-Joseph de Bourbon in 1816. *Elisabeth de Flesselles en Source*, did not appear on record until 1876 with the collection sale of M. Huot-Fragonard's collection. *Madame Victoire incarnant l'Eau*, is one of four paintings that were used to decorate the overdoors of the *grand cabinet* of Louis the

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<sup>109</sup> Sherry McKay, "Salon de la Princesse": "Rococo" Design, Ornamented Bodies and the Public Sphere" in *Canadian Art Review XXI 1-2* (1994), 82. Originally cited from P. Violette, "Natoire et Boffrand," in Gallet and Garms, eds, *Germain Boffrand*, 255. The Salon de la Princesse is one compartment of the larger Hotel de Soubise and was envisioned to mark the second marriage of Hercule-Meriadec de Rohan-Rohan, Prince de Soubise, to Marie-Sophie de Courcillon, nineteen-year-old widow of the Duc de Picquigny. While Marie-Sophie came from an aristocratic family, it was apparently not one of the most established lineages and thus, this is where McKay inserts the potential for ambiguity with respect to rank encountered in the plans of the space.

<sup>110</sup> Salmon, 78. Mentioned in Garnier du Breuil's *Mes Souvenirs ou lettres a M. le comte de M\*\*\* sur un voyage à Chantilly en 1788*. Musée Conde, Ms 1365 XIV F 46.

Dauphin of France.<sup>111</sup> In the series of Diana guises, *Carlotta Frederika Sparre en nymphe de Diane*, was part of Count Tessin's collection and was part of the inventory of art works on display in his château d'Akerö in 1770. *Constance Gabrielle Magdeleine Bonnier de la Mosson sous les traits de Diane*, was not mentioned until Nolhac attributed it to Alfred Debat's collection, where it remained until his death in 1908. *Madame de Maison-Rouge sous les traits de Diane*, was one of two paintings commissioned by the sitter. It has been suggested that the painting was shown along with the other, *Madame de Maison-Rouge sous la figure de Venus attelant des colombes a son char* (fig 27), in the 1757 Salon, though there have not been any records confirming this. It has also been suggested that *Madame de Maison-Rouge sous les traits de Diane* was on exhibit in Marie Antoinette's *salon de musique* and it has also been associated with the princess of Condé. However, the only definitive information that is known about the painting's history is that it belonged to Count Mondesir, near Cherbourg and it was acquired by the merchant E. Gimpel in 1903. In the series of mother and daughter, *Portrait presume de Marie-Therese-Catherine Crozat, marquise du Chatel, et de sa fille Antoinette-Eustachie*, is not cited until it enters Michel Ephrussi's collection in Paris in 1905-1930. *Madame Marsollier et sa fille*, was first shown in the 1750 Salon and then passed down through descendants, beginning with the Lorimier de Chamilly family and ending with the marquis Dafosse in 1892.

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<sup>111</sup> Salmon, 223. January 11, 1750 Charles François Paul Lenormant de Tournehem, directeur général des Bâtiments du roi, indicated that Louis, Dauphin of France, had requested four overdoor portrait paintings of his sisters for his grand cabinet at Versailles, to be painted by Nattier.

#### **Chapter 4. The New Portrait *Déguisé*—Portrait ‘Types’: Water Nymphs, Diana, and Mother and Daughter**

Although powerful individuals typically commissioned portraits, portraiture also became the province of the merchant class. The merchant class used the genre to help them project an identity and association with the level of society in which they wished to be identified, or to which they were newly admitted, usually through marriage. A historical difference between portraiture of the aristocracy and that of the merchant class was marked in the separation between large-scale full-frontal, equestrian, and seated formats that were associated with aristocracy, and the informal, compositions that were closer to genre painting associated with the merchant class. However, Nattier’s portraits serve as an example in which this traditional tendency was not followed. The same elements seen in portraits of powerful individuals that had affinities with the moral, elevated qualities of history paintings were being transferred to depictions of the bourgeoisie making class distinctions almost indistinguishable.

In this chapter a short overview of eighteenth-century portraiture will be introduced followed by the discussion of Nattier’s three portrait types. This discussion will mark visual similarities between Nattier’s other paintings and those of the past, in an attempt to trace the long standing history of iconography that was being initially used by the aristocracy and nobility and later employed by the bourgeoisie.

Before exploring the various portrait types Nattier employed in his work, it is important to establish exactly who made up the eighteenth-century merchant class in France and how they defined themselves and where they fit into the new social hierarchy

of the times. The merchant class or the *bourgeoisie* were and continue to be a sector of society that is difficult to define to a certain extent. The parallel between their development and that of the visual arts is unmistakable. Paris and its new public spaces paralleled with the developing realm of the visual arts and much in the same ways the new social class experienced difficulty and conflict over legitimacy, so too did the visual arts. Official cultural institutions and the old established binary class system were being challenged by the new modern popular society and culture.

### I. Defining the Merchant Class

The merchant class also referred to as the bourgeoisie, can be defined by its original definition, as ‘those that have acquired their monetary wealth through their labors in commerce or any other professional trade, or through property that has been left to them.’<sup>112</sup> The bourgeoisie were a class of people that were well off and lived comfortably. They enjoyed all of the amenities and luxury, and lived in their own private homes and apartments within the city. During the eighteenth century Paris was one of the few nations that had a substantial merchant class. François-Marie Arouet, known as Voltaire (1694-1778) wrote in 1749, “What makes Paris the most flourishing city in the world is not the large number of its magnificent and opulent mansions replete with every luxury, but the vast number of private houses, in which people lived in a state of comfort unknown to our ancestors, and at which other nations have not yet arrived.”<sup>113</sup> Voltaire paints the picture of an unprecedented progressive city that was in fact very much defined

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<sup>112</sup> Ducros, 185.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 185. Originally quoted from, Voltaire, *Lettre a l’occasion de l’impot du vingtieme*, 1749.



by its merchant class. Opulence, grandeur, and the luxurious remnants of the old regime were no longer what defined Paris.

However, in spite of their wealth and display of their monetary power, the bourgeoisie nevertheless found themselves in the predicament of establishing a self-identity. They were entirely disdained by the higher nobles, for they represented the encroaching 'lower' class who had managed to work their way closer to the social elite. Likewise, the bourgeoisie felt this same discontent for the lower classes from which they had risen. However, their ties to the lower-classes were never far from reach. They viewed their new found superiority to the lower class as an exception, one that was earned and therefore set them apart from the lower orders. The bourgeoisie had no desire to be counted among the class from which they derived.

In one such example, Edmond Jean François Barbier (1689-1771), a consultant lawyer of the Paris Parliament and author of a historical journal of the eighteenth century, describes the festivities held in Paris for the arrival of the Dauphine in 1745. He describes the chaos and confusion between social classes:

The success of these Rooms did not come up to expectation. The provost of the Merchant Guilds had intended to supply the public—that is to say the bourgeoisie of Paris—with a resort for dancing and amusements. But this was not to the bourgeois taste. On entering, one found the most lamentable confusion on all sides. The rooms were filled only with the dregs of the populace. Tongues, loaves, and the leg of turkeys were flung from the sideboards for anyone to catch, and all this caused a veritable riot! A large and excellent orchestra was playing, but no one danced, though sometimes a crowd of street urchins would dance in a ring. The wife of a cobbler or a dressmaker would have felt themselves disgraced if seen dancing in such a place.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Edmond Jean François Barbier, *Chronique de la régence et du règne de Louis XV (1718-1763), ou Journal de Barbier*. Vol. 4 (1745-1750), (Paris: Charpentier, 1857). <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k203940c.>, 19. “La dépense de ces salles n’a pas été

Barbier himself was of the bourgeois class and in this passage, which reflects the general attitude and opinion of the class in which he belonged; it is evident that the bourgeoisie perhaps disdained the lower order even more so than the nobles disdained the bourgeoisie. The extent to which Barbier describes the caliber of the lower order is accentuated in his term ‘street urchins’ (*bande de polissons*). This negative term, coupled with the embarrassment wives of cobblers or dressmakers would have felt attending the festivities implies both his opinion and perhaps the general consensus of the bourgeoisie—in that the rest of the populace of France were made up of the absolute dregs of the city. The lower orders, or the rest of the populace of Paris, were the humble. They often came to Paris from the country in order to amass a small amount of money and they lived in simple dwellings, often times with others. They were shoemakers, stonecutters, masons, and generally served the bourgeoisie of the city.

Within the bourgeois class there seemed to have been a sub-hierarchy which existed. The term *haute bourgeoisie*, or upper merchant class, was not coined until the late-nineteenth century, but may be useful in attempting to define the placement of lawyers, doctors, and financiers. These professions certainly did not make up the noble class, yet they were slightly better off than the bourgeoisie. Of course given their

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remplie. L’objet de M. le prévôt des marchand étoit de fournir au public, c’est-à-dire aux bourgeois de Paris, un amusement pour danser et se divertir. Mais cela n’a pas été de son gout. Comme on entroit de tous côtés, dans ces salles, comme dans une salle couverte, il y avoit une confusion misérable. Elles n’étoient remplies que de la dernière populace : on jetoit du haut des buffets, en l’air, les langues, les cervelas, le pain, les membres de dindons. Attrapoit qui pouvoit ! ce qui faisoit le tumulte. La symphonie, bonne et nombreuse, jouoit des contredanses, mais personne ne dansoit, que quelquefois une bande de polissons, en rond. La femme d’un cordonnier, une couturière, se seroient crues déshonorées de danser là.”

profession and business, they would have been considerably wealthier than the successful merchants, land owners or other professional traders, thus placing them in the even more ambiguous social strata.

In Ducros' description of Lawyers and magistrates it is implied that they were in fact 'noble' while simultaneously bourgeoisie. An account made by the Abbé de Choisy (1644-1724) provides insight into the tension between the judicial class and nobility offering a view of the mutual dislike that both classes had for one another. "My mother, who was a Hurault de l'Hôpital, often said to me: 'Listen, my son; never be vain or forget that you belong to the merchant classes, I know quite well that your ancestors have held high office in the Civil Service and have been Councillors of State, but, believe me, in France no nobility is generally acknowledged save that of the sword.'"<sup>115</sup> This passage illuminates several social issues between the two classes. One, in that the merchant class often made the mistake of counting themselves amongst nobility, something that this mother dutifully reminds her son against. And two, that despite their family's name and long standing prestige within the Civil Service, the old-fashioned prejudices of true nobility, that of the sword, were still the judges of who belonged in the elite class.

However in terms of the merchant class and lower class, the office of magistrate was still very much sought after, as it became an entry into a higher class of bourgeoisie. A commoner could only hope to marry his son to someone wealthy in order to buy him a post in the judiciary, which in turn would create an opportunity to marry the son's daughter to a noble if not destitute magistrate, thus creating a claim to the nobility of the

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<sup>115</sup> Ducros, 122.

Law. The ability of both the bourgeoisie and merchant class to gradually ascend the social ladder to the highest positions of judicial nobility in turn marked the disdain for which the higher nobility (of the sword) felt for the higher magistrate.

Similarly, financiers were also placed within the ambiguous terms of the noble and bourgeoisie. Jean de La Bruyère's (1645-1696) account of interaction between courtiers and financiers serves as example, "if a financier fails to bring off his coup [deal], the courtiers call him a *bourgeois*. If he succeeds, they ask his daughter in marriage."<sup>116</sup> Clearly substantial wealth was one of the means in which the bourgeoisie might enter a higher class through marriage. In fact, the Farmer-Generals who served as the buffers and middle-men between the tax payers and the Crown became increasingly wealthy and in 1716 a tax was placed on the financiers.<sup>117</sup> Their wealth had become progressively more disproportionate to that of the nobility inasmuch, as nobles had become all but dependent on the financial wealth of this class in order to sustain their properties and lifestyles. Thus, while the nobility resented the wealthy, and in turn the power accumulated by the class, they nevertheless came to heavily depend on them.

Lastly, we come to the doctors. During the eighteenth century doctors came to hold a lucrative, prestigious position in society and became directly associated with ladies of fashion. As Ducros points out, the doctors of this time were no longer the 'pedant of Molière's day.'<sup>118</sup> They were well dressed, and took on the appearance and character of

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 172. This reference to Molière's treatment of doctors comes from some of his work such as *Le Médecin malgré lui* (The Doctor In Spite of Himself), whereby he pokes

worldly men, frequenting drawing-rooms and were part of the circles of literary men. The doctor's new social and monetary success can be explained by the shift in the understanding of bodily and spiritual maladies—the physical body became of greater importance. Ducros notes that, “As in fifteen cases out of twenty they were summoned for a whim rather than from necessity, they obviously had more complaints to listen to than remedies to prescribe.”<sup>119</sup> He goes on to describe the frequency at which ladies would call upon their doctors for the ‘vapors’ or claim to have maladies that did not exist. We are left with the impression that doctors of this time merely created a sense of security for their patients without really administering medical attention— that keeping their patients calm and happy were their sole goals, which in turn insured their popularity, and thus lucrative career.

However, like the bourgeoisie, doctors found honor and power in society but did not at Court or amongst the nobles. For instance, in February 1738 the Dauphin was operated on for an abscess he had in his cheek. Upon completing the surgery, “these gentlemen [doctors] had fondly hoped that they would be given a royal coach in which to return [to Paris from Versailles], and expected this as a mark of distinction and bounty on the King's part.” However, after waiting several days for a response they were told that, “This was not possible because all the King's coaches are coaches of [his] body and could only hold the King and those who had the honor to join...”<sup>120</sup> Thus, despite their

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fun at the medical fraternity. The story involves a drunkard woodcutter who plays the role of doctor.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>120</sup> Charles Philippe d'Albert Luynes, *Mémoires sur la cour de Louis XV, 1735-58*. Vol. 2. (Paris : Fermin Didot Frères, 1860)

seemingly utmost importance in the care of the Dauphin, their social rank as bourgeoisie outweighed any sense of merit which would have been granted with their transportation back to Paris.

## II. The Merchant Class, Gender, and the Art Market

The social concerns of the time also had an effect on the visual arts. The evolving terms of class distinction implicated the discourse of anti-rococo literature heavily, and the academic doctrine of the hierarchy of the genres within the Academy became a means in which to play out the transparency that the old regime wished to return to. As many scholars have noted, the ambiguities of rococo became a direct correlative representation of the French society. For the aristocracy, this was not only a direct threat of power but more importantly, identity. This led to the call to return to art that was transparent, ambitious, and defined. Thus, history painting became the visual field in which these tenets could exist. As has been seen, Watteau's submission to the Academy was taken as an exception and although it presented a challenge to the established hierarchies, it was nevertheless dealt with through assimilation. However, by the 1750s, nearing the end of Nattier's career, this assimilation was no longer a possibility—as one sees in the high criticism of Boucher's work. The increasing argument made by critics for aesthetic and moral sensibility became a direct reflection of the deep rooted social anxieties between the aristocracy and nobility in relation to the new merchant class.

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<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.390150049611431860>, 27-36. “Les médecins et chirurgiens consultante furent enfin renvoyés hier. Il y eut à cette occasion une petite difficulté. On demanda un carrosse du Roi pour les ramener à Paris ; mais cela ne se put exécuter parceque, tous les carrosses du Roi sont carrosses du corps et qu'il n'y peut monter que du Roi et ceux qui ont l'honneur de le suivre...”

By the late 1750s the appropriation of iconography and imagery associated with nobility and the aristocracy seemed to have been used in more overt terms and had nearly reached its peak in criticism. Melissa Hyde, pointedly marks Madame de Pompadour and the various means she used to affirm her identity after gaining her title of Marquise and her position as ‘title mistress’ to the king, in her book, *Making Up the Rococo: Francois Boucher and His Critics*. In her discussion of *Madame de Pompadour at Her Toilette*, Pompadour’s hand in the making of the cameo featured in the painting and her own figure within the space of the *toilette*, position her within the privileged visual iconography of the noble. Hyde states that, “She [Pompadour] was the avatar of the social instability occasioned by the upward mobility of the bourgeoisie as they acquired the appearance, manners, and notional symbols of the cultural elite—that is to say, as they transformed their *état* through the performance of aristocratic identity.”<sup>121</sup> Thus, it is possible to speculate that Pompadour continued this very same iconographical appropriation set forth by early artists like Nattier. In the case of Pompadour, these appropriations were put into use after her inclusion and position within court life. This was not always the case in the bourgeois female sitters of Nattier’s portraits. Some female sitters were most certainly members of the bourgeois class, while others being born into the merchant class were newly admitted into the realm of nobility through marriage.

However, Nattier’s portrait types become more problematic in their apparent lack of individuation of the sitter. Often times costume, body types, and even faces are

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<sup>121</sup> Melissa Hyde, *Making Up the Rococo: Francois Boucher and His Critics* (Los Angeles: Getty Institute, 2006), 129.

similar, if not completely duplicated, leaving the viewer to distinguish between sitters through the titles given for each painting. As Brilliant points out, “Functionally, it matters little whether the subject is well-known or not.”<sup>122</sup> However, as will become apparent in the following pages, the bourgeoisie were able to mimic noble imagery in such a way as to possibly encourage their likeness to other sitters, while simultaneously unveiling their identity through the painting’s title.

### III. Portrait Type: Water Nymphs

In 1729 Nattier received his first major portrait commission which would influence his reputation as painter of ‘ladies’ as well as display the formal elements that would come to define Nattier’s work. Prior to 1729, Nattier’s work had been limited to paintings of various renditions of noble men as hunters, with the last image of a seated woman having been his portrait of Catherine the Great in 1717, before his acceptance into the Academy (figures. 28, 29). These types of portraits highlighted the exclusive hunting activities of the noble in which the male sitter was typically portrayed from the knees up, sat with one hand holding his musket, the other relaxed, while his trusty hunting canine examined the wild game which had been recently caught by his master. The scene featured, almost always, a vast landscape or tree trunk that was used to frame the portrait. Nattier was most certainly influenced by the formula used by painters of Louis XIV’s time like Jean-Baptiste Santerre (1651-1717), however, Nattier’s color palette was much brighter<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Brilliant, 49.

<sup>123</sup> See Santerre’s *Chasseur*. Oil on canvas. 148 x 114 cm. (Paris: musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, dépôt du musée du Louvre) inv. 3900.



Marie-Anne de Bourbon (1697-1741), also referred to in Nattier's title as Mademoiselle de Clermont, is the subject of his 1729 portrait, *Marie-Anne de Bourbon, dite Mademoiselle de Clermont, aux eaux minérales de Chantilly* (fig 4). Marie-Anne is figured sitting posed with her back to a cluster of reeds. Unlike any portrait found in the rest of Nattier's oeuvre, Marie-Anne is depicted as a full length figure. She is dressed in a pearl-white *sous vêtement*-style robe which has been draped with Prussian blue fabric that hangs over her shoulders and folds between her legs.<sup>124</sup> A stone urn, from which water flows, serves as a resting place for her right arm. She gazes at the viewer as she gestures to a woman in a similar pearl-white robe, adorned with pearls, who pours water into a cup. In front of Marie-Anne, a young cupid-like child draped in gold fabric, holds a marine rudder in his right hand, while his left holds a serpent. These three figures make up the foreground which features a running spring just at their feet. Behind them, we see a pavilion along with several figures and a large body of water beneath either a dusk or dawn sky.

After careful examination of each figure, it becomes clear that Nattier's work was more than a simple portrait, but was a portrait featuring allegorical elements which made reference to a long standing visual motif utilized in paintings of mythology. Marie-Anne in fact, takes on the guise of the Greek water nymph, more aptly, a Naiad, as she presides

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<sup>124</sup> This may also be a *chemise*, which was always and white, long and full part of the undergarment. This was worn by the rich and could be cut in either the French or English style. See Madeleine Delpierre, *Dress in France in Eighteenth Century*. English Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 32.

over running water and a spring.<sup>125</sup> The personification of feminine youth, charm and beauty, the young woman to her left plays the role of attendant as she refills her cup, a nymph herself. The small enfant who holds the marine rudder makes reference to the water and also to the god of medicine, with the Rod of Asclepius or the serpent that encircles his arm. For as Salmon points out, this body of water and location are identifiable as the mineral fountain that had been built in Chantilly in 1725—the healing benefits of which are reiterated in the reference to the Rod of Asclepius.<sup>126</sup>

Interestingly, if Nattier intended for this scene to be understood as allegory, based on his reference to Greek myth along with the imposing size of the piece, this however, is not the result. Situated in the background, figures that scatter the landscape and entrance of the Pavilion are dressed in contemporary clothing, thus the allegorical image that is created in the foreground is entirely disconnected from the background. This inherently disturbs the viewer's understanding of the distinctions between reality and allegory. Despite the artist having used the same motif in another one of his paintings, *Jeune Femme en source* (fig 30), he nevertheless includes elements depicting contemporary life in his 1729 portrait of Marie-Anne. When he paints her again in 1733, he also omits any contemporary representations in his version of Marie-Anne as a Sultana (fig 31). Perhaps this was Marie-Anne's way of depicting her noble lineage. Her father Louis III, Prince of

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<sup>125</sup> Richard Cavendish and Brian Innes, ed., *Man Myth and Magic: The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology, Religion and the Unknown*, vol. 14, "Nymphs" (New York: Marschall Cavendish), 1899.

<sup>126</sup> The pavilion is described by Salmon as being located near the road leading to Creil, France.

Condé (1668-1710) was a prince by blood to Louis XIV.<sup>127</sup> The family's ancestral château de Chantilly would have been near the newly discovered mineral water source, and the pavilion was built between 1725 and 1728. Thus, it would not be unfitting for Marie-Anne to picture herself one year later in front of the recently completed pavilion, while also making reference through her guise as a water nymph and with the appearance of water being poured both from the urn and from the pitcher, to the new source of drinking water.

Nolhac's explanation for the artist's selection of such a scene for the depiction of Marie-Anne suggests that Nattier was replicating previous artists more than anything. The biographer believed that Nattier, during the late 1720s, was attempting to copy some of the successful elements seen in Jean Raoux's (1677-1734) work. Raoux, who was admitted to the Academy as history painter, was known for his portraits which placed his female sitters within an imagined landscape with fictive attributes. Nolhac likens the careful craftsmanship, shimmering fabrics, and pleasant sitter's resemblance to Nattier's paintings.<sup>128</sup> In fact, in 1930, Louis Dimier (1865-1943), a French art historian, published on the subject of French painters of the eighteenth century and mistakenly attributed Nattier's *Jeune Femme en Source* as belonging to Raoux.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Marie-Anne's mother was Louise Françoise de Bourbon, also known as Mademoiselle de Nantes who was the eldest surviving daughter of Louis XIV and his mistress Madame de Montespan. There had been speculation that Marie-Anne was the daughter of Louise-Françoise de Bourbon and Francois Louis, the prince of Conti, with whom her mother was having an affair. Nevertheless, Marie-Anne has been accepted as Louis III, Prince of Condé's daughter.

<sup>128</sup> Salmon, 78.

<sup>129</sup> Louis Dimier, "Les Portrait français du musée de Parme" in *Chronique des arts et de la curiosité* 1906 (Paris : Gazette des beaux-arts). No. 26,.

However, Nolhac makes an interesting connection between Raoux's patronage from actresses and that of more noble women. "As it follows he [Raoux] knew how to satisfy his clients of the Opera, where the girls only had to, it is true, but bring the stage costume to his studio, to give him ideas for the painting."<sup>130</sup> He continues in the next paragraph to say, "Great ladies, which sometimes followed the taste of the great actresses, addressed the same painters without scruple and received from him the same emblems and the same poses of theater."<sup>131</sup> This suggests that even women of nobility were being influenced by fashions of the stage, and despite their origins they were willfully being employed by the upper class. Theater represented a public culture of social exchange and spectatorship. The number of sites for celebrity and fashions in the eighteenth century were found within the court, Opera, clubs, assembly rooms, masquerade balls, and art exhibitions all of which aided in the dissemination of fashion and social trends into the popular culture.<sup>132</sup> While these costumes or scenes were being

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<http://archive.org/details/chroniquedesar1906pariuoft.>, 222-223. "J'ai publié ici il y a moins de trois ans , l'identification de certains portraits du musée de Parme, marqués soit de faux noms, soit d'attributions fausses, par le catalogue de ce musée. . . Ces tableaux sont au nombre de trois : un *Duc de Bourgogne, fils de Louis XV*, excellente répétition du Nattier de Versailles, sans doute de la main du maître, inscrit au catalogue de M. Ricci sous le nom de Louise-Charlotte de Bourbon, morte reine de Saxe en 1857. . ."

<sup>130</sup> Nolhac, 54. "C'est ainsi qu'il sut satisfaire sa clientèle de l'Opéra, d'où les demoiselles n'avaient, il est vrai, qu'à transporter en son atelier le costume porte sur les planches, pour lui fournir une idée de tableau."

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 54. "Les grandes dames, qui suivent quelquefois le goût des grandes actrices, s'adressaient sans scrupule au même peintre et recevaient de lui les mêmes emblèmes et la même apothéose de théâtre."

<sup>132</sup> Jessica Munns, "Celebrity Status: The Eighteenth Century Actress as Fashion Icon." In *Women, Popular Culture, and the Eighteenth Century*, Potter, Tiffany, ed., (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 70.

appropriated from the lower class actresses and theater, it is important to note the history of the water nymph and its use within painting.

According to Greek mythology the nymph was a creature that was wild and dangerous. Closely related to Pan and Diana, they caused madness and nympholepsy with their beauty. The Greeks called brides ‘nymphs,’ however, it is unknown whether this was due to the fact that brides were held to be filled with some type of divine power or because nymphs were supposed to be the brides of those they seized. This association with marriage and the bride may interestingly relate to Marie-Anne’s own life as a wife. In 1724, it is said that during a hunting party at the family’s château in Chantilly, her then husband Louise de Melun disappeared and was never found. Marie-Anne never married again and never had children.<sup>133</sup> The beauty and youth associated with the nymph is displayed in Marie-Anne’s portrait. One might also even further relate the enfant figure to the princess’ childless life, as one never see this putti-like figure in any other rendition of the water nymph scenes painted by Nattier. Nymphs were also associated with natural objects, for example, Oreads with the mountains; Meliae with ash groves; Dryads with those of other trees, especially oaks; Naiads with fresh water; and Nereids, daughters of Nereus, with the sea.<sup>134</sup> However, it is the naiad who is the chosen nymph as seen

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<sup>133</sup> Stéphanie Félicité de Genlis, *Mademoiselle de Clermont, nouvelle Historique* (Paris, 1827) <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015030374006>., 127-128. This passage recounts how Mademoiselle de Clermont had told her husband, based on her brother’s orders, to distance himself from her during the hunting trip and to meet her brother that night. The only explanation she provided was that she would explain later. Before leaving, he turns to look at the princess and that is the last time she sees him.

<sup>134</sup> John Pinsent, *Greek Mythology*. Library of the World’s Myths and Legends (New York: P. Bedrick Books, 1983), 36.

throughout Nattier's oeuvre in which the repeated motif of the urn and spring water is used.

While the image of the naiad is found as far back as 580 B.C.E, the iconographic motif of the urn does not gain significant popularity until the sixteenth and seventeenth century. In a Flemish tapestry dating to c. 1680-1710 entitled *Rape of Proserpina*, c. 1680-1710 (fig 32) a very similar depiction of the water nymph is displayed at the bottom right of the composition. To the left one sees a horse-driven carriage that depicts Hades as he swiftly kidnaps Persephone. Her outstretched arm and furrowed eyebrows, as she turns back to the viewer, indicate her terror. At the bottom of the composition two naiads look up in shock. The female gestures upward with both of her arms outstretched, as the male seated behind her looks on. Interestingly, not only does one see the emblematic urn, from which water flows from, but also the same marine rudder Nattier's enfant child held. Rather than depict the typical counterpart of the female nymph, the satyr, here one sees a male version of the typically female nymph. Clearly he is not a satyr, he is not depicted drinking, he does not possess a tail and moreover, a human leg is visible beneath his garb. However, according to Liana Cheney, the iconographical history of the ship rudder indicates guidance, control, and safety. This came to be associated with the idea of government, or 'abundance' which derived from ancient Rome. It originally derived from the annual celebration of the grain harvest transported from city to city, primarily by

boat.<sup>135</sup> This would clearly relate to the ‘abundance’ in the new spring of Chantilly and its service as a public source of drinking water.

Perhaps more telling of Nattier’s influence is Peter Paul Rubens’ (1577-1640) *The Judgement of Paris*, c. 1597-1599 (fig 33). Paris, seated with his back to the viewer, gives the prize of a golden apple to Venus. She is the central standing goddess, whom he judged to be the most beautiful of the three. To the left stands Juno who is angered by his choice. Identifiable by the armor at her feet, Minerva turns away. Venus is accompanied by Cupid and crowned by a putto who reaches down to her head, while another putto holds two doves by strings. Paris is accompanied by Mercury at the left, and in the background two satyrs watch the contest. At the right a water god and a nymph recline on the ground.

Once more, the emblematic urn is included from which water pours. The male water god is included along with a female naiad; however, the depiction of the ship rudder is absent. Nattier’s enfant figure may have also been directly inspired from the putto, who also draped in gold, places the crown onto Venus. More evident is Nattier’s apparent influence of Rubens’ color palette and execution. If one takes a closer look at the atmospheric background in both Ruben’s piece and Nattier’s Marie-Anne portrait, the same blue-green hues are used in both. This certainly is not unique to this particular painting, but reappears in almost all of Nattier’s paintings. The influence of Rubens’

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<sup>135</sup> Liana De Girolami Cheney, “Abundance” in Helene E Roberts, *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography: Themes Depicted in Works of Art* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2013), 19.

works would not be unlikely, as Nattier copied all twenty-four of the artist's paintings located in the Gallerie du Palais du Luxemburg from 1702-1704.<sup>136</sup>

Marie-Anne not only used her image as allegory, as was traditional for women of her class, but also, through visual reference was able to point to her family's presence and power in the region of Chantilly. The building of the Chantilly spring and pavilion complimented the iconography of the ancient water nymph.

Since the beginning of the eighteenth century there had been a legion of painters portraying the water nymph. Artists like François de Troy (1645-1730) who depicted *Pan and Syrinx* several times, once in 1720 and sometime between 1722 and 1724 (figs 34, 35), as well as *Diana and Her Nymphs Bathing* between 1722 and 1724 (fig 36); Nicolas de Largillierre who depicted two noble women as nymphs in, *Portrait de dame en source, dit autrefois La princesse Palatine (Elisabeth-Charlotte de Bavière)* (fig 37) and *Portrait de Marianne de Mahony*, during the late seventeenth century (figs 38); and Pierre Gobert (1662-1744), who often painted works after Largillierre. However, in all cases, these were limited to noble women who took the guise of the water goddess, if not simple mythological paintings bearing no connection to a sitter.

In 1747, Nattier returned to the iconography of the water nymph, this time, not for a member of noble lineage, but for a woman of the bourgeois class, *Élisabeth de Flesselles en Source* (fig 5). Madame Flesselles, also referred to as Mademoiselle Flesselles, though her appearance in age seems to suggest that by this time she was in fact 'Madame', who is presented as goddess of the waters. She is clothed in a pearl-white

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<sup>136</sup> Salmon, 40. Nattier's drawings were approved to be engraved by Louis XIV in 1704.



*sous-vêtement* which has been accented with strings of pearls. A string of pearls falls over her right shoulder, some tie around her left arm, while another string is used to cinch her waist. In her speckled grey hair, pearls are also seen interspersed through her curls. She reclines her right arm on the emblematic urn, on which Nattier's usual Prussian blue fabric billows over. Amongst the mass of reeds on the left side of the composition, the faint outline and shadow, of what appears to be a ship rudder, protrudes from the greenery.

Unlike Marie-Anne's portrait, Madame Flesselles is pictured from the knees up, she does not have an attendant, and the infant figure is not present. The background is void of any other figures or architectural structures but rather what is depicted is an amorphous bucolic landscape—the lines between verdant green space and bodies of water are completely indistinguishable. Nattier treats the foliage with the same golden hues created by either the sun light of dawn or dusk, once again. However, several elements of this composition are striking, when compared to other versions of the water source. First, one notices that Madame Flesselles is heavily made up. That is to say, her eyebrows are much fuller, her cheeks are heavily powdered with rouge, and her face seems to be substantially paler than Marie-Anne. In fact, the grey speckled hair one might take as a product of her age may actually be the remnants of the application of white powder. The use of pearls is also an adornment not found on the figure of Marie-Anne. But just who was Madame de Flesselles?

Madame Flesselles, born Élisabeth Robinet, was the daughter of a wholesale wine merchant in Auxerre and later married Jacques de Flesselles, sir of Champgueffier in

Brie. Élisabeth did not come from a noble family, nor did she marry into one. Her husband after having been a banker in Paris, made his riches in farming, and had acquired by 1735 the charge of secretary of the king. Thus, while she was not noble, Madame Fleselles undoubtedly was very wealthy. With her husband's new post, he would have not only positioned the family in the upper echelon of the bourgeois class, but would have also facilitated in the ennobling of the second generation of their family.

In turn, Madame Flesselles's uses of cosmetic and bodily adornments seem to be products of her position within society. In an attempt to have her image figure into the cannon of this allegorical type of portraiture, Madame Flesselles, unknowingly also seems to highlight her bourgeois status. Having been informed by the writings of Madame du Deffand (1697-1780), the Goncourt brothers write on the subject of rouge:

To animate this face [reference to women in general] even more, and to give it a factitious life, there was rouge, the choice of which is so weighty a matter. For it was not only a question of being painted; the great point was to have a rouge "which says something." More, the rouge must represent the person wearing it; the rouge of the lady of quality was not the rouge of the lady of the Court; the rouge of a bourgeoisie was neither the rouge of the lady of Court, nor the rouge of a lady of quality, nor the rouge of a courtesan; it was merely a soupçon of rouge, an imperceptible shade. At Versailles, on the contrary, the princesses wore it very bright and very high in color; they required that the rouge of women presented at Court be more accentuated than usual on the day of their presentation.<sup>137</sup>

The above account of the hierarchy of rouge sheds light on the sensitivity associated with the cosmetic. A preference for a 'small amount' is what the brothers' mark across social

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<sup>137</sup> Jules and Edmond Goncourt, *The Woman of the Eighteenth Century: Her Life, from Birth to Death, Her Love and Her Philosophy in the Worlds of Salon, Shop and Street* (Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, 1982), 208. The Goncourts take this information directly from the Unpublished Correspondence of Madame du Deffand, Michel Levy, 1850. Vol. I. –A letter of Voltaire's attests all the trouble that Maria Leszczynska had on her arrival in France to become used to this coloring.

ranks. However, at Versailles the heavy rouge is only acceptable for young princesses. Thus, the rouge that was meant to align Madame Flesselles with the Court and the noble did more to distinguish her as not belonging to the class at all. Looking more closely over Nattier's oeuvre, female figures that did have a great deal of rouge on their cheeks were most importantly of the noble class, and furthermore of considerable youth, as is seen in the study, *Visage de Marie-Josèphe de Saxe*, 1750 (fig 39). In her emulation of appearance, Élisabeth indeed takes the necessary steps to create, what she believed to be the image of aristocracy, though her over compensation in appearance caused the representation of a 'noble woman' to become unsuccessful.

With the appropriation of the water nymph, or allegory of water, made by the bourgeois class, it is interesting to note that the motif was not discarded from noble class imagery, and two years later the subject was taken up once more. According to French National Archives, on January 11, 1750, Charles François Paul Lenormant de Tournehem (1684-1751), who was the director general of the King's Buildings, indicated that Louis, Dauphin of France, had requested four overdoor paintings of his four sisters to be depicted after portraits already in existence.<sup>138</sup> These were to be placed in his *grand cabinet* at Versailles. However, Jean-Charles Lécuyer, who was the controller of the King's Buildings, sent the frames which Nattier was to use as a guide for his four compositions, and received instead four entirely new compositions representing the sisters in the guise of the four elements. According to Salmon, the commissions were

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<sup>138</sup> Salmon, 223. It has been noted that the Prince probably thought that this would save time and would prevent the overdoor spaces from remaining empty for too long. We do not know the reason but the Dauphin quickly changed his opinion and preferred finally the new effigies over the replicas that Nattier sent.

originally intended for François Boucher, though none of these paintings came to fruition.<sup>139</sup>

After the death of his wife Marie-Thérèse-Raphaëlle, infante d'Espagne (1726-1746), the Dauphin had decided to abandon the apartment that he had occupied while married. One year later after remarrying, he resolved to move back. This brought about the large project of redecorating his room, which was detailed in the Duke de Luynes' memoir accounts. He indicates the tireless work of craftsmen and decorators who worked even on holidays and Sundays.<sup>140</sup> The Dauphin's apartment was composed of three different rooms leading to his main bedroom. There was the guard's room, which led to an anti-chamber, which led to another, that finally led to the prince's sleeping quarters, off of which a small personal room was located. Unfortunately, after the four paintings were delivered to the Dauphin at Versailles, there was no mention of the effigies or description of their locations within the prince's *cabinet*.

The portrait, *Madame Victoire incarnant l'Eau* (fig 6), (Marie Louise Thérèse Victoire) 1751, is one of the four paintings executed that year. The three other princesses took on the guises of Earth, Fire, and Air.<sup>141</sup> Although the title indicates that Madame Victoire is the incarnate of water, it is clear in the repeated iconography and composition

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<sup>139</sup> Salmon, 226.

<sup>140</sup> See Charles Philippe d'Albert Luynes, *Mémoires sur la cour de Louis XV, 1735-58*, vol. 14, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015004961143>. 1860., 330-331. A more detailed description of the arrangement of each room is given.

<sup>141</sup> Jean-Marc Nattier, *Madame Victoire incarnant l'Eau*, 1751. Oil on canvas. 106 x 138., *Madame Infante, Louise-Elisabeth de France, duchesse de Parme, incarnant la Terre*, 1750. Oil on canvas. 107 x 138. , *Madame Henriette Incarnant le Feu*, 1751. Oil on canvas. 106 x 138.5., *Madame Adelaïde incarnant l'Air*, 1751. Oil on canvas. 106 x 138.

that she is in fact depicted as a water nymph like Nattier's other *en source* portrait types. The horizontal canvas size allowed for the princess to take up a larger visual space. She rests her left arm onto the emblematic urn. Her hands meet; one holds the Prussian blue fabric, while the other rests on top of it. Her pearl-white *chemise* falls from her right shoulder and features a bow just below her décolletage. One can faintly make out a string of pearls at her waist, and more clearly, some that decorate her hair along with flowers. In this composition, in addition to the cluster of reeds, one finds again, the semi-hidden rudder that is propped against a tree trunk. The background lacks the vibrant hues of gold found in the foliage seen in Marie-Anne's and Madame Flesselles' portraits, which are instead found in the sky. Two swans are featured in the body of water just behind the princess. Interestingly, the portrait of Marie-Anne also features the depiction of the swan, one that is missing in Madame de Flesselles' portrait, also clearly marking the distinction between the noble and the bourgeoisie.

Madame Victoire is considerably less made up than Nattier's bourgeois sitter two years previously. Although she clearly wears rouge and powder, it has been applied *légèrement* much in the way the Goncourts described. Interestingly, her three sisters are depicted with bright heavy rouge, especially Louise-Élisabeth and Madame Henriette. The explanation for this is unclear. It is known that Madame Victoire was the youngest of her sisters and rather than wear the typical intense red, perhaps her youthful age

dictated this light application of rouge—her appearance is more closely aligned with Marie-Anne's.<sup>142</sup>

Nevertheless, the motif that was first used to depict a woman of nobility, was consequently applied to a woman of bourgeois status, and in turn used again by the elite class marking the emulation and recycling of a portrait type.

#### IV. Portrait Type: Diana

According to Greek mythology the nymph was closely related to Artemis, also referred to as Diana in Latin. Diana was the Amazonian Moon goddess associated with the hunt. She was not the female counterpart of the male nor was she the personification of intellectual or social ideals. She represents, especially to modern eyes, female independence, strength, and childbirth, although her character is one of ancient mythology. Diana is often depicted as huntress, donning an animal skin, classic tunic, or nothing at all. She is always pictured with her bow, arrow and quiver, wild animals, and in some cases a crescent moon emblem at the crown of her head. However, Diana was comparatively a late comer to the pantheon and had less 'mythology' than many of the other gods and goddesses.<sup>143</sup> However, her association with the female often seen in poetry and folklore, made her image particularly susceptible to visual representation.

The history of the depiction of Diana is long standing and the Roman goddess was featured through various mediums such as sculpture, fresco, and pottery, long before Western Europe began appropriating her image. During the Renaissance the goddess'

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<sup>142</sup> Nicolas-Louis Achaintre, *Histoire Généalogique et Chronologique de La Maison Royale de Bourbon*. Paris, Vol. 2, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433081848214>. 1825., 154.

<sup>143</sup> Cavendish, 574.

image proliferated both in painting and sculpture. Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553) produced several paintings of the huntress. *Apollo and Diana in a Wooded Landscape* (fig 40) depicted the nude goddess in the company of Apollo who holds her emblematic bow and arrows while she is seated on a wild deer. Around 1600, Giuseppe Cesari (Cavalier d'Aripino) produced his version of the goddess amongst nymphs in his, *Diana and Actaeon* (fig 41). The scene depicts the mythical tale in which Actaeon encounters the chaste Diana, where she bathed nude in a spring with the help of her nymph companions. Here one sees the transformation of Actaeon, for it is said that Diana, frightened, splashed him with water causing him to transform into a deer.

However, early Western European portraitists began painting contemporary women in the guise of the goddess omitting, the Venus style nude figure in place of gowns and tunics of contemporary fashions. Ambroise Dubois (1542-1614) painted *Gabrielle d'Estrées in the guise of Diana the huntress* (fig 42), though her figure and dress are more aligned with contemporary fashions of full length dresses, corseting, and ruffled trims, she nonetheless possesses all of the emblematic iconography associated with Diana. Amongst the verdant background two deer are featured. While in the foreground Gabrielle holds, with her right hand, the leash of her two dogs, her left hand holds up her hunting horn. The crescent moon is featured in her hair and her quiver of arrows and bow are slung over her shoulder.

Perhaps more contemporary to Nattier's own work, de Troy painted in 1734 his rendition of Diana, along with the animal skin wrap one sees continually in Nattier's Diana portrait types. The same scene depicted by Cesari, *Diana Surprised by Actaeon*

(fig 43), features Diana at the center of the composition surrounded by a considerably larger group of water nymphs. Diana is hastily draped with umber and white fabrics by one of her nymph attendants, under which a long animal skin tumbles from her chest to the ground. The crimson fabric just to her left leads our eye to the quiver which sits propped next to her. Instead of the crescent moon emblem often found in the goddess' hair, it is featured just above her head.

One distinction that is found in Nattier's take on the Greek goddess is found in the omission of other figures. Diana's nymph attendants, along with the depiction of various other gods, are not present. Instead, Nattier's images focus on the goddess herself and the emblems that define her. In 1739 Carlotta Frederika Sparre (1719-1793) accompanied along with her brother Carl, her uncle and aunt, the Count and Countess Tessin on their summer trip to Paris. Carlotta's aunt, Ulrika Lovisa Sparre (1711-1768), had sat for Nattier that same year when the Count, in a search for a portraitist, was advised by Carl Hårleman (1700-1753) to seek the talents of Nattier.<sup>144</sup> It was only natural that when it came time for Carlotta to have her portrait painted, the Count called on Nattier's services once more.

The young Swedish noble sat for Nattier in 1741, where the artist depicted her in the guise of the nymph Diana in *Carlotta Frederika Sparre en nymphe de Diane* (fig 7). She is pictured in a very close frame, much like her aunt's portrait. Unlike Nattier's typical half-length portraits, the viewer is left with what is close to a bust-length portrait,

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<sup>144</sup> Salmon, 138. Jean-Marc Nattier, *Ulrika Lovisa Sparre, comtesse Tessin*, 1741. Oil on canvas. 81x65. Signed and dated on the bottom right of the doorframe of the oculus: *Nattier pinxit. 1741.* (Paris: musée du Louvre). Inv. RF 925.



even though her hand is visible. Though one cannot see her entire dress, it is assumed that the young woman dons the similar pearl-white *sous-vêtement* style dress which all of Nattier's sitters are usually depicted wearing. Her shoulders are draped with the same animal skin seen in Cesari's painting and her delicate hand, posed just in front of her torso, holds the emblematic bow associated with the huntress. Carlotta's head, slightly tilted, gazes at the viewer—her hair adorned with flowers. Curiously, Nattier omits any sense of location in this portrait. Void of a natural landscape or architectural structure, her location is unknown. Her quiver of arrows is also not seen.

However, in 1735 the artist had begun depicting sitters in the guise of Diana, all of which included the view of a natural setting, the quiver, and the accent of a colored satin—either blue or red. A possible explanation for this is found in the account of Count Tessin, having written a letter to his wife on June 30, 1741, where he complains about the time it took Nattier to complete the painting.<sup>145</sup> This suggests that the artist was pressed for time and did not include the entire motif associated with the goddess. It is known that the following year Nattier lost his wife, Marie-Madelaine de La Roche, leaving him a widower. This could account for the artist's inability to finish the painting along with copies requested.<sup>146</sup> This may also explain the artist's decision to portray the noble woman in bust-length.

By 1742 Nattier returned to the motif, with his portrait *Constance Gabrielle Magdeleine Bonnier de la Mosson sous les traits de Diane* (fig 8). The woman depicted was the wife of Joseph Bonnier de la Mosson (1702-1744), Constance Gabrielle

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>146</sup> Dussieux, L., 364.

Magdeleine de Monceil de Louraille. She is depicted in half-length portrait style and once more the viewer is met with Nattier's typical portrait style featuring a reclining sitter and natural background. Dressed in a pearl-white *sous-vêtement* style robe which has been draped with an animal skin, Gabrielle leans her right arm on her quiver which is complete with several arrows. She holds one with her right hand and with her other grasps the bow which rests in her red satin covered lap. The woman does not appear to be as young as Nattier's previous sitter Carlotta, though she also makes use of the bright rouge associated with the court. The red fabric, so often seen in association with the goddess of hunt, has also been appropriated across her lap.

Gabrielle was daughter of a *Président a mortier* in Rouen.<sup>147</sup> Her father's position was venal and could be bought and sold, and what had typically been a position which required knowledge of law had become a position that could be bought by those with the monetary means.<sup>148</sup> Her husband, Joseph, came from a family of very successful tradesmen. His grandfather, the draper Antoine Bonnier, had amassed a small fortune, though his grandson added to this considerably, through his work in regional finance. During the war of the Spanish Succession of 1701, he acquired a considerable amount of wealth supplying the troops grain and fodder, and in 1711 he bought the office of general treasurer of the region of Languedoc.<sup>149</sup> As I have mentioned in section I of this chapter, offices of finance and law, along with the nobility, made up the most powerful sectors of society during the eighteenth century, and while neither Gabrielle nor Joseph came from

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<sup>147</sup> This position was one of the most important legal posts. They were principal magistrates of the highest juridical institutions like the *parlements*.

<sup>148</sup> Ducros, 147.

<sup>149</sup> Salmon, 151.

noble families, both came from considerably wealthy backgrounds. Though in an account between Joseph's good friend, Messire Portail, and himself, Portail describes the beauty of Gabrielle but also the mediocrity in which she lived. He proposes to his friend to meet, "...a charming girl..., known by the entire village for her beauty, by her good morals, and by the indifference she has shown toward men until now. She is with her mother in utter poverty."<sup>150</sup> This suggests that while Gabrielle's father may have held an important post within parliament, her status is nonetheless 'mediocre' in relation to Joseph's fortune in finance. Even so, after asking Gabrielle's mother for her hand, it is said that her mother, shocked by the proposal, wanted to know who he was. Upon identifying himself, she replied that it was of good fortune for her daughter. She pressed for more details.<sup>151</sup>

Thus, the commissioning of this portrait served as a status marker of financial success. Neither born from the class in which they intended to associate themselves with, call upon an artist who was in high demand throughout the kingdom. Their choice in iconography served in their attempted establishment within the upper echelon of the bourgeois society. In turn, they represented a couple whose monetary means enabled them to escape their anonymity.

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<sup>150</sup> Louis Grasset Morel, *Les Bonnier, ou, Une Famille de financiers au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1886), 109. "une fille charmante..., connue de toute la ville par sa beauté, par la régularité de ses mœurs et par sa beauté, et par l'indifférence qu'elle a conservée jusqu'à présent pour les hommes. Elle est avec sa mère dans une honnête médiocrité."

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 110. "...il lui demande sa fille en mariage; la mère étonnée de sa proposition veut savoir qui il est. Il se nomme : quelle fortune pour sa fille ! Elle a peine à le croire ; on en vient aux éclaircissements."

In 1756 and 1757, Nattier once more returned to the iconography of Diana. During these two years he produced, what Salmon believes to be, two portraits of the same woman, Madame de Maison-Rouge.<sup>152</sup> In *Madame de Maison-Rouge sous les traits de Diane* (fig 9), the young woman takes on the guise of Diana as huntress. In the half-length portrait her gaze does not meet the viewer, but is focused on something in the distance to the right of the sitter. Her pearl-white robe is cinched at the waist with what appears to be a series of pearls and diamonds. The animal skin wrap hangs over her right shoulder and is tied at the bust, leaving her left shoulder free as well as her arm which props the emblematic bow just next to her thigh. Her right hand rests on the quiver just under her arm. Interestingly she points with her index finger towards the opposite direction in which she gazes. Perhaps this gesture indicates that Nattier's second portrait of the woman, as Venus, was meant to be displayed to the left of this painting, although one cannot know for sure. In this case, the traditional bright-red fabric that is draped over the goddess takes on the pale hue of the color rose. She is clearly younger than Nattier's previous Diana. Her cheeks are fuller, along with heavy rouge and her eyes are larger. Her hair is also adorned with flowers.

The woman pictured most certainly had the means to commission not only one half-length portrait, but two. She was married to Etienne de Maison-Rouge, *receveur general*. In the Memoires of duc de Luynes one learns that the woman who came to be Madame Maison-Rouge was the young, Mademoiselle Belot, daughter of the bailiff of

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<sup>152</sup> Salmon, 267. Salmon suspects Nattier's portrait painted the following year was of the same woman. *Madame de Maison-Rouge sous la figure de Vénus attelant des colombes à son char*, 1757. Oil on canvas. 123x97. Signed and dated on the bottom left: *Nattier pinxit./1757*. (Los Angeles: Lynda and Stewart Resnick collection).

the palace. She brought to the marriage a dowry of 200,000 livres which dwarfed her husband's mere 10,000 livres and 40,000 livre's worth of diamonds that he contributed.<sup>153</sup> With her husband's work in finance and her father's judiciary work, Madame Maison-Rouge had the perfect economic profile to commission two large portraits by Nattier. Her choice of allegory, both as Diana and one year later as Venus, show her ostentatious taste for the noble genre. One portrait would not have highlighted her substantial wealth, so a second was commissioned. However criticism of both, the tendency of bourgeois sitters to commission portraits and Nattier's reoccurring fantastical allegories, appeared in 1755 and 1757.

In 1755 Pierre Estève denounced the overuse of portraiture and it's presentence at the Salon of 1755:

On the subject of portraits, I confess that I am shocked to see so many in the Salon. One should not have themselves painted unless one thinks of himself as someone important. In response, you will tell me in that case all humanity will have their portrait made. Therefore I have not explained myself properly: for I only wish to only see portraits of the Royal family at the Salon, those of people who successfully perform the duties of prominent positions or have reached celebrity. This way our painters less occupied with daubing flat figures would produce more paintings of imagination. We paint M. le Marquis de Marigny: it's his right, no one would protest. It is the same with the portraits of la Tour and many others that I can cite whether those of M. Vanloo, those of M. Nattier, those of M. Tocqué and those of M. Perroneau. As for those portraits that we should remove, please do not make me say who they are.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Charles Philippe d'Albert Luynes, *Mémoires sur la cour de Louis XV, 1735-58, vol. 15*, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015053618677>. 1860., 250. [sic] "...et il vient d'épouser Mlle Belot, fille du bailli du palais. Il reconnoit avoir reçu d'elle 200,000 livres et lui donne 10,000 livres de douaire et 40,000 écus de diamants."

<sup>154</sup> Pierre Estève, *Lettre a un partisan du bon gout . Sur l'Exposition des Tableaux faite dans le grand Sallon du Louvre le 28 Août 1755*. [s. n.], <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84429672>. 1755., 11. [sic] "A propos de portraits je vous avouerai que je suis indigne d'en voir un si grand nombre dans le Salon. On ne devrait se faire peindre que lorsqu'on se sent un personnage important. Vous allez me

Found in the critic's writing, he highlights the propensity at which portraits have been commissioned, suggesting that the genre really should be exclusive to those who are of a certain importance to society. He adds that portraiture should be entirely limited to royalty or those of celebrity. In Charles-Nicholas Cochin's (1715-1790) fictional memoir, where he addresses the *Mercure de France*, the critic concludes his opinion of the ridiculous costumes seen in Nattier's portraits with his take on the ironic locations his sitters are portrayed in. Cochin states that Nattier's models had clearly posed in interior spaces of apartments because he did not think it was possible to assume that one would present themselves in public with such indecency, which would have made the nation of France appear "crazy."<sup>155</sup> Suggesting that Nattier's female sitters would not have posed in the natural spaces in which they are depicted.

Thus, Nattier's effigy of Maison-Rouge proved to be the expression of a genre that was no longer in fashion for critics, though the portrait types were still being commissioned.

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répondre qu'à ces titres tout l'espèce humaine fera représenter sa figure. En ce cas je rends mal mon idée : car je ne voudrais voir au Salon que les portraits de la famille Royale, ceux des personnes qui s'acquittent avec succès des devoirs d'un poste eminent ou qui sont parvenus par leur seul mérite à une grande célébrité. Alors nos Peintres moins occupés à barbouiller de plates figures produiroient un plus grand nombre de Tableaux d'imagination. Qu'on peigne M. le Marquis de Marigny : c'est le droit des gens, personne n'en sauroit murmurer. Il en est de même du portrait qu'à fait la Tour et de plusieurs autres que je pourrois citer soit de de M. Vanloo le neveu, de M. Nattier, de M. Toqué et de M. Perroneau. Pour ce qui est des portraits qu'on devoit supprimer, vous me dispensez de vous les indiquer.

<sup>155</sup> Charles Nicolas Cochin, *Recueil de quelques pieces concernant les arts : extraites de plusieurs Mercuries de France* (Paris, 1757) 154. "M. Findfault croit cependant que ces modes n'ont été usitées que dans l'interieur des appartements ; car il ne lui paroît par possible de supposer qu'on eut osé se presenter en public avec de tels ajustemens qui, outre l'indécence, auroient fait passer les François pour une nation de fous."

## V. Portrait Type: Mother and Daughter

As opposed to the previous discussion of Nattier's portrait types, which were heavily based on the iconographies of mythology, one pointed example in which these methods were not appropriated by the bourgeoisie came with the depiction of *Madame Marsollier et sa fille*, 1749 (fig 11). The bourgeois patroness and her daughter appear as true, realistic documentations of mother and daughter at their toilette. The problematic distinction between allegory, mythology, and more importantly class seem to be nonexistent. The painting is so natural and so true to life that one inherently interprets the picture as a candid portrayal of a moment in the daily lives of these two sitters. Unlike Nattier's images of sitters in the guise of water nymphs or Diana, where the viewer may easily confuse one woman's identity with another, Marsollier's image along with her daughter's, are curiously highly individualized. This illusory quality only leads the viewer to question the identity of the sitters, thus bringing the focus not to their potentially allegorized personas but to their true identity. In this case perhaps an allegory, in which case Marsollier and her daughter would be potentially disguised, would not have been useful to her agenda, and in fact may have increased the likelihood of her identity being confused with another. Donald Posner also related the allegorical style's decline leading up to around 1750, which may have influenced both Marsollier and Nattier's decision for the seemingly realistic interior space—a space where material luxury could be displayed.

But Marsollier was not the aristocratic figure one might take her to be. She was daughter to an attorney for the king and while she may have in fact been exposed to the

world of the aristocracy and nobility, she was by no means a part of the exclusive social arena. She was wed to a prosperous textile merchant who sold imported silks and velvets, and although he was substantially wealthy, Marsollier felt that her current status as a simply merchant's wife was unacceptable. Anxiously trying to conceal her true social ranking, she went so far as to have her husband purchase a title, and went on to portray herself as an equal to the elite whenever possible.<sup>156</sup> In fact, one of the conditions of her marriage was "...that she would never have to enter her husband's shop; she even avoided the rue Saint-Honoré so she would not have to see the shop..."<sup>157</sup> Her overt social climbing did more to hinder her reputation than it did in helping her infiltrate the class of people she so wanted to be associated with, resulting in her infamous nickname, '*la duchesse de Velours*.'<sup>158</sup>

In this portrait, Nattier steers away from his typical portrayal of other elite and bourgeois female sitters. Unlike his works before and after the creation of the *Marsollier piece*, where one sees a variation of sitters portrayed as Flora; water nymphs; sultanas; muses; and an array of mythological or ancient personas, Madame Marsollier is not portrayed as any of these typical personas nor is her daughter.<sup>159</sup> In this depiction of a double portrait, one sees a mother and daughter in the midst of their *toilette* preparations. Whether one is seeing a morning or evening *toilette* remains ambiguous. As is the case in many of Nattier's *en source* portrait types, it is difficult to discern what time of day it

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<sup>156</sup> "Gallery label," Metropolitan Museum, <http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections/110001629>.

<sup>157</sup> Salmon, 203.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>159</sup> Nicholson, 56.



is. The only indication the viewer has is found in the opening space of the loggia which gives a minimal glimpse of the outdoors. The reflective golden rays of sun could either depict sunrise or the moments just before dusk. Though because the *toilette* was often associated with the morning and the figures, namely the daughter, seem to be adding ornamentation rather than taking them away, one might assume this to be a depiction of the morning *toilette*. Interestingly, in looking more closely at the verdant outdoors, a faint reflection of tree limbs are seen just below the tree masses in a body of water. This likely relates to some of the artist's earlier works of women depicted as water nymphs or as allegories of water. As was seen in Nattier's *Marie-Anne de Bourbon, dite Mademoiselle de Clermont, aux eaux minérales de Chantilly* (fig 4), the background tree masses have been handled with the same golden hues. Madame Marsollier was probably familiar with these works and viewed these specific elements in relation to the elite women to whom they were associated.

Both figures are placed near the lace covered dressing table, of which tools of beautification can be found. A large gilt table-top mirror, a crystal ewer and various gold jars and boxes where powders, ointments or sponges may have been found represent the luxury items that would have been reserved for the elite. As Hyde points out in her article, ““The Makeup” of the Marquise,” the space of the *toilette*, as is seen in the Boucher *Madame de Pompadour at her toilette* (fig 44), becomes a representation of class and gender identity.<sup>160</sup> The social significance surrounding the *toilette* would not have been missed by Marsollier and would have placed her directly into the realm of the

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<sup>160</sup> Melissa Hyde, “The ‘Makeup’ of the Marquise: Boucher’s Portrait of Pompadour at Her Toilette,” *The Art Bulletin* 82, no. 3 (September 1, 2000), 453.

elite's daily activities. While one does not see her or her daughter actively applying powders or perfumes as would likely be seen in an elite *toilette* scene, one does view rouge that has been applied heavily to both figures faces, as has been seen with other bourgeois sitters. As opposed to Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin's (1699-1779) depiction of the very modest bourgeoisie, Marsollier and her daughter's rouge align them more fittingly with the comedic theatres of Paris. "During the Grand Siècle cosmetic adornments were less a matter of gender than of class, lavished almost exclusively on the faces of the nobility—both female and male, but principally those of the courtly nobility."<sup>161</sup> This heavy rouge, seems to be a vain attempt to show that 'she too' wore the popular makeup of the elite. Not only does this speak to her emulation and declaration to relate to the aristocracy, but with her position at the *toilette*, it also speaks to the nature of makeup itself. There is an apparent duality, as has been noted by Hyde, in the makeup of the wearer and the 'making up' of their persona or self. Madame Marsollier was not only fabricating her social status through this ostentatious portrait, but was also fabricating her appearances to an extent. It is known that she was a beautiful woman during her time. According to the memoirs of the duc de Luynes, the only documentation available concerning Marsollier and her life, she was widely known for her beauty. His words provide confirmation of this, "A few days ago a Madame Marsollier died in Paris. She was the daughter of M. de Leu, procurator for the domains and woods of the King; she was very well known for her beauty..."<sup>162</sup> This overuse of vermillion did not in fact serve

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 458.

<sup>162</sup> Luynes, *Mémoires Sur La Cour de Louis XV, 1735-58*. Vol. 14 (Paris: Fermin Didot Frère, 1860-65), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015004961143>. 1860., 383. [sic] " Du

to cover deleterious effects of age, as the critics of Pompadour would have stated.

Rather, Marsollier's use of rouge was purely a mark of desired status that was apparently shared across social ranks, though with Nattier's portrait, her blatant overuse was made public. Cochin alludes to these issues of class in his, "Avis aux dames:"

It is well known that rouge is nothing more than the mark of rank or wealth, because it cannot be supposed that anyone has thought to become more beautiful with this terrible crimson patch. It is surprising that such distinction has been attached to a color so common and inexpensive that even the lowliest *grisettes*<sup>163</sup> can make this expenditure as abundantly as a person of the highest birth.<sup>164</sup>

Rouge had therefore slightly lost its distinction as being purely relatable to the elite aristocracy. However, Marsollier strengthens this association with the accoutrement that surrounds her and her daughter.

In addition to the passive luxurious objects found on the vanity table, Marsollier's young daughter holds an ornate gilt accessory box filled with feathers and plumes, one of which her mother places in her hair. Nattier allows his viewers to catch an active moment of the *toilette* preparations. The two figures are not simply just posing for their likeness to be captured, as was seen in his water nymph and Diana portrait types, but

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samedi 17. – Il mourut il y a quelques jours à Paris une Mme Marsolier, fille de M le Leu, procureur du Roi des domaines et bois; elle etoit fort connue par sa beauté.”

<sup>163</sup> The word *grisette* is used in reference to the French working-class woman. It derives from *gris*, the French word for grey, and refers to the cheap fabric of the dresses these women originally wore.

<sup>164</sup> Cochin, "Avis aux dames," in *Recueil de quelques pièces concernant les arts : extraites de plusieurs Mercuries de France*, 49. "On sait assez que le rouge n'est que la marque du rang ou de l'opulence; car on ne peut pas supposer que personne ait cru s'embellir avec cette effroyable tache cramoisie. Il est étonnant qu'on ait attaché cette distinction a une couleur qui est si commune et à si bon marche, que les plus petites grisettes pourroient faire cette dépense aussi abondamment qu'une personne de la plus haute naissance.”

more interestingly, Marsollier attentively looks over her right shoulder into the table-top mirror as she busily tends to her daughter's hair. Her daughter, though less engaged, carefully holds open the ornate accessory box resting on her mother's lap, from which her mother seems to be choosing items. But let us take a closer look at not only the accoutrements that complement the figures, but also the space they inhabit. One aspect that was a constant throughout Nattier's career was his known manipulation of the physiognomy of his sitters. This manipulation or 'beautification' as it was seen, was not just relegated to the rouge of a cheek or pearly complexion but often spilled into the spaces in which his sitters inhabited.

Both Madame Marsollier and her daughter sit enveloped in a bountiful sea of fabric, most likely a combination of satins. The satin that falls over Madame Marsollier's left shoulder billows onto the vanity table and visually seems to vanish behind the mirror, continuing its serpentine form upward, eventually hanging over the two figures. Following the now stiff folds of Prussian blue fabric, two gold tassels hang in valence, suggesting that this space can be opened and closed to the public eye. Just below one is brought to the pilaster of the loggia and interestingly our attention is brought to a faint sculptural relief over the niche. While it is not positively identifiable, there have been speculations that it may represent the crowning of Psyche, who lived, of course, with Cupid in a magnificent palace.<sup>165</sup> The inclusion of such a motif could not have been created unconsciously, thus, with this reading there are several connections that can be made between Madame Marsollier and Psyche. As is known, upon hearing that Cupid

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<sup>165</sup> Posner, 96. Information found in endnote. Speculation made by K. Baetjer, in D. Sutton, *Treasures from the Metropolitan Museum* (Yokohama, 1989).

had fallen in love with Psyche, Venus placed a curse on Psyche that prevents her from meeting a suitable husband. Coincidentally, Marsollier, while married to a fairly wealthy merchant, finds her husband's profession an offense to her dignity and henceforth takes it upon herself to conceal this. In a way, Marsollier may have considered herself cursed in the same way as Psyche in her inability to find a suitable husband, who would have brought her the social dignity and rank she hoped for. Marsollier, like Psyche, is admired for her beauty as duc de Luynes documented in his memoirs. Psyche's beauty, which is praised and admired by all, is nonetheless futile, as no one desired her as a wife causing her parents to consult an oracle, which marks the event of the fable. This 'wasted beauty' may have also been related to the undeniable beauty that Marsollier possessed, though again her social position may have been regarded as a deterrent to any interest that may have been found within the aristocracy or nobility. Despite her beauty, she was not desired as a wife to all.

Pointedly, this ostentatious show of material wealth served the purpose of Marsollier's commissioning of the portrait, creating a false sense of grandeur and importance that would, as she hoped, be associated with her and her daughter. This association with the aristocracy was created not only in the sheer expense of the space, which was unlikely a depiction of her home, let alone a real location, but through her association with Psyche—an association that would have been reserved for the elite. Nattier does not depict her as a goddess or allegory of nature per se, but this connection to Psyche speaks volumes in relation to Marsollier's social position. Like Psyche, Marsollier is but a simple 'mortal' who takes on all obstacles in order to inhabit the world

of the ‘gods’ (elite). Though one knows that Marsollier’s story does not end as favorably as Psyche’s, she is left with one beautiful daughter, similar to Cupid and Psyche’s daughter Voluptas.

The theme of the *toilette* was not one to be typically used in conjunction with the merchant class. To clarify, the luxury of this particular *toilette* would have been a space solely reserved to high society, as mentioned previously. The space signified not only the wealth of the user through the level of richness it possessed, but was also associated with the attitude and routine of an aristocratic woman. Women of this position, referred to as women *de bon ton* (fig 45, 46) would typically rise late in the morning and spend most of their day at their toilette *en négligé*, continuously receiving guests and officials throughout the day.<sup>166</sup> Receiving visitors in such a state of undress would not have been uncommon; as such display was seen in terms of the dress code afforded to a superior status. As Posner points out, both Marsollier and her daughter are depicted in this state of undress, thus exhibiting the manners of that social class she felt she belonged to.<sup>167</sup> Both figures seem to leisurely experiment in their various beautifications leading us to believe that Madame Marsollier spent her days in the very same ways as did the women *de bon temps*.

As opposed to Chardin’s *Morning Toilette* (fig 47), where a mother hurries to adjust her daughter’s bonnet as they leave for morning mass, one is not met with same sense of urgency seen Nattier’s piece. This modest *bourgeois* mother and daughter do

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 136. *De bon ton* translated from French, meaning of good taste or fashionable. This may have also been a play on words as *de bon ton* similarly sounds, when spoken, like the words *de bon temps* meaning of good time, or good time.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 136.

not have the time to luxuriate in the leisurely pleasures of the *toilette*. A special importance on vanity and appearances becomes apparent in Nattier's *toilette* scene. Unlike the Chardin, in which the mother is wholly concerned in her task, leaving her daughter to admire her appearance, Marsollier in opposition is the one who gazes into the mirror in Nattier's painting. She seems to look at the reflection, of what would be the profile view of her daughter, in an effort to establish whether the umber plum or yellow sprig of flowers would better suite her appearance. La Font de St. Yenne appropriately relates this vanity to the artifice in his statement saying, "[Vanity] whose hold on us is even more powerful than that of fashion, has had the skill to present to the eyes, and especially to those of the ladies, mirrors of themselves all the more enchanting in that they are less true."<sup>168</sup> Thus Marsollier looks not only at her daughter's reflection but also her own, in the realization of the image that she has created for herself which will inevitably 'reflect' on her daughter.

Portraits during the eighteenth century had become increasingly seen as a cultural practice and effigy. By having sat for Nattier, a fashionable portraitist of the time, Madame Marsollier knowingly entered the elite discourse of self-consciousness, a socially prestigious realm where she manipulated her image.<sup>169</sup> But the intended acceptance of this piece as a realistic portrayal for both her and her daughter seems to

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<sup>168</sup> Nicholson, 58. Also see La Font de St. Yenne, *Reflexions*, 24. "Et en effet, quel spectacle est comparable, pour une beauté réelle ou imaginaire, a celui de se voir éternellement avec les grâces et la coupe de Hébé la Déesse de la jeunesse ? d'étaler tous les jours sous l'habit de Flore les charmes naissans du Printems dont elle est l'image ? ou bien parée des attributs de la Déesse des forets, un carquois sur le dos, les cheveux agites avec grâce, un trait à la main, comment ne se pas croire la rivale de ce Dieu charmant qui blesse tous les cœurs?"

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

conflict with typical portraiture. If the piece in fact did not have any ties to the *portrait déguisé*, or allegorical genre, it would still be difficult to justify the apparent overt exposure of both figures, even if associated with the women *de bon ton*. As has not been seen thus far, even with the depiction of sitter in the guise of water nymphs or Diana, such exposure is not seen.

The ‘duchess’ and her daughter are both depicted in a suggestive off the shoulder *chemise*, low enough reveal a bare breast. If indeed there were no associations meant to be made with the allegorical, one can only then assume that Madame Marsollier took being *en négligé* to an extreme, making it clear that she was of superior social standing according to the *ancien régime* dress code concerning the *négligé* and a *négligé malpropre*, which would have been seen as vulgar for their social rank.<sup>170</sup> Intentional or not, the abundant silk, which reflect Nattier’s signature use of silvery blues and greys that flow between both figures, may have also realistically pointed to her husband’s profession and wealth as a silk merchant. Though, this point would not have been made too overt, as Marsollier was particularly interested in distancing herself from her merchant-class origins. This possible distorted distinction between the extravagant opulence she seems to possess as an ‘aristocrat,’ with that of the physical materials to

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<sup>170</sup> Pierre Marivaux, *Le Spectateur Français*, 1721-24 (Paris, Editions Bossard, 1921), 193. Writer and playwright Pierre Marivaux (1688-1763) used the literary device describing his narrator as having called too early one morning at the home of a particularly beautiful woman who was deeply embarrassed and ashamed because she had not yet applied her make-up and was in an extreme state of undress (‘dans un négligé des plus négligés, tranchons le mot, dans un négligé malpropre’—wordplay that emphasizes the thin line between unkemptness and indecency or vulgarity).



which her husband made his modest fortune, may have served as a visual pun to what was true and what was fabricated.

With many of Nattier's portraits, the use of pearls and flowers are abundant and Marsollier and her daughter are no exception, as they are both beautified by the same adornment. Pearls are found on her daughter, seen in her hair and at the gathering of her dress at her décolletage. On Marsollier, one sees pearls wrapped around her waist. In comparing the dress of both figures, it becomes clear that Madame Marsollier and her daughter are also dressed in similar *sous-vêtement* style pearl-white gowns seen in both his water nymph and Diana portrait types. The 'duchesse' saw the potential gain in mimicking these young, elite women. The placement of the blue satin textile serves more than the simple display of wealth; it serves as a visual connection between mother and daughter.

With his famous 1762 treatise on education entitled, *Émile*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) brought the issue of eighteenth-century childhood, particularly child rearing, to the forefront of readership focusing on the system of education. Rousseau tackled issues surrounding the relationship between individual and society. He forcefully rejected original sin and replaced it with original 'innocence.' In dealing with the system of education, he describes how exactly one would go about raising a child to be an ideal citizen and while his writings were not a detailed parenting guide, they served to change the notions of childhood and the definitions that had previously prevailed,

focusing on an education based on the purity and goodness of nature rather than by the corrupting influences of civilization.<sup>171</sup>

These changes from the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth-century's notions and prejudices toward children began to evolve even before Rousseau, with the writings of John Locke (1632-1704) and François Fénelon (1651-1715).<sup>172</sup> Both contributed to the belief of the power of education and how it assured the structures of civilization. Their exclusive dissertations were directed toward aristocratic families and later became widely disseminated manuals for the growing merchant class. They rejected the widespread belief that children were, "simply, imbecilic creatures who need [ed] to be amused with frivolous pastimes."<sup>173</sup> They saw children, for the first time, as possessing a unique status of their own.

While Rousseau's writings would have been read thirteen years after Nattier's piece, the bourgeoisie and aristocracy would have been well aware of Locke and Fénelon's philosophical writings on the subject. Children prior to this movement had historically been portrayed in paintings as simple miniature representation of adults, lacking any unique qualities that would suggest their actual age. As Dorothy Johnson points out, a child's body would have been manipulated and constrained in the same way an adult male or female's would have been. "...[S]waddling clothes and the corset were still prescribed to constrain and control the puny and disturbingly animal-like-body of the

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<sup>171</sup> Dorothy Johnson, "Picturing pedagogy: Education and the Child in the Paintings of Chardin," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 24, no. 1 (October 1, 1990), 48.

<sup>172</sup> Referring to Fénelon *De l'éducation des Filles* (1687) and Locke's *De l'éducation des enfants* (1695).

<sup>173</sup> Johnson, 50.

infant, and later, clumsy and uncoordinated figure of the child.”<sup>174</sup> One sees this constrained adult-like child in Watteau’s *Iris* (fig 48) where a group of charming children are engaged in playing music and dancing. Each child’s stance, pose, and manner strangely resemble that of proper men and women. The young boys sit and converse in a *sage* manner. Even the dog that lies near the flower-filled urn remains quiet and composed.

One comparison to the Marsollier portrait may be a portrait by Largillière of *Madame Aubrey and her son Leonor* (fig 49). Her son, who stands gesturing with his left arm out, palm open, holds a sprig of flowers with his right. He is dressed in a corset, like his mother, a custom beginning in the sixteenth century,<sup>175</sup> and according to Johnson, his gesticulation resembles the figure of his mother.<sup>176</sup> Madame Marsollier’s daughter, while still visually mimicking her mother, also exhibits a slight individualization in her manner and clothing. Girls typically dressed like little women as soon as they came out of their swaddling clothes.<sup>177</sup> This imitation in feminine dress is evident in the Nattier’s piece as both figures wear the same white *robe*, though Marsollier’s daughter is depicted with the added gold satin that drapes across her left shoulder. She also directly gazes at the viewer as opposed to her mother and does not seem to echo her mother’s gesture at all.

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid., Popular notions of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-centuries. Gabriel du Pac de Bellegarde, *Maximes* (Paris, 1718), 316.

<sup>175</sup> Pilippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: Social History of Family Life* (A Vintage Giant; V-286. New York: Vintage Books, 1965), 51. “This is the dress [dressing like their young sisters] of the youngest boys; it had become customary in the sixteenth century to clothe them like girls, who for their part went on dressing like grown women. The distinction between child and adult still did not exist in the case of women.”

<sup>176</sup> Johnson, 53.

<sup>177</sup> Ariès, 53.

One may posit that this delineation from the typical depiction of the mimicking child comes with the age of Marsollier's daughter. While her age is unknown, one may infer that she is no longer a 'child' and may in fact be of adolescent age. During the Middle Ages, calendars depicted the adolescents who had reached the age of love, with the adornment of flowers and leaves.<sup>178</sup> This arrival in age may be referenced through the sprig of flowers Marsollier holds. Thus, her daughter maintains a connection with her, but also begins to display signs of the individuality of a young woman.

Perhaps more fitting is the comparison of one of Nattier's earlier portraits featuring a very similar interaction of mother and daughter in *Portrait présumé de Marie-Thérèse-Catherine Crozat, marquise du Châtel, et de sa fille Antoinette-Eustachie* (fig 10). The compositional scheme is almost identical as both women place flowers in their daughter's hair, and both children are positioned just next to their mother's thigh. However the portrait of Crozat and her daughter place the two figures within a similar natural space seen in Nattier's other mythological and allegorical portraits. Here Crozat dressed in a combination of rose and pearl colored fabrics, wears a black lace ribbon around her neck. Just at her bust, one can faintly make out a diamond broche and a string of pearls that lay over her right shoulder. She carefully places a rose flower bud in Antoinette's hair. Antoinette leans against her mother with a similar pearl-white draped robe, her left hand filled with various flowers and her right delicately holds a sprig of blue flowers, much like the ones seen in the Marsollier portrait. One notices that both figures are rouged, though not nearly as heavily as Marsollier and her daughter.

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 78.

Curiously, Antoinette's robe also falls over her right shoulder revealing her right breast, though comparing the age of both children; it becomes apparent that Antoinette is considerably younger than Marsollier's daughter. Her features are rounder, softer, and her stature is relatively small.

Marie-Thérèse-Catherine Crozat, however, was not of the same class that Marsollier found herself. Her husband was Louis François Crozat (1691-1750), son of the incredibly wealthy private proprietary owner of the French Louisiana from 1712 to 1717, Antoine Crozat (1655-1738). Antoine and his brother rose from obscurity as two of the wealthiest merchants in Paris, and became ennobled as marquis du Châtel with their substantial lending to the French government. Marie-Thérèse-Catherine was daughter to Charles-Antoine de Gouffier, marquis d'Heilly and Catherine-Angelique d'Albert de Luynes (1668-1746), thus marking her incredible financial wealth and noble lineage.<sup>179</sup> The image of noble mother and daughter would have undoubtedly served as an image for Marsollier to emulate. Perhaps Marsollier knew of the the Crozat's family's rise from the class of merchant to immense fortune and wished to align herself with a family she aspired to imitate.

Although with Rousseau, Locke, and Fénelon one sees a change with the individualization of children, there are elements of mimic, as mentioned, which are still present in Nattier's work and may be specifically important to Madame Marsollier. Both figures are seated in their white *robes*, enveloped in the same Prussian blue satin fabric; it falls from behind the duchesses' shoulder, passing over her daughter's lap, onto hers, and

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<sup>179</sup> Salmon, 91. See Salmon's catalogue entry for a complete documentation of the Crozat lineage.

again folding back around, billowing onto the vanity table. An interesting point that Philippe Ariès (1914-1984) makes that may relate to the *toilette* is that during the eighteenth century, “we find those [elements associated with the family unit], together with a new element: concern about hygiene and physical health.”<sup>180</sup> The fabric that envelops both figures also connects them with the *toilette*, not only pointing to what it socially represents but also to the practicality of the space.

While the two are visually tied with one another through color and fabric, they also seem to mimic each other in their posture and the placement of clothing. Madame Marsollier’s left shoulder is draped with the blue satin fabric. Her daughter mimics, with her own left shoulder also being draped, though in gold; both are covered by the same Prussian blue satin. The gold that now seems singular to her daughter is reiterated in the yellow sprig of flowers that she holds delicately in her hand just between the two figures. Madame Marsollier’s *robe* slightly falls revealing her left breast, which is mirrored in the exposed right breast of her daughter. Both figures turn their bodies to each other, though neither one makes eye-contact with the other. With the mirroring and mimicking of body, textile and color, one may then parallel these unlikely coincidences with the theme of the *toilette*. Much like the mirror reflection one sees when looking at oneself or those around them, a reflection is created between mother and daughter. Additionally, they wear the same *coiffure* and rouge. As the viewer sees the reflection created, Marsollier is likely to take notice as she gazes into the mirror which reflects both her and her daughter. This extension of self that is created between mother and daughter, or son as seen in

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 133.

*Madame Aubrey and her son Leonor*, also serves the purpose, much like the work of Chardin in his *Morning Toilette*, as a tool in educating children through watching and emulating. According to Locke and Fénelon, “the young child begins to acquire ideas through sensation and observation.”<sup>181</sup> One observes this in Chardin’s series of *bourgeois* interior portraits, and could apply this same reading to Nattier’s portrait. Rather than displaying the young *naïveté* of the young child’s first encounter with the vanities of the *toilette*, Nattier shows us a maturing young girl who is no longer fascinated with the space of beautification. She is self-assured and is the product of her mother’s tutelage.

As Posner states, Nattier’s painting serves also as an expression of an affectionate, nurturing relationship between mother and daughter that is created through their interaction.<sup>182</sup> This new approach to portraiture featuring mother and child would have been the *goût* of the time, as referring back to the philosophical writings that would have been read by the aristocracy and bourgeoisie, Fénelon’s prescriptions of the family were being played out pictorially in Chardin’s piece and later Nattier’s. As opposed to earlier portraiture of mother and child, seen in Largillière’s *Madame Aubrey and her Son*, this intimacy is lost. A simple delicate hand that rests on her son’s shoulder is the only glimpse the viewer is allowed of the Marquise’s recognition of her child’s presence. Her gaze is fixated on the viewer while she uses her other free hand to caress the dog in the foreground. This motion seems to put the importance of both her son and animal on the same level, where they both become ‘props’ surrounding the Marquise. Madame

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<sup>181</sup> Johnson, 59.

<sup>182</sup> Posner, 136.

Marsollier, in contrast, is more concerned with caring and preparing her daughter as she leaves the viewer with a three-quarter view of her *visage*. This is much like the modest *bourgeois* setting of Chardin's *Morning Toilette*, in which the mother concerns herself with carefully arranging her daughter's bonnet, also leaving the viewer with a partial view of herself. Marsollier remains part of the focus through her sheer stature and placement, but nevertheless artfully brings attention back to her daughter. Though scholars have questioned Madame Marsollier's genuineness in her maternal warmth toward her daughter<sup>183</sup>, it is known from duc de Luynes' account that she "...is survived only by one daughter, who will be very rich."<sup>184</sup> Thus, it is more likely that her daughter was presented as a representation of herself and through the realistic artifice created by Nattier, she would have then possessed the pictorial wealth and status that would enable her to enter the same world of aristocracy her mother had so desperately tried to belong.

Just as portraiture was an obligation of aristocracy rank, which kept record and perpetuated the family prestige, the various patronesses of Nattier's work discussed in this study took into account the benefits of displaying their images within the canon of portrait types exclusive to the aristocracy and members of the elite. In turn, they would perpetuate the simulated prestige with the aid of Nattier's talents in the *portrait déguisé*. Through the artificial association with aristocracy, they attempted to mirror, mimic, and

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 138. Posner questions whether Madame Marsollier "cherished" her daughter stating: "One likes to think that Madame Marsollier cherished her child as warmly as the portrait suggest. But whatever the truth of that, in her picture the duchesse de velours was again asserting that she shared with members of society's elite the current fashion—maternal fashion in this case."

<sup>184</sup> Luynes, *Mémoires Sur La Cour de Louis XV, 1735-58*. Vol. 14., 383. "Mme Marsolier ne laisse qu'une fille qui sera fort riche."



emulate a social rank in which they hoped to become a part of, if not associate themselves with. These sitters took part, in what I refer to as, the *new portrait déguisé* through their manipulation of not only ostensible wealth but references to allegorical and mythological motifs that were collaboratively included connecting them with images belonging to a long history of iconography associated with the elite. Nattier's careful use of reality and artifice create a unique commentary on concepts of identity and the state of social statuses of the time.

## Chapter 5. Conclusion

Several themes have become apparent in my analysis of Nattier's portraits with regard to the paintings themselves, the patrons who commissioned them, and the critics and writers who created the discourse associated with the artist. Interestingly, motifs and iconography, as one has seen, were not simply discarded by their original elite users, but rather continued to be used by both elite and merchant classes. The portrait of Madame Marsollier and her daughter clearly revealed the mixing of classical iconographies associated within the canon of portraiture and those found in Nattier's previous portraits of aristocratic women. What became apparent are the social class tensions that are so poignant in understanding the importance of Nattier's work.

In terms of the traditional narrative of the rococo, Nattier's depiction of the social climate of the time became problematic in that it unarguably shed light on the merchant-class woman's attempt to position herself into particular social strata. Nattier's depictions of these class insecurities did not quite fit into the typical narrative of the eighteenth century. However, artists like Watteau seemed to have been more useful in creating a certain type of history that did not highlight these issues in such overt terms. In Watteau's work, theatre, costume, and class became inextricably ambiguous, while Nattier's work offered viewers a glimpse of the realities of identity, class, and association during that time.

However, Diderot truly acted as the outlier of critics and writers of the early and mid-eighteenth century in his critique of Nattier's work, which subsequent scholars

granted as important. Unfortunately, the weight of Diderot's writings and scholarships that followed, further relegating the artist to the background of history.

Portraiture created by Nattier during the eighteenth century exemplified the ways in which the new merchant class established their presence, power, and authority to equal or to greater levels of that of the aristocracy. Through their appropriation of imagery typically associated with the higher class, the new self-made man, or woman at that, was able to not only visually express the broad shift in social class dominance, but also explore and make use of the visual realm now open to women. Nattier sought the patronage of this rising merchant class because of their ability and means to commission his work. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, the artist created a platform on which his merchant-class female patrons were able to define themselves through the visual image. To the 'true' members of aristocracy, these images came to represent the fragility of class distinction and ultimately just how performative the navigation between the two classes had become.

## Appendix 1. Figures

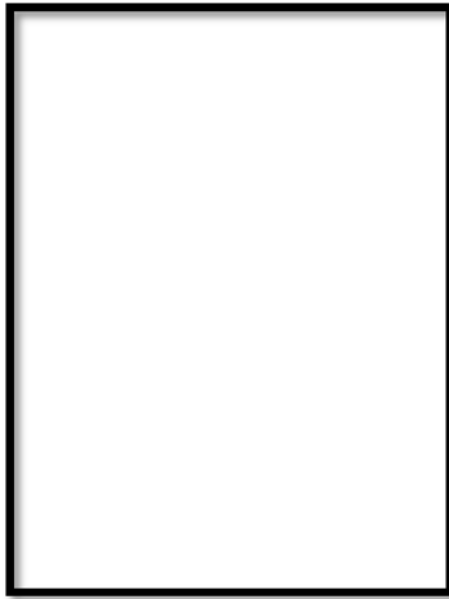


Figure 1

Louis-Michel Van Loo, *Femme en vestale*. Oil on canvas. Montpellier. (Montpellier: musée Fabre) inv. 849-1-1. Reproduced in: Xavier Salmon, *Jean-Marc Nattier* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1999), 25 (Fig. 19).

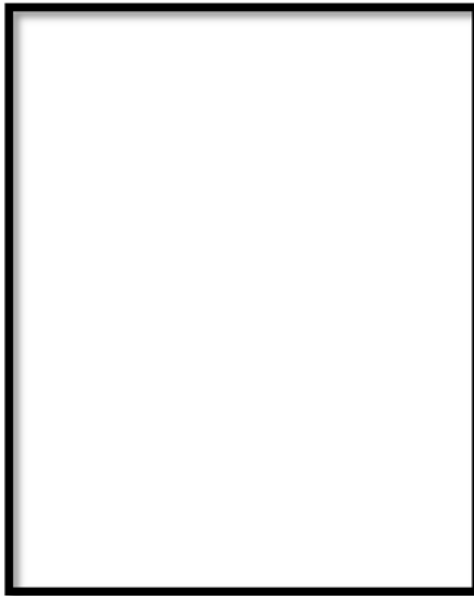


Figure 2

Attributed to Pierre Le Sueur, *Femme en source*. Oil on canvas. 82.5x65cm. Location unknown. Reproduced in: Ibid. (Fig. 20).

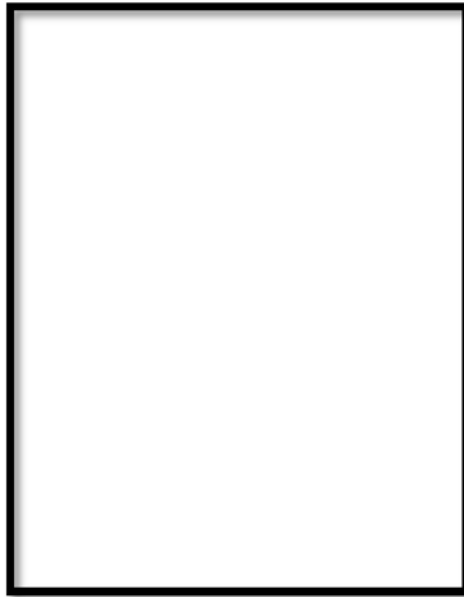


Figure 3

Marianne Loir, *Femme en Hébé*. Oil on canvas. 95x78cm. (Location unknown).  
Reproduced in: Ibid. (Fig. 21).

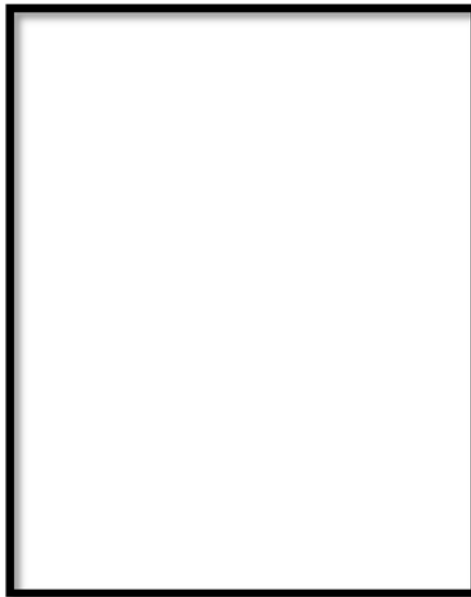


Figure 4

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Marie-Anne de Bourbon, dite Mademoiselle de Clermont, aux eaux minérales de Chantilly*, 1729. Oil on canvas. 195x161. (Chantilly: musée Condé) Inv. 375. Reproduced in: Ibid., 79 (cat. 11).

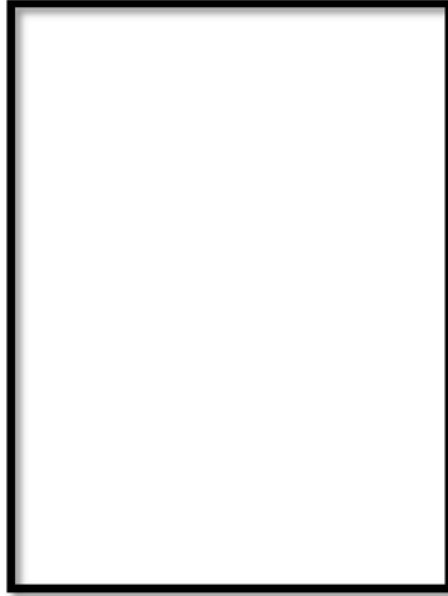


Figure 5

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Elisabeth de Flesselles en Source*, 1747. Oil on canvas. 135.5x103. Signed and dated on the bottom left rock: *Nattier Pinxit/1747*. (Princeton: Princeton University Art Museum) Inv. Acc. N<sup>o</sup> 1964-5. Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 189 (cat.48).



Figure 6

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Madame Victoire incarnant l'Eau*, 1751. Oil on canvas. 106x138. Signed and dated on the bottom right: *Nattier pinxit/1751*. (Sao Paulo, Museu de Arte de Sao Paulo Assis Chateaubriand). Inv. 47 to 50. Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 229 (cat.64).

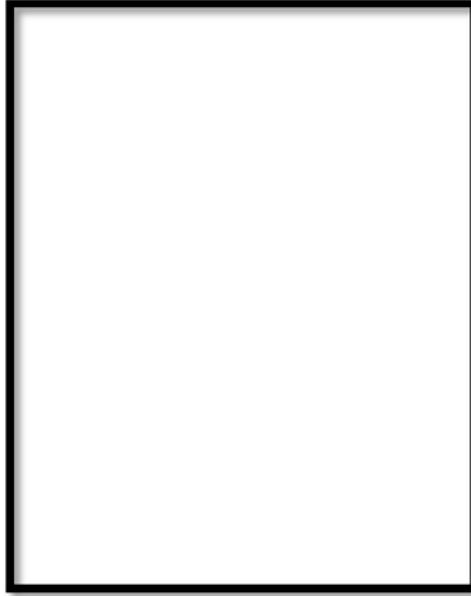


Figure 7

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Carlotta Frederika Sparre en nymphe de Diane*, 1741. Oil on canvas. 64x53. Signed and dated on the right, above the left shoulder: *Nattier p.x./1741*. (Dublin, The National Gallery of Ireland). Inv.1646. Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 143 (cat.32).



Figure 8

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Constance Gabrielle Magdeleine Bonnier de La Mosson sous les traits de Diane*, 1742. Oil on canvas. 128.9x96.5. Signed and dated on the bottom left: *Nattier p.x./1742*. (Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum) Inv.77. PA 87. Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 35 (cat.35).

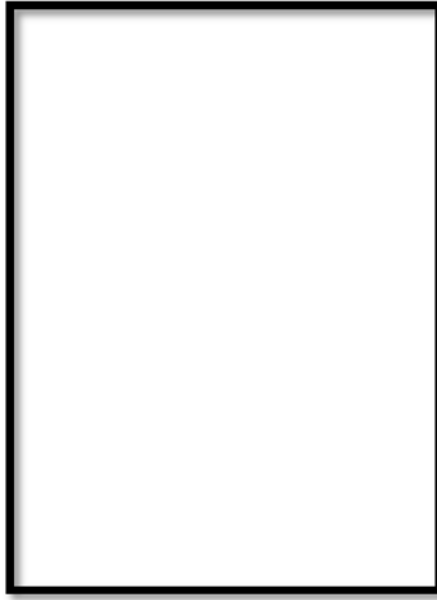


Figure 9

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Madame de Maison-Rouge sous les traits de Diane*, 1756. Oil on canvas. 136.5x105.1cm. Signed and dated on the bottom right: *Nattier pinxit/1756*. (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Inv. 03.37.3. Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 268 (cat. 76).

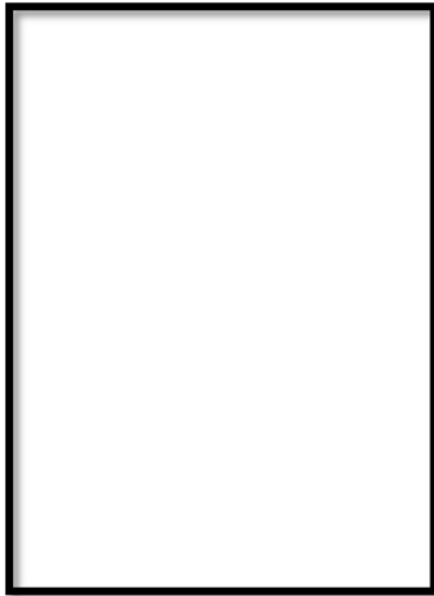


Figure 10

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Portrait présumé de Marie-Thérèse-Catherine Crozat, marquise du Chatel, et de sa fille Antoinette-Eustachie*, 1733. Oil on canvas. 138x105.5. Signed and



dated on the bottom right : *Nattier pinx./ 1733*. (Indianapolis, Indianapolis Museum of Art). Inv. 72.132. Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 92 (cat. 15).

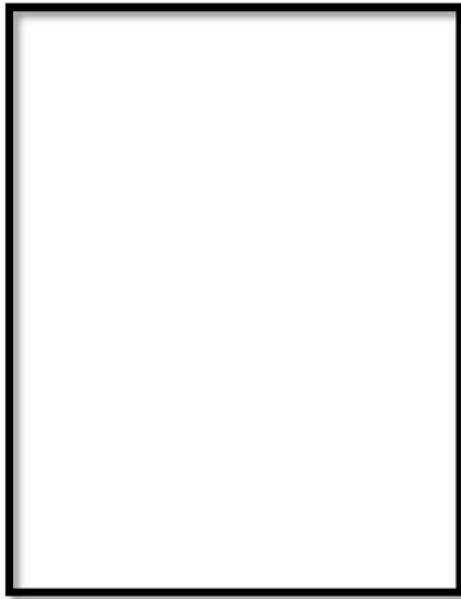


Figure 11

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Madame Marsollier et sa fille*, 1749. Oil on canvas. 146.1x114.3. Signed and dated on the pilaster on the right: *Nattier pinxit/1749*. (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Inv. 45-172. Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 205 (cat.54).



Figure 12

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Une Vestale*, 1759. Oil on canvas, 115.6 x 135.9cm. Signed and dated *Nattier pinx./1759*. (Raleigh, The North Carolina Museum of Art). Inv.52.9.130. Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 287 (cat.84).

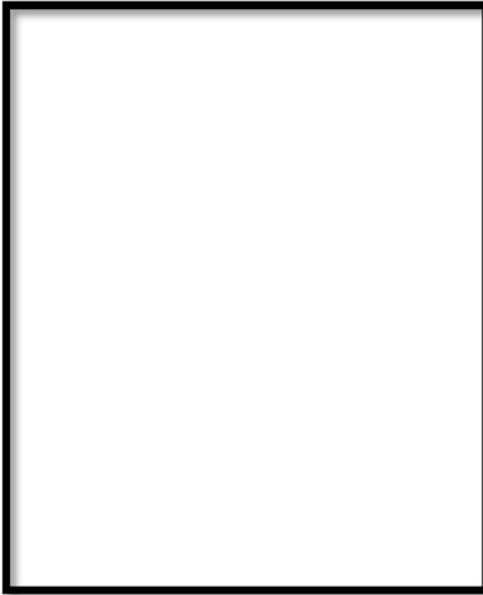


Figure 13

Maurice Quentin de La Tour, *Portrait of Prosper Jolyot de Cr billon*, 1761-1770. Pastel on paper laid down on canvas. 45.9x37.6cm. (private collection). Reproduced in: Christie's online: <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/drawings-watercolors/maurice-quentin-de-la-tour-portrait-of-5287591-details.aspx>

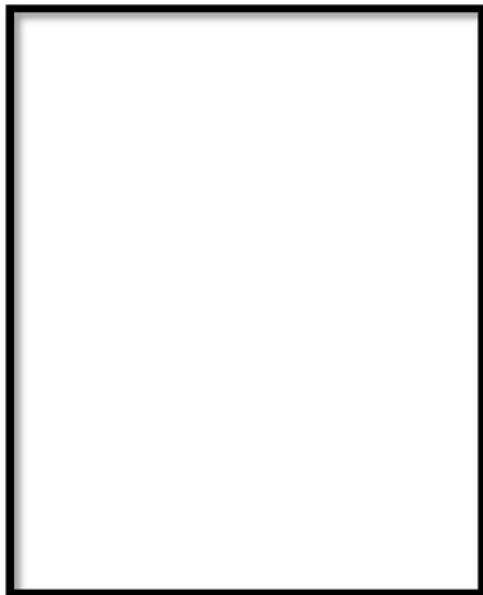


Figure 14

Maurice-Quentin de La Tour, *Pierre-Louis Laideguive*, c. 1761. Pastel on coloured paper and canvas. 947x763mm. (Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya). Acc: 065009-000.

Reproduced in: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maurice-Quentin\\_de\\_La\\_Tour\\_-\\_Pierre-Louis\\_Laideguive\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maurice-Quentin_de_La_Tour_-_Pierre-Louis_Laideguive_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

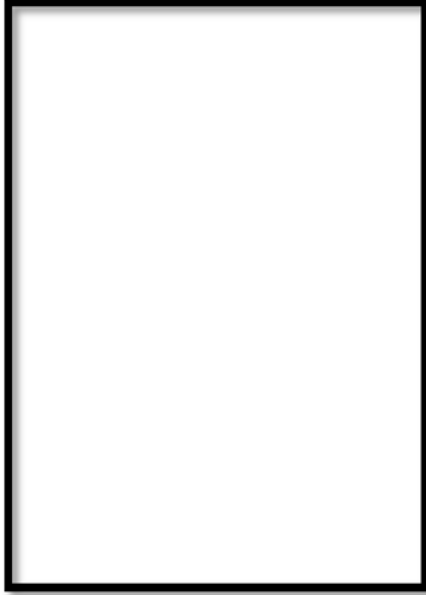


Figure 15

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Madame Infante en habit de chasse*, 1760. Oil on canvas. 140.2x107cm. Signed and dated under the hunting horn to the left : *J.M. Nattier/1760*. (Versailles, musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon). Inv. MV 3875.

Reproduced in: Salmon, 289 (cat.85).

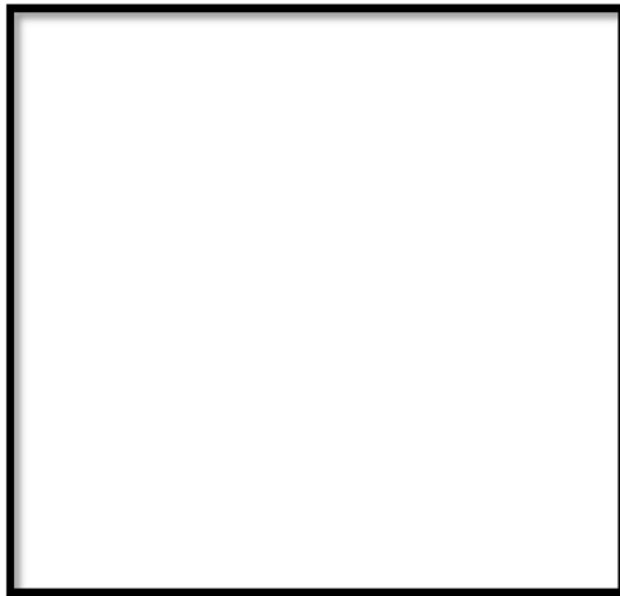


Figure 16

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Jean-Marc Nattier et sa famille*, 1730-1762. Oil on canvas. 142.5x163cm. Inscription on the case of the keyboard to the write : *Tableau de lattelier de M./Jean-Marc Nattier trésorier/de Lacademie Royale de Peinture/et de Sculpture/commence en 1730. Et fini/par Le dit S. en 1762* (Versailles, musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon). Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 294 (cat.87).

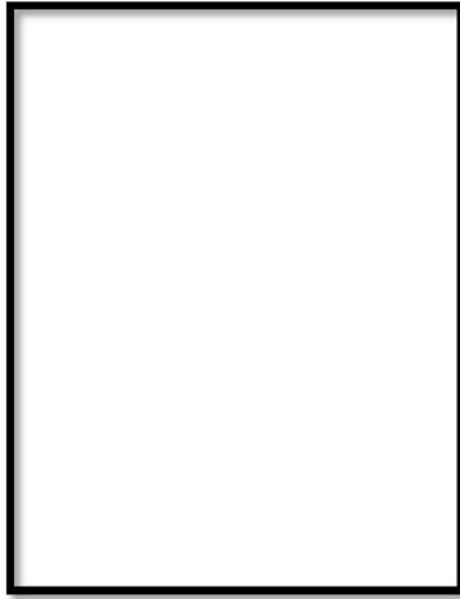


Figure 17

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Madame Le Fevre de Caumartin as Héb e*, 1753. Oil on canvas, 102.5x81.5cm. (Washington DC :National Gallery of Art). Inv. 1946.7.13. Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 11 (fig.2).



Figure 18

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Persée, assiste par Minerve, pétrifie Phinée et ses compagnons en leur présentant la tête de Méduse*, 1718. Oil on canvas, 113.5 c 146 cm. (Tours, musée des Beaux-Arts). Inv 803.1.17. Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 65 (cat.6).

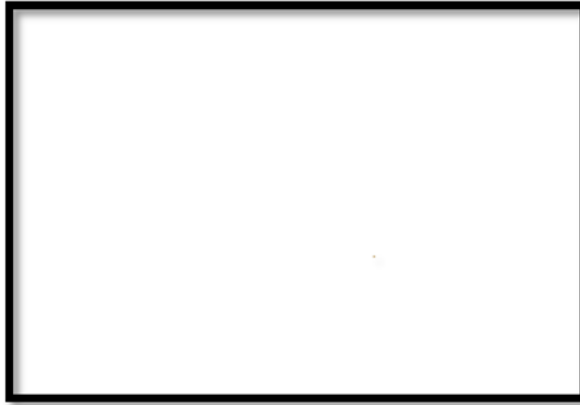


Figure 19

Jean-Antoine Watteau. *Pilgrimage to the Isle of Cythera*, 1717. Oil on canvas. 129x194cm. (Musée du Louvre, Paris). Inv. 8525. Reproduced from: ARTstor [online] ID Number : 40-11-01/19.



Figure 20

Jean-Antoine Watteau. *L'Enseigne de Gersaint*, 1720-1. Oil on canvas. 64 x 121in. 163x308cm. (Charlottenburg Palace, Berlin). Reproduced from: ARTstor [online] ID Number: 40-11-05/15.



Figure 21

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Jacques Fitz-James, duc de Berwick*, 1723. Oil on canvas. 274x357cm. Signed and dated on the bottom left fabric: *Nattier P.x. MDCCXXIII*. (Paris, muse des Art décoratifs). Inv. GR 833. Reproduced in: Salmon,72 (cat.8).

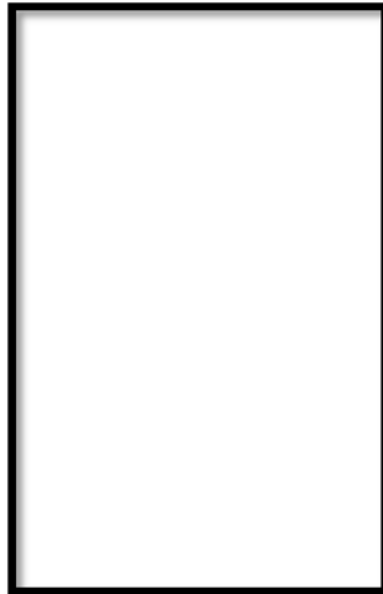


Figure 22

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Le Comte Maurice de Saxe*, 1720. Oil on canvas. 257x172cm. Signed and dated no the bottom left : *peint a paris par Nattier le jeune en 172[0]*. (Dresde, Staatliche Kunstsammlung, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister). Inv.783. Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 68 (cat.7).

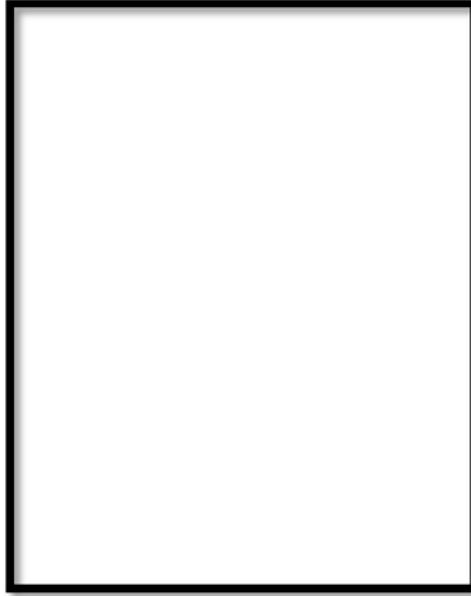


Figure 23

Jean-George Vibert, *In the Image of the Emopperor*, late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Reproduced in: Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991), 84 (fig.33).



Figure 24

Joshua Reynolds, *Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse*, 1784. Oil on canvas, 240x 148cm, (San Marino, California Huntington Art Gallery). Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 86 (fig.34).

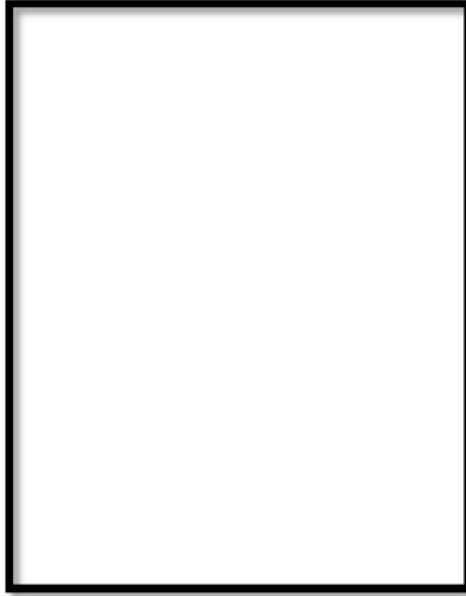


Figure 25

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Portrait présumé de Marie-Anne Comasse*, 1755. Oil on canvas, 80x63.5cm. Signed and dated on the tree trunk to the left : *Nattier/fecit. 1755*. (German, Private Collection). Reproduced in: Salmon, 261 (cat.74).

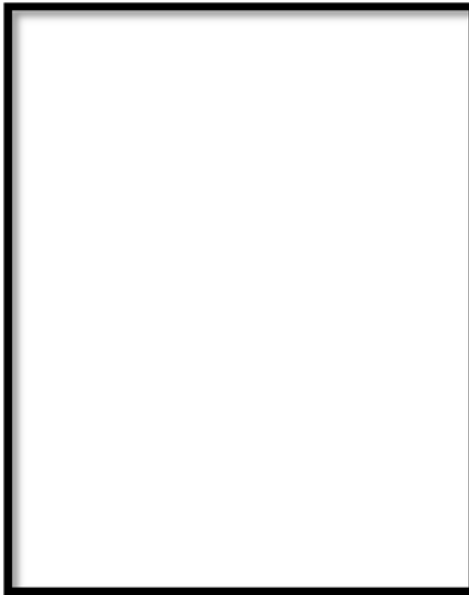


Figure 26

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Madame Duplex de Bacquencourt, née Jeanne-Henriette de Lalleu*, 1735. Oil on canvas, 82.6x65.7. Signed and dated on the bottom right : *Nattier Pinxit/1735*. (Private Collection). Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 95 (cat.16).



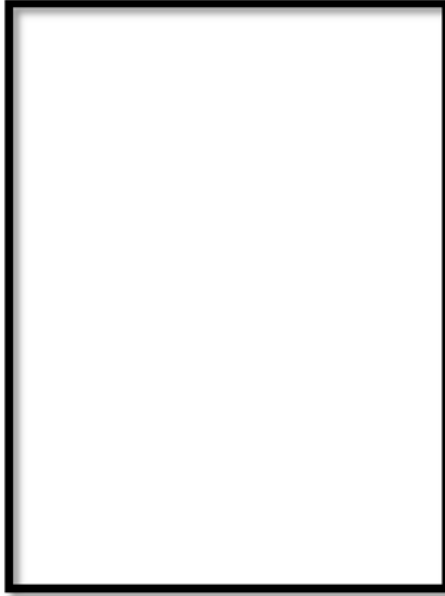


Figure 27

Jean-Marc Nattier, *madame de Maison-Rouge sous la figure de Venus attelant des colombes a son char*, 1757. 123x97. Signed and dated on the bottom left: *Nattier pinxit./1757*. (Los Angeles, Lynda and Steward Resnick collection). Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 269 (cat.77).

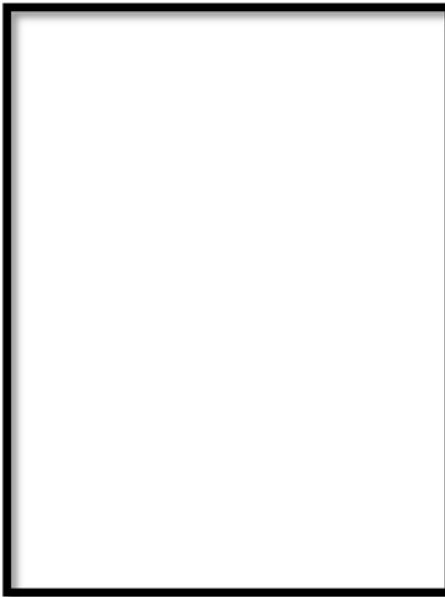


Figure 28

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Jean-Baptiste Le Gobien, seigneur de Saint-Jouan*, 1724. Oil on canvas. 138.5x 105 cm. (Canada : Private Collection). Signed and dated on the bottom-left : *Nattier le Jeune 1724*. Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 75 (cat.9).

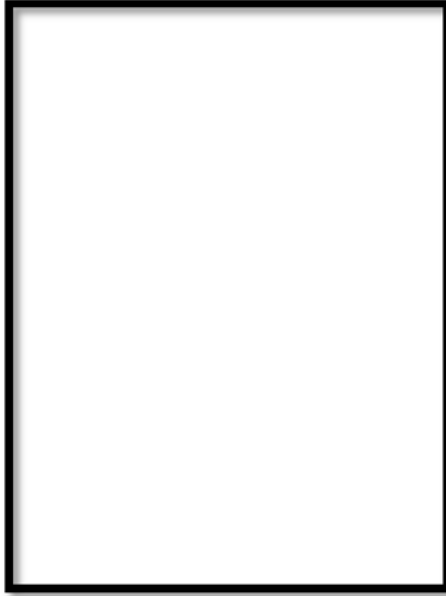


Figure 29

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Alexandre Borisovitch Kourakine*, 1728. Oil on canvas. 131 x 107cm (Saint Petersburg, musée de l'Ermitage) inv. 5633. Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 77 (cat.10).

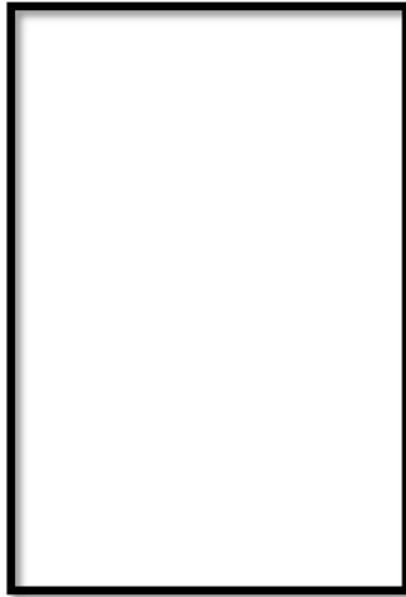


Figure 30

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Jeune Femme en source*. Oil on canvas. 195 x 130. (Location unknown). Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 81 (fig.3).

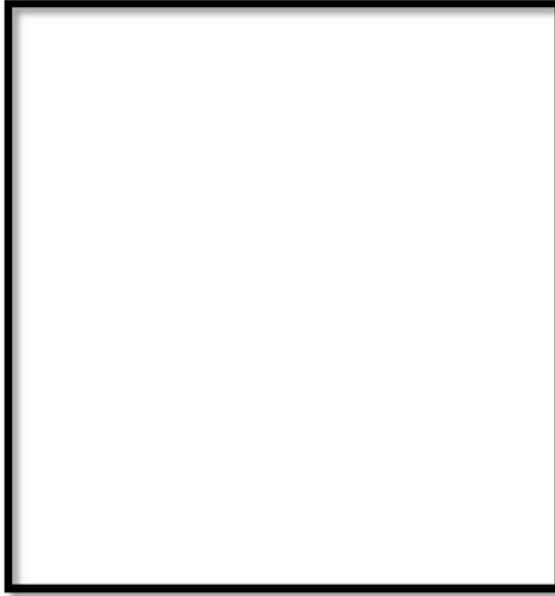


Figure 31

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Mademoiselle de Clermont au bain*, 1733. Oil on canvas. 109 x 104.5cm. Signed and dated in the middle : *Nattier pinxit. 1733*. (London: Wallace Collection), inv. P. 456. Reproduced in: *Ibid.*, 81 (fig.4).



Figure 32

Unkown, *Rape of Proserpina*, c. 1680-1710, Brussels. (Unknown location). Reproduced from: ARTstor [online] ID Number: 1485/web 306244.



Figure 33

Peter Paul Rubens, *The Judgement of Paris*, c. 1597-9. Oil on Oak. 133.9 x 174.5 cm. (London: The National Gallery). Reproduced from: Ibid., ID Number: NG6379.



Figure 34

Jean-François de Troy, *Pan and Syrinx*, 1720. Oil on canvas. 106 x 139cm. (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art). Reproduced from: Ibid., ID Number: CMA\_.1973.212.



Figure 35

Jean –Francois de Troy, *Pan and Syrinx*, 1722-1724. Oil on canvas. (The J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center). Reproduced from: Ibid., ID Number: 84.PA.45.



Figure 36

Jean-Francois de Troy, *Diana and Her Nymphs Bathing*, 1722-1724. Oil on canvas. (The J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center). Reproduced from: Ibid., ID Number: 84.PA.44.

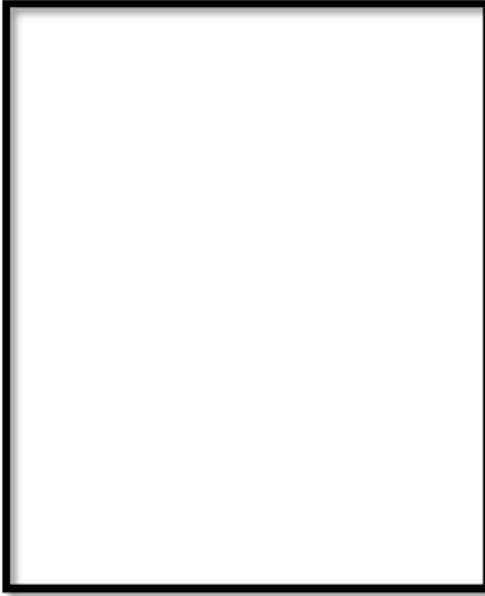


Figure 37

Nicolas de Largilliere, *Portrait de dame en source, dit autre fois La princesse Palatine*, late 17th century. Oil on canvas. 65x54cm. (Chantilly : musée Condé). Inv. PE 331. Reproduced from: Les Collection du musée Condé Online: <http://www.musee-conde.fr/>.

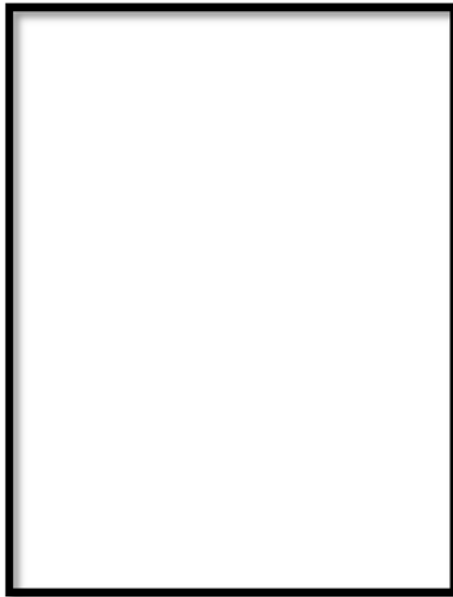


Figure 38

Nicolas de Largilliere, *Portrait de Marianne de Mahony*. Oil on canvas. (Private collection). Reproduced from: Art Renewal Online: <http://www.artrenewal.org/pages/artwork.php?artworkid=17553&size=large>.

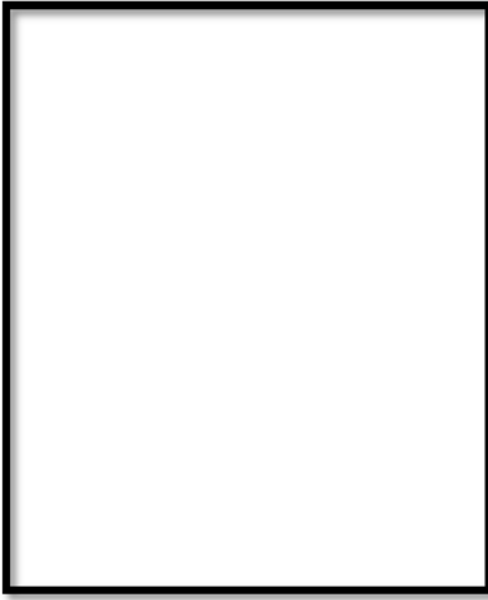


Figure 39

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Etude du visage de Marie-Joséphe de Saxe*, 1750. Oil on canvas. 60 x 50cm. (Bordeaux : musée des Beaux-Arts) Inv. BX E 697. Reproduced in: Salmon, 217 (fig. 59).

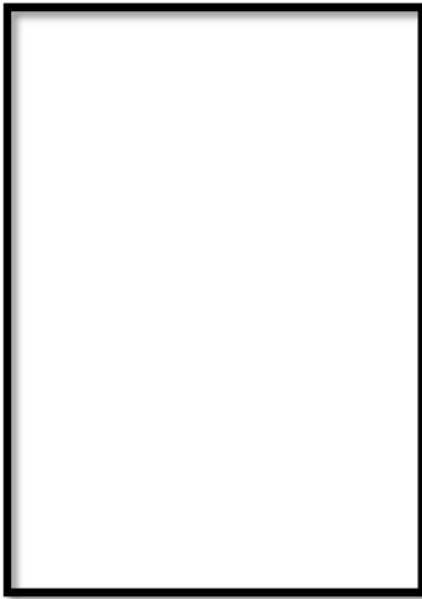


Figure 40

Lucas Crancach the Elder, *Apollo and Diana in a Wooded Landscape*, ca. 1524, 1526-27. Oil on beech wood. 51.8 x 363.6cm. (Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin). Reproduced from: ARTstor [online] ID Number: 42299.



Figure 41

Giuseppe Cesari, called Cavalier d'Arpino, *Diana and Actaeon*, 1600-1601. Oil on wood, 47.5 x 66cm. (Paris: musée du Louvre). Ibid., ID Number: 40-08-07/13.

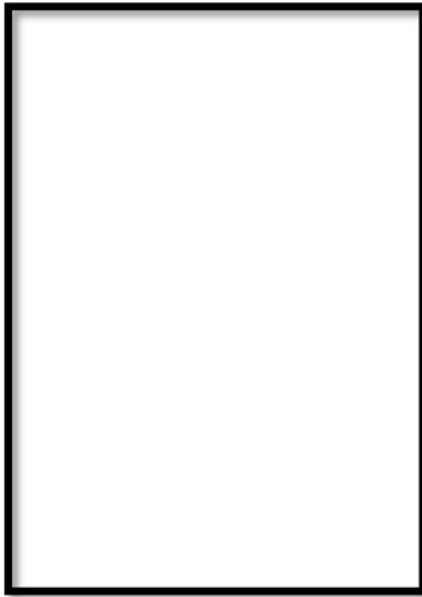


Figure 42

Ambroise Dubois, *Gabrielle d'Estrees as Diana the Huntress*, 1590. (Château Chenonceaux –Salle François 1er). Reproduced from: Reinette:Allegorical Portraits [Sunday, 8 April 2012] online: <http://jeannedepompadour.blogspot.com/2012/04/portraits-first-portraits-of.html>.





Figure 43

Jean-François de Troy, *Diana Surprised by Actaeon*, 1734. Oil on Canvas. 129 x 193cm. (musée du Louvre Paris). Reproduced from: ARTstor [online] ARTstore Slide Gallery.

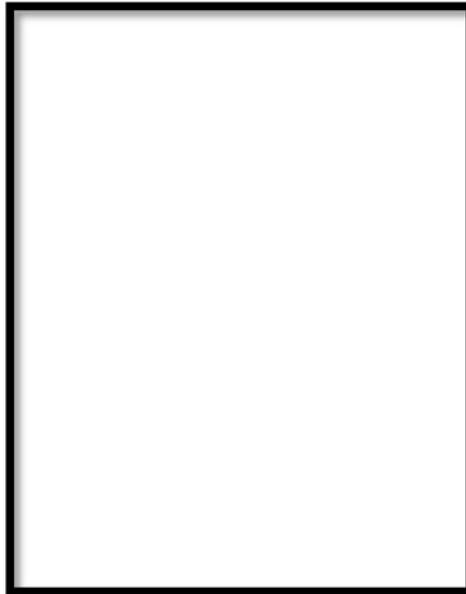


Figure 44

François Boucher, *Madame de Pompadour at her toilette*, 1758. Oil on canvas. 81.25x64.9cm. (Cambridge: Fogg Museum, Harvard Art Museums). Reproduced from: Ibid., ID Number: 204303.

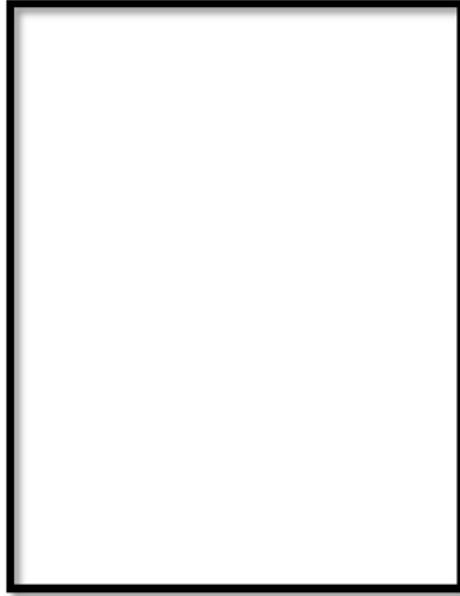


Figure 45

After Pierre-Antoine Baudouin, *A Woman at Her Toilette*, 1765. Gauche, etching and engraving by Nicholas Ponce, 1771. Reproduced from: Fashioning the Past online [Saturday, 28 April 2012]: <http://www.fashioningthepast.com/2012/04/inside-toilette-lacing-corset.html>.

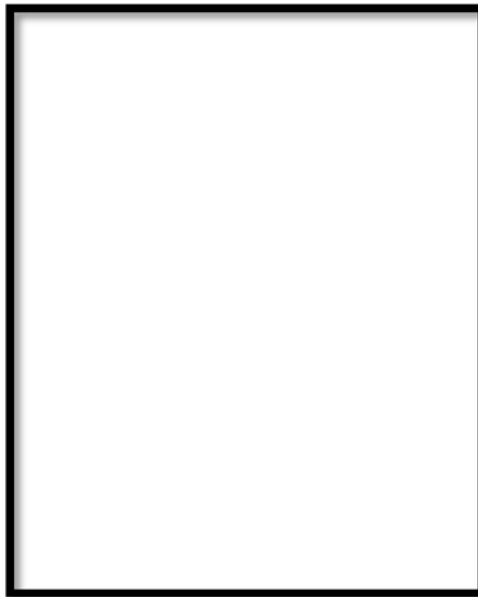


Figure 46

Nicolas de Largillierre, *Portrait of a Woman at Her Toilette*, ca. 1695-1700. Oil on canvas. 158.8x127.4cm. (St. Louis: St. Louis Art Museum). Reproduced from: ARTstor [online] ARTstor Slide Gallery.

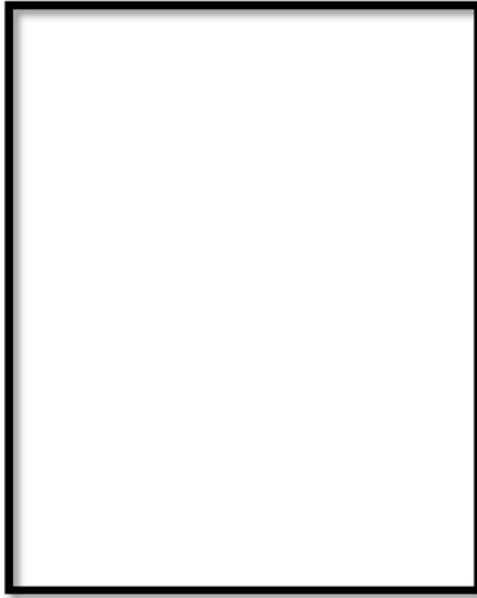


Figure 47

Jean Baptiste Siméon, *Morning Toilet*, 1741. Oil on canvas. 49x39cm. (Nationalmuseum, Stockholm). Reproduced from: Ibid., ARTstor Slide Gallery.



Figure 48

Jean-Antoine Watteau, *Iris*, ca. 1719-20. Oil on canvas. 166x97cm. (Gemaldegalerie, Berlin, Germany). Reproduced from: Aparences online: <http://www.aparences.net/periodes/rococo/jean-antoine-watteau/>.

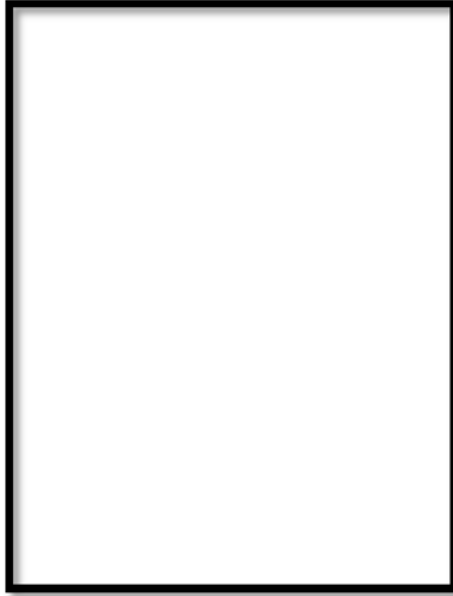
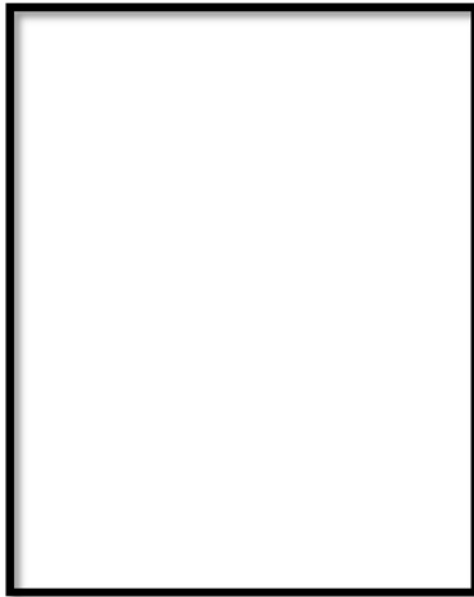


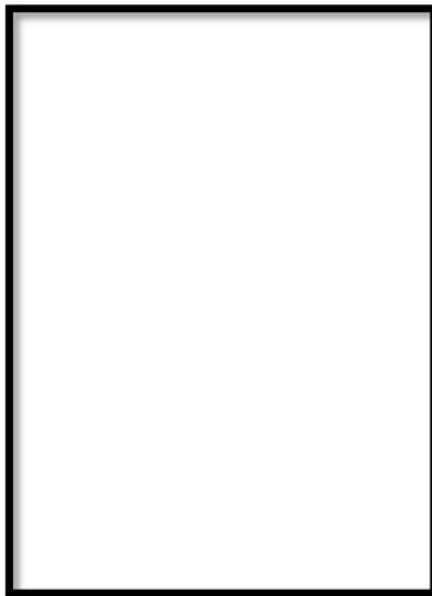
Figure 49

Nicolas de Largillière, *Madame Aubrey and her son Léonor*, 1699-1700. Oil on canvas.  
134x105.1cm. (Minneapolis, The Minneapolis Institute of Art). Reproduced from:  
ARTstor [online] ID Number: MIA\_.77.26.

## Appendix 2. Chronology of Nattier's Paintings



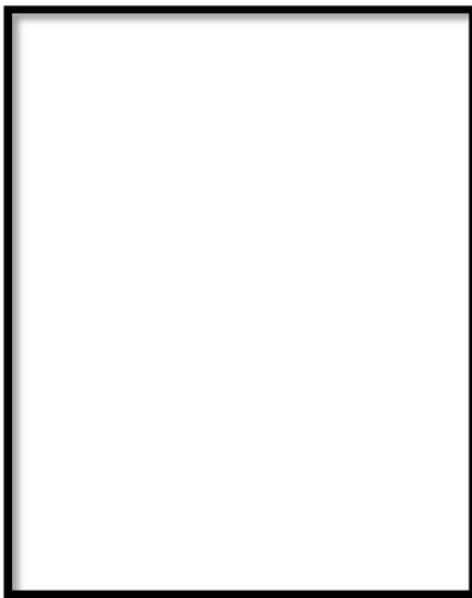
*Marie-Anne de Bourbon, dite Mademoiselle de Clermont, aux eaux minérales de  
Chantilly*  
1729



*Portrait présumé de Marie-Thérèse-Catherine Crozat, marquise du Chatel, et de sa fille  
Antoinette-Eustachie*

1733

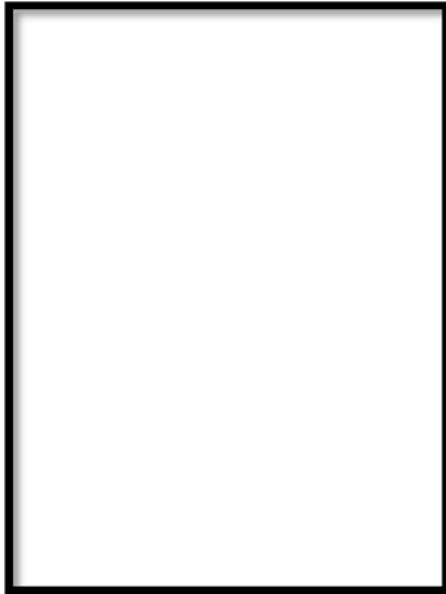
144



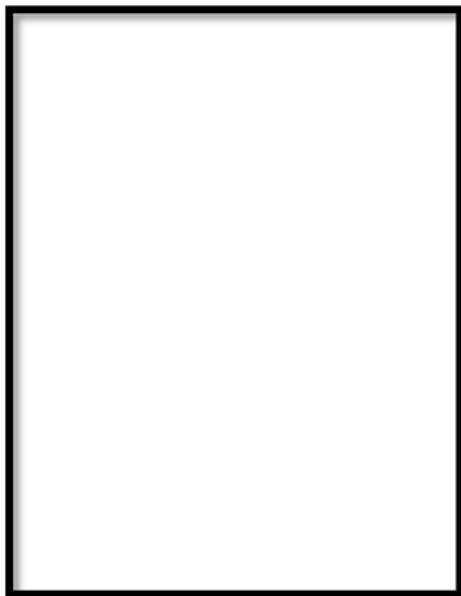
*Carlotta Frederika Sparre en nymphe de Diane*  
1741



*Constance Gabrielle Magdeleine Bonnier de la Mosson sous les traits de Diane*  
1742



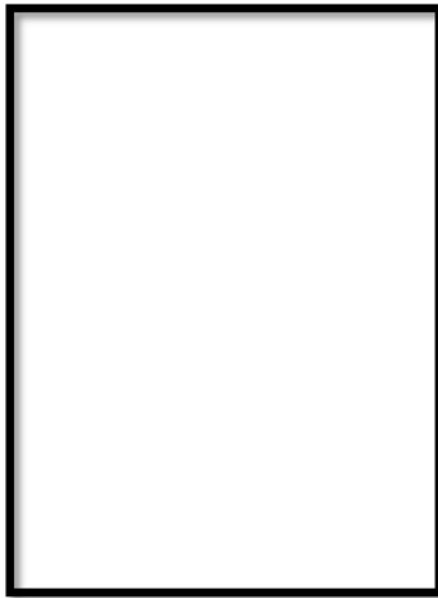
*Élisabeth de Flesselles en Source*  
1747



*Madame Marsollier et sa fille*  
1749



*Madame Victoire incarnant l'Eau*  
1751



*Madame de Maison-Rouge sous les traits de Diane*  
1756



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