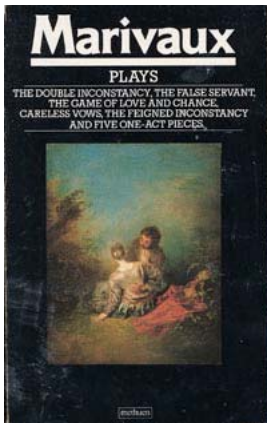


A Matter of Dispute by Pierre Carlet de Marivaux



Who was unfaithful first – men or women – is the question that preoccupies Marivaux's play. When the prince and his lady Hermione begin to argue about which sex was originally to blame for romantic infidelity, the prince reveals his part in a curious social experiment. His father had ordered for four newborn babies to be brought up in solitary confinement. Now that they are old enough, they are ready to be monitored and to re-enact the dawn of creation. When the two young men and two young women are released into the world, the sudden exposure to their own feelings and experiences leads to both painful and comical revelations.

A Matter of Dispute was first performed in 1744 by the Comédie Française.

'A remarkable play - one that condemns the obscene reduction of people to guinea pigs while implying that infidelity is a reflection of the infinite diversity of humanity.' *Guardian*

Genre:	Social drama	Fee:	£30 plus VAT, per performance
Cast:	m5 f5 (plus prince's retinue)	Scripts:	ISBN 9780413185600 £14.99
Set:	the country	Length:	1 act
Contact:	Ua UhYi f!fjJ \ lg4 V'cca gVi fmcom		

EXTRACT

Adinia Oh, what's this new creature? (*She comes forward.*)

Eglea She's looking at me carefully, but not admiring me. It isn't another Azoro. (*She looks at herself in the mirror.*) Still less is it another Eglea . . . But I think she's comparing herself with me.

Adinia I don't know what to think about the way this creature looks. I don't know what's missing from it. There's something insipid about it.

Eglea I don't like the look of her sort.

Adinia Does she have any language? Let's see . . . Are you a person?

Eglea Yes, certainly, and very much a person.

Adinia Well, have you nothing to say to me?

Eglea No. People usually forestall me by speaking to me first.

Adinia But don't you find me enchanting?

Eglea You? I'm the one who enchants people.

Adinia What! You aren't really delighted to see me?

Eglea Sorry, I'm neither delighted nor upset. What does it matter to me?

Adinia Well, that's very peculiar! You look at me, I show myself, and you don't feel anything! You must be looking somewhere else. Have a good look at me. Now, what do you think of me?

If you enjoyed this, you might like:

- *The Will* by Marivaux (m3 f3)
 - *Careless Vows* by Marivaux (m3 f4)
 - *A History of Falling Things* by James Graham (m5 f2)
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