INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.

5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

University Microfilms International
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106 USA
St. John's Road, Tyler's Green
High Wycombe, Bucks, England HP10 8HR
GOODMAN, E. L.

RUBENS' "CONVERSATIE A LA MODE" AND THE TRADITION OF THE LOVE GARDEN.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, PH.D., 1978

Copyright by
E. L. Goodman
1978
RUBENS' CONVERSATIE A LA MODE AND THE
TRADITION OF THE LOVE GARDEN

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

E. L. Goodman, B.A., M.A.

***

The Ohio State University
1978

Reading Committee:
Francis L. Richardson
Mathew Herban, III
Franklin M. Ludden

Approved By

Francis L. Richardson
Adviser
Department of the History of Art
To the memory of my mother,
Ruth Sussman Goodman (1917-1963)
and to my father,
Maurice H. Goodman
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to the Ohio State University Development Fund for aiding my research with a grant which allowed me to travel to various libraries and museums in Europe. I am especially grateful for assistance by the staffs of the Warburg and Witt Libraries in London. During my stay in Washington, D.C., I received gracious treatment from the staff of the Folger Shakespeare Library. I have benefited from the advice and assistance of numerous people. Without the constant support, patience, and advice of my husband, Rolf Soellner, this project would not have been completed. Professor Charles G. Dempsey of Bryn Mawr College made many valuable suggestions. The comments and criticisms of Professors Mathew Herban, III, Walter A. Liedtke, and Franklin M. Ludden greatly improved the work. They have my sincere thanks. But my greatest debt of gratitude is to my adviser, Professor Francis L. Richardson, who directed this dissertation with wisdom, patience, and kindness. Throughout my studies, he has unfailingly supported me.
VITA

July 19, 1946 ........ Born - Towanda, Pennsylvania

1969 ............... B.A., University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, Connecticut

1972-1977 ........ Teaching Associate, History of Art, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1975 ............... M.A., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

PUBLICATIONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION ................................................................. ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................... iii
VITA ................................................................. iv
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ............................................... vi
INTRODUCTION ........................................................... 1

Chapter

I. PRECURSORS OF THE LOVE GARDEN IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES AND RENAISSANCE .................. 6
II. THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PLEASURE GARDEN ............ 29
III. THE GARDEN AS A LOCALE FOR LOVE IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE ...................... 54
IV. RUBENS’ CONVERSATIE À LA MODE AND CHÂTEAU IN A PARK ................................................. 92
V. SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CONVERSATION PICTURES ........ 126

EPILOGUE: THE ROLE OF THE GARDEN IN THE FÊTES GALANTES OF WATTEAU ......................... 178

APPENDIX: CONVERSATION PAINTING IN SEVENTEENTH- AND EARLY EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY RECORDS 192

BIBLIOGRAPHY .............................................................. 204

PLATES ................................................................. 211
### LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Rubens, <em>Conversatie à la Mode</em>, Madrid, Prado</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Limbourg Brothers, <em>April Page from the Très Riches Heures</em>, Chantilly, Musée Condé</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Anonymous, <em>Small Garden of Love</em>, Early Netherlandish Engraving</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Francesco del Cossa, <em>April Scene, Sala dei Mesi</em>, Ferrara, Palazzo Schifanoia</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Titian, <em>Venus and the Organist</em>, Madrid, Prado. 217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Dirck Barendsz, <em>Mankind Awaiting the Last Judgement</em>, engraved by Jan Sadeler. 219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>David Vinckboons, <em>Spring</em>. 221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Abraham Bosse, <em>Frontispiece to Le Jardin de la Noblesse Françoise</em>. 224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td><em>Frontispiece to Madeleine de Scudéry's La Fausse Clélie</em>. 226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Rabel, <em>Frontispiece to Conclusion of L'Astrée</em>, 1628. 226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Rabel, <em>Frontispiece to Conclusion of L'Astrée</em>, 1633. 227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Jacob Cats, <em>Turpe Senilis Amor</em>. 228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Abraham Bosse, <em>Adolescence</em> from the <em>Ages of Man</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Isle of Cythera from <em>Le Songe de Poliphile</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Madeleine de Scudéry, <em>Le Carte de Tendre</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Dirk Hals, <em>Promeneurs in a Garden</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>F. Ertinger, Frontispiece to Molière's <em>Mélicerte</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>Stefano della Bella, <em>Designs for Mirame</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>Stefano della Bella, <em>Le Nozze degli Dei</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Rubens, Design for Woodcut made by Jegher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>Rubens, Design for Woodcut made by Jegher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>Detail from Rubens' <em>Conversatie à la Mode</em>, Madrid, Prado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>Detail from Rubens' <em>Conversatie à la Mode</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>Detail from Rubens' <em>Conversatie à la Mode</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>Harrewyn, Engraving of Rubens' Garden in Antwerp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td>Jegher's woodcut of the <em>Conversatie</em> after Rubens' design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47.</td>
<td>Stefano della Bella, <em>Gardens at the Villa Pratolino</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td>Rubens, Rubens, Helena Fourment and his Son, Nicholas Promenading in Their Garden, Munich, Alte Pinakothek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.</td>
<td>Rubens, Rubens and Helena Fourment Promenading in their Garden, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wrightsman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Rubens, <em>Château in a Park</em>, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. Peter Clouwet, <em>Engraving after Rubens' Conversatie à la Mode</em></td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. Cesare Ripa, <em>Matrimony from the Iconologia</em></td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. Camerarius, <em>Fida Coniunctio from Symbolorum et emblematum</em></td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. Jacob Cats, <em>Nuptial Doves from Silenius Alcibiadis</em></td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. Rubens, <em>Marriage of Marie de Medici with Henry IV</em>, Paris, Louvre</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. Rubens' designs for the <em>Marriage of Maximilian of Burgundy</em> for the <em>Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi</em></td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. Rubens' designs for the <em>Marriage of Philip the Fair</em> for the <em>Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi</em></td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. Arnold Bon, <em>The Fountain of Love from the Delfs Cupidoos Schighje</em></td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. Rubens, <em>Henry IV Receiving the Portrait of Marie de Medici</em>, Paris, Louvre</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. Ripa, <em>Conjugal Love, Iconologia</em></td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. Rubens, <em>Oil Sketch for Henry IV Promenading with Marie de Medici</em></td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. Dürer, <em>Promenading Couple</em></td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64. Frans Hals, <em>Portrait of a Couple in a Park</em></td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65. Alciati, <em>In fideum uxoriam</em></td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67.</td>
<td>Rubens, <em>Château in a Park</em>, Collection, Gaston Dulière, Antwerp, Rubens house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68.</td>
<td>Schelte à Bolswert, <em>Engraving after Rubens' Château in a Park</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69.</td>
<td>Dirk Hals, <em>Tuinfest</em>, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72.</td>
<td>Esaias van de Velde, <em>Garden Repast</em>, sold at Christie's, 26 April, 1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.</td>
<td>Jerome Janssens, <em>Conversation on a Terrace</em>, sold at Sotheby's, London, 11 December, 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74.</td>
<td>Watteau, <em>Guitarist and Seven Bystanders</em>, Berlin, Charlottenberg Castle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75.</td>
<td>Simon de Vos, <em>Conversation</em>, W.E. Duits, 1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76.</td>
<td><em>Frontispiece to Jan Starter's Friesche Lusthof</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.</td>
<td>P. Rollos, No. 52, <em>Le Centre d'Amour</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78.</td>
<td>P. Rollos, No. 4, <em>Le Centre d'Amour</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79.</td>
<td>Jacob Cats, <em>Labyrinth of Puppy Love</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81.</td>
<td>George Wither, <em>Emblems</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82.</td>
<td>Otto van Veen, <em>Love Grows by Favor, Amorum Emblemata</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83.</td>
<td>Esaias van de Velde, <em>Garden Conversation</em>, sold from Soehle's, Munich, 1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84.</td>
<td>Esaias van de Velde, <em>Conversation</em>, Dorotheum Sale, March 3, 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.</td>
<td>Jacob Cats, <em>Amor, Tela Penelopes from Proteus, ofte, Minne-beelden</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.</td>
<td>G.A. Bredero, <em>De Groote Bron der Minnen</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.</td>
<td>Fountain of Love from the <em>Amoris Divini et Humani Antipathia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89.</td>
<td>Lady Venus from Starter's <em>Friesche Lusthof</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90.</td>
<td>Louis de Caullery, <em>Le Jardin d'Amour</em>, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91.</td>
<td>Louis de Caullery, <em>Homage à Venus</em>, Copenhagen, State Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93.</td>
<td>Watteau, <em>Embarkation from the Isle of Cythera</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94.</td>
<td>Willem Buytewech, <em>Deftige Vriage</em>, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95.</td>
<td>Dirk Hals, <em>Visus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96.</td>
<td>Jan Starter, <em>As One who Measures the Heaven's Height</em> from the <em>Friesche Lusthof</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97.</td>
<td>Starter, <em>Cupid, How Have You Bent my Gaze</em> from the <em>Friesche Lusthof</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.</td>
<td>Dirk Hals, <em>Banquet in the Open Air</em>, Nyenrode Sale, Amsterdam, 10 July, 1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101.</td>
<td>No. 19 from Le Centre d'Amour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102.</td>
<td>No. 17 from Le Centre d'Amour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103.</td>
<td>David Vinckboons, Merry Company in the Open Air, Vienna, Gemäldegalerie der Bildenden Kunst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104.</td>
<td>P.C. van Hooft, Lusthof, Frontispiece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105.</td>
<td>George Wither, Love, a Musician, from Emblems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106.</td>
<td>Cupid in the Role of a Fisherman from P.C. van Hooft's Emblemata Amatoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107.</td>
<td>Fishing emblem from Starter's Friesche Lusthof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108.</td>
<td>Crispin de Passe, Fishing Emblem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109.</td>
<td>Vinckboons, Fishing Couple, Paris, Institut Néerlandais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110.</td>
<td>No. 38 from Le Centre d'Amour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111.</td>
<td>J.H. Krul, Minne-beelden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112.</td>
<td>Dirk Hals, Music Party in a Garden, Nemes Sale, Munich, 16 June, 1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113.</td>
<td>Harmony of Music from Cupido's Lusthof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114.</td>
<td>Daniel Heinsius, Emblemata Aliquot Amatoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115.</td>
<td>Christoffe van der Lamen, Lutenist on a Terrace, auction, Sotheby's, London, 7 July, 1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116.</td>
<td>Jacob Cats, Quid non Sentit Amor from Proteus, ofte, Minne-beelden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117.</td>
<td>Jacob Cats, Amor doet Musicam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118.</td>
<td>Jerome Janssens, Le Bal, Lille, Musée des Beaux-Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120.</td>
<td>Janssens, <em>A Dance</em>, Collection of Lord Hylton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124.</td>
<td>P.C. van Hooft, <em>Songs of Apollo and the Muses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125.</td>
<td>Promenading Couple in Den Bloem Hof van de Nederlantsche Leught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126.</td>
<td><em>The Splendour of One is the Ardour of Another</em> in Hooft's Emblemata Amatoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128.</td>
<td>Fragonard, <em>La Main Chaude</em>, Washington, National Gallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131.</td>
<td>De Hooch, <em>Game of Ninepins</em>, St. Louis, City Art Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132.</td>
<td>Game of Ninepins, <em>Le Centre d'Amour</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133.</td>
<td>Game of Billiards in <em>Amoris Divini et Humani Antipathia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134.</td>
<td>Game of Ball, <em>Le Centre d'Amour</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135.</td>
<td>Game of Chess or Backgammon, <em>Le Centre d'Amour</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136.</td>
<td>Gerrit van Honthorst, <em>Game of Chess</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>De Hooch, <em>Formal Garden at a Country Residence</em>, Windsor, Royal Collections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>Bredero, <em>Love Garden</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>Watteau, <em>La Conversation</em>, Paris, Collection J. Heugel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>Watteau, <em>La Surprise</em>, London, Buckingham Palace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>Watteau, <em>La Gamme d'Amour</em>, London, National Gallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>Watteau, <em>Fêtes Vénitiennes</em>, Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>Watteau, <em>La Cascade</em>, Paris, Private Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td>Watteau, <em>Young Couples Near a Statue of Venus</em>, Dresden, Gemäldegalerie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td>C.L. Lingée, <em>La Promenade du Matin</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>C.L. Lingée, <em>La Promenade du Soir</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148</td>
<td>Jan Foucheil, <em>Terrace in a Park with Three Gentlemen and Two Ladies</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149</td>
<td>Watteau, <em>La Perspective</em>, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152</td>
<td>Picart, <em>L'Entretien Galant</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154.</td>
<td>After Rubens, <em>Conversatie à la Mode</em>, Dresden, Gemäldegalerie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Peter Paul Rubens' *Conversatie à la Mode*, executed ca. 1632-34 (Plate I), is the most complex and poetic visual evocation of what is commonly known as the "Love Garden" in the seventeenth century. It is significant that Rubens' painting was entitled in seventeenth-century documents a *Conversatie à la Mode* or as representing a *Conversatie van Joffres* (Young Ladies), not called *Garden of Love*, the title given it today. "Conversatie" is the Flemish variant of the French term "conversation," used for society paintings by seventeenth-century art critics and contemporary inventories. (See Appendix). The *Conversatie* does indeed descend from the Love Garden and uses some of its conventions but it also has idiosyncratic features of its own. I believe that the original title is important for understanding what Rubens and his contemporaries were attempting to portray, namely scenes of conversation among *galant* couples in the open air, a favorite pastime of the upper classes in Rubens' time. But Rubens' painting is more complex than this; on another level, the *Conversatie* is a marriage picture, using erotic conventions of the literary epithalamium in order to characterize the happiness of Rubens after his wedding to Helena Fourment in December of 1630. In articulating this level, Rubens goes far beyond
his predecessors.

Rubens' Conversatie and the Love Gardens of his contemporaries, such as Dirk Hals, David Vinckboons, and Jerôme Janssens, have not heretofore been analyzed in terms of their proper social, cultural, and literary contexts. This study is an attempt to do so. I shall point out that the society pictures reflect diversions associated with the actual pleasure garden, an important locale for recreation of the upper bourgeoisie and nobility. In these paintings, the pastimes connected with the pleasure garden, such as the promenade, the fête, the conversation, the collation, and the dance are copiously illustrated. The artists, particularly Rubens, also used images and conventions that appear in seventeenth-century love poetry and drama. Themes such as the garden as a locus for courtship and love and as a metaphor for the beauty of the lady within it parallel contemporaneous trends in baroque poetry.

These pictorial gardens and the pastimes portrayed are imbued with a subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, eroticism. This eroticism can best be understood by reference to contemporaneous songbooks and emblem literature. Emblem books with amorous themes, such as Daniel Heinsius' Emblemata Amatoria and the game book Le Centre d'Amour, are particularly helpful for deciphering the iconography.

While the main concern of this study is the seventeenth century, a brief glimpse at the eighteenth has proved necessary. The pictorial
conversations of Rubens and his contemporaries were models for the enchanting gardens and parks in Antoine Watteau's *fêtes galantes*. Watteau's pictures, I shall show, are the culmination of a well-established pictorial tradition in the seventeenth century.

The first chapter will survey the tradition of the Love Garden in late medieval and Renaissance paintings and engravings in order to determine pictorial antecedents of Rubens' *Conversatie* and the Gardens of his contemporaries. It will be demonstrated that, in some cases, Rubens and his contemporaries drew on the conventional repertoire of motifs connected with this earlier pictorial tradition.

The second chapter is an account of the actual pleasure garden in the seventeenth century and the pastimes connected with it, since they were reflected in the paintings. The social importance of the recreations associated with the garden, such as the conversation and the amorous promenade, will be stressed by reference to courtesy books, tracts on social behavior, and *belles lettres*.

Chapter Three is devoted to a discussion of the Garden of Love in poetry and drama contemporaneous with Rubens' *Conversatie*. It will be demonstrated that the convention of the garden as a locus for love and courtship was also used in poetry and that Rubens was aware of this use. He and other painters of the seventeenth century adapted the poetical convention of the garden as a metaphor for the beauty of the lady who inhabits it. Since the literary epithalamium is important for
understanding the iconography of Rubens' Garden of Marriage, I shall analyze epithalamic features that appear in the Conversatie. The theme of retirement, often expressed in the belles lettres and the philosophy of the period, also appears in Rubens' painting; I have therefore devoted a section to it here.

Chapter Four is dedicated to an iconographic analysis of Rubens' Conversatie à la Mode; it will be discussed both as a conversation piece reflecting seventeenth-century pastimes and as an allegory of wedlock reflecting his marriage to Helena Fourment in their own Garden of Love. The Château in a Park, the other conversation painting in Rubens' oeuvre, will be considered as a precursor of Watteau's fête galantes.

Chapter Five is devoted to an iconographic analysis of seventeenth-century Gardens of Love executed by Rubens' contemporaries, some of them being direct sources for his Conversatie. These pictures are divided into six major categories, according to the popular pastimes of the epoch. These works are overlaid with an erotic symbolism which can best be deciphered by turning to emblem literature and songbooks illustrated with Gardens of Love analogous to those in the paintings.

The Epilogue is a brief summary of the role of the garden in the fête galantes of Antoine Watteau, the culmination of the seventeenth-century pictorial tradition. Watteau's parks play a major role in the
amorous symbolism of the paintings and often contain statuary emblematic of love, a convention derived from seventeenth-century art.

The Appendix is a summary of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century references to Rubens' painting as a *Conversatie à la Mode*, perhaps the most distinguished example of conversation painting at the period. This section will also include an examination of conversation pieces in early inventories and art criticism.
CHAPTER ONE

PRECURSORS OF THE LOVE GARDEN IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES AND THE RENAISSANCE

Rubens' *Conversatie à la Mode* belongs to a long and rich tradition established in medieval art and nourished by the Bible and classical antiquity. I intend merely to survey this tradition here since it is evident that the medieval and Renaissance Love Gardens were generally not the direct sources for Rubens and the painters of the seventeenth century *tableaux de mode*. Titian's emblematic gardens in his so-called *Venus and the Organist* pictures and perhaps Peter Pourbus' *Allegorical Love Garden* are exceptions in that they appear to actually have influenced Rubens. However, the medieval and Renaissance paintings provided general patterns, encouraging painters to continue the tradition and teaching them what to portray in the paintings. Some of the recreations depicted in Italian Quattrocento *cassoni* and *dechi da parti*, marriage caskets and birth plates with pictures of courtship, love, and wedlock, appear also in pictorial "conversations" of the seventeenth century. A mid-fifteenth-century engraving, *The Large Garden of Love*, even couches its portrayal of high society in a marital symbolism, in some manner anticipating Rubens.
The Garden of Love as an independent genre appears in paintings decorating cassoni and deschi da parti of the early fifteenth century. The genre develops further in the North at mid-century, where it is first represented by Early Netherlandish engravings associated with the Court of Burgundy. Like the gardens of Rubens and his Flemish and Dutch contemporaries, the painted gardens of the Middle Ages are associated with those in contemporaneous literature.

A strong influence on the configuration of these medieval gardens was the Song of Solomon, which contains the garden most familiar to the Middle Ages, the garden that inspired artistic representations up until the time of Rubens. The line, "Let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits," together with other passages with garden imagery, prompted paintings of the hortus conclusus, representations of Paradise, and secular gardens. The garden in the Song of Solomon is a metaphor for the pleasures of love and the physical union of Solomon and his bride. This image continues through the ages into the seventeenth century, where it appears in erotic poetry.

An equally important source for medieval love and marriage gardens is the "Bower of Venus" in Claudian's Epithalamium for Honorius and Maria of AD 398. The dwelling place of the Goddess of Love is a delightful enclosed grove, inhabited by birds, flowers, springs, and trees. The convention provided a model for several allegorical gardens. More important for our purposes, its marital imagery and pictorial
conventions influenced Rubens' Conversatie à la Mode several centuries later.

The idea of the garden as the dwelling place of the Goddess or God of Love was transmitted to the Middle Ages and appears in the thirteenth-century allegorical romance, Le Roman de la Rose, written by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung. The garden of the Roman was indisputably the most influential allegorical pleasance of the Middle Ages. The Poet-lover in the month of May wanders into "a large roomy garden, entirely enclosed by a high crenelated wall." Inside the garden, birds sing love lays, persons dance a carol, and musicians perform sweet music. There are animals, a fountain, and personifications of Joy and Courtesy as well as attendants of the God of Love; in this delightful spot, the poet falls in love with the rose and finally plucks it.

Gardens, orchards, and meadows as loci for assignations and trysts abound in romances of the high and later Middle ages. In Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan of ca. 1210, Tristan and Isolde meet in an orchard by a brook to pledge their love; Isolde's own garden is the site for melancholic conversations about love and for the arrival of messengers with news from Tristan. The conventional tree-filled meadow is the locale for the touching scene of Guenivere and Lancelot's first kiss in the Lancelot en Prose, one of the most popular French romances of the Middle Ages, whose manuscripts contain charming
illustrations of love gardens. Boccaccio in the fourteenth century continued the classical convention of Venus' garden in his Teseida and imbued it with an allegorical significance. The Goddess's park contains plants and animals that arouse sexual desire in its inhabitants.\textsuperscript{6}

The literary motif of the garden as the site for love was picked up by cassoni and deschi painters of the early Quattrocento. Like the gardens in the literature of the period, these panels contained conventional symbols of love, courtship, and marriage, which soon became part of a stereotyped repertoire of images. Characters engage in acts denoting or connoting courtship and love; they dance, listen to music, dine, and sometimes crown one another with garlands. Most of these activities decorate a desco da parto entitled the Garden of Love, dated from the early fifteenth century and formerly in the Figdor Collection in Vienna (Fig. 1).

These acts have recently been interpreted as metaphors for courtship whose meaning can be deciphered by turning to the literature contemporaneous with the paintings.\textsuperscript{7} For instance in the paintings as well as in Boccaccio's Teseida, music and eating are the food of love while drink often provokes the amorous appetite. Frequently in the panels maidens crown their lovers with plaited garlands, signifying the acceptance of their suits. This motif will recur in seventeenth-century Love Gardens, perhaps most poetically portrayed in Rubens' Château in a Park.
Another emblematic image of the deschi and cassoni paintings of the Love Garden is the fountain, which usually occupies the center of the pleasance. In the famous Garden of Love at Yale of ca. 1440, the fountain is an elaborate octagonal structure reminiscent of a baptismal font (Fig. 2). Cupid sits on a cloud above the fountain and governs the activities. By referring to literary fountains, especially in Claudian's Epithalamium, the Roman de la Rose, and Boccaccio's Teseida, one learns that the fountain, the source of love in the world, is intimately associated with Cupid. But the most important amorous symbol in these panels is the garden itself, luxuriant with flowers and blooming trees, as it appears in the Yale and Figdor paintings.

An offshoot of the Garden of Love in Quattrocento cassoni is the Garden of Marriage, also governed by Venus in her role as the patroness of wedlock and procreation. The natural growth of the garden here denotes fecundity and procreation, necessary for a successful marriage. And indeed this garden symbolism is appropriate for a cassone, a gift given to engaged or newly wedded couples. This Garden of Marriage too has descendants in later works of art; Rubens' Conversatie à la Mode is the most famous example. However, as we shall see, Rubens chose his symbols from a repertoire of seventeenth-century emblems and culled images from antique poetry in an individualistic way, different from the conventional manner of his medieval precursors.
Gardens of Love and Marriage are ubiquitous in books of hours of the International Style; the most famous of these is the *Tres Riches Heures* of the Duc de Berry, dating ca. 1415. The April page in the calendar cycle of this manuscript represents the engagement of a couple (Fig. 3), who exchange rings in a luxuriant garden. Maidens attend the lady and bring flowers to her. Garden illustrations abound in manuscripts of the *Roman de la Rose* dating to the fifteenth century. At this time, the symbols become even more conventionalized and are likely to be reduced to a few bare details—the crenelated wall, fountain, and flowers. By the fifteenth century many scenes of love and marriage presuppose a garden setting; the image is synonymous with love.

The themes of love and marriage combine in perhaps the most notable garden in Early Netherlandish engravings—the so-called Large Garden of Love of ca. 1450 (Fig. 4). It has been recently demonstrated that the Garden is a betrothal picture, couched in elaborate allegorical language. The engraving embodies three stages of love—courtship, engagement, and matrimony—each indicated by a different section of the composition. As one might expect, in this late medieval work amorous symbols abound: a castle most likely symbolizing the Château d'Amour, birds, attendants at the court of the God of Love, and animals symbolic of courtship and sexuality.

Another engraving, *The Small Garden of Love*, prefigures Rubens' *Conversatie à la Mode* and Watteaus' *fêtes galantes* because of the
predominance of women (Fig. 5). Here as in later works, the importance of the ladies is reinforced by courtiers who pay homage to them. They are the controlling forces of love, not only by their sheer number, but also by the tone of elegance and sophistication they set. Rubens' Cour de Venus, as it was once called, parallels the court of Frau Minne in this Early Netherlandish engraving; but Rubens replaced Frau Minne as the governess of amorous activity by a classical statue of Venus Alma (Nurturing Venus).

The Love Garden continued to be a usual attribute of astrological and calendar cycles in the Renaissance. And Venus as the goddess of procreation appears in illustrations of the springtime months. Such is the case in the April scene in Francesco del Cossa's Sala dei Mesi in the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara, dated ca. 1470 (Fig. 6). Venus sits on a cart drawn by swans and is in the process of shackling Mars, who presents a threat to her peaceful reign of love and merry-making. Her subjects have benefited from her rule. They hold lutes and recorders, indicative of the music which has beguiled a couple to embrace. At the left, the Garden of Love, now a well established attribute of Venus, occupies an important place in the composition. Here lovers engage in polite conversation and amorous dalliance. These amusements perhaps reflect actual pastimes at the court of the Duke of Ferrara, the patron of the cycle.
Engravings of astrological cycles abound in the fifteenth century, and the Garden of Love ruled by Venus and Cupid is frequent in them. It appears, for instance, in a copper engraving attributed to Baccio Baldini, now at the British Museum and dated ca. 1450 (Fig. 7). The Goddess of Love and her son ride on a cart drawn by doves through the heavens, while beneath lovers play music, make love, dance, and bathe. The fountain of love, now a stock convention, alludes to the powers of Cupid over his subjects. We are certain not to miss the significance of this scene since the inscription, "Amor Vincit Omnia" is boldly written on a building in the garden.

In Germany, Georg Pencz continued the allegorical Garden of Love into the sixteenth century. His astrological woodcut of a springtime month under the aegis of Venus (1531) shows the various stages of lovers' responses to music (Fig. 8). The garden is the locus for amorous pastimes, including the promenade, an important activity of seventeenth-century Gardens of Love. Lovers who have been beguiled by the powers of the garden walk from there into the woods, as do Watteau's promenaders, in order to consummate their love.

Perhaps the most famous Garden in the Italian Renaissance is portrayed in Botticelli's La Primavera, painted in 1478, and most likely destined for the rural villa of Lorenzo de Pierfrancesco de Medici at Castello. The garden in the Primavera is by inference a Garden of Love since it is presided over by Venus, the Goddess of Love and
Gardens, seen here as a rustic deity. The garden of *Venus hortorum*, like those in earlier Italian cassoni, is a place of eternal spring, unchanging with the seasons. As Professor Dempsey has shown, the pageant that unfolds in Venus' garden can be explicated in the light of two ancient literary texts: Lucretius' description of a rustic pageant featuring deities of springtime explains the right-hand side of the painting; Horace's *Ode to Venus* (i, 30), the presence of the Graces and of Mercury at the left.

Famous as the garden in the *Primavera* is, paintings with pastoral and garden settings in sixteenth-century Venice provide the most important legacy for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One of these, entitled the *Garden of Love* by Mirimonde and attributed to Stefano Cernoto by Francis Richardson, is now housed in the National Gallery in London (Fig. 9). Here music and the pastoral setting are participants in the passion of the two lovers. Various stages of love unfold in the painting; in the foreground a man strums a *lira da braccio* and his female companion carries a wreath of flowers, an attribute of courtship that reappears in Rubens' *Château in a Park*. Other symbolic elements appear here, such as the doves lying at the maiden's feet. We remember from fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italian engravings that doves are associated with Venus as agents of love. Perhaps the stream in the picture is a subtle allusion to the well or font of Cupid, now represented naturally in the spirit of the Renaissance. In the
middle ground—a little later in time—the courtship has progressed: the cavalier sits beneath the tree and his lady lies in his lap. Presumably music and the sweet fruits of nature are responsible for the consummation of the couple's love.

The Venetian pastoral painting which most closely prefigures the dream-like mood and arcadian fantasy of Rubens' Château in a Park and Watteau's fêtes galantes is Giorgione's Concert Champêtre, dated ca. 1510 (Fig. 10). The painting, now in the Louvre, was in the Collection of the Duke of Mantua and in that of Charles I of England during the time of Rubens; it was later housed in the Royal Collection at Versailles during Watteau's lifetime. It is therefore likely that both the baroque and the rococo masters saw it and were influenced by it. The Concert Champêtre prefigures gardens of love in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries because of its genre-like character and its implicit, rather than explicit, references to the roles of gardens and music in the play of love. It also presages Watteau's fêtes galantes because of the intimate relation of the characters to their natural surroundings; they are extensions of the landscape around them.

Professor Kettering has recently suggested that rural scenes of lovers by followers of Giorgione inspired Dutch multi-figured pastoral paintings of the seventeenth century. Compositions by, for example, Palma Vecchio and Cariani, depicting elegant couples in gardens and parks, may have been stimuli, direct or indirect, for the Merry
Companies in the open air in early seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish paintings. Love and music are the central themes of Palma Vecchio's *Concert Champêtre*, set in the luxuriant surroundings of the Venetian countryside, the Renaissance version of the medieval Garden of Love (Fig. 11). The Dutch and Flemish painters of the next century adapted these pastoral settings and musical couples to their own environments—familiar gardens and parks of country houses. According to Kettering, the pensive air of the Venetian concerts has been replaced in the seventeenth century by a down-to-earth realistic tenor that is particularly Dutch.

A word or two should be said about Titian's *Bacchanals* executed for the *Camerino d'Alabastro* at Ferrara, commissioned by Alfonso d'Este between 1518-21 and long considered a source for Rubens' *Conversatie à la Mode*. F. M. Godfrey called the Rubens' painting "a Feast of Venus in the guise of a sumptuous social gathering," a statement which implies that Rubens translated Titian's mythological feast into a modern-day festival. However, while it is true that Rubens copied Titian's *Worship of Venus* and *Bacchanal of the Andrians* and expanded the genre in his *Feast of Venus*, the *Bacchanal* is not the model for his *Conversatie à la Mode*. As will be shown below, the visual sources for Rubens' painting were Flemish and Dutch society pictures of the seventeenth century, pictures of the same genre as his *Conversatie* and available to him at every turn.
Titian did indeed influence Rubens' *Conversatie*: the Garden as an emblem of love appears in true Renaissance courtly fashion in his *Venus and the Organist* picture (ca. 1550), housed in Spain where Rubens must have seen it (Fig. 12). Here a formal Renaissance park, comparable to the neatly pruned gardens described in Bembo's *Gli Asolani*, is populated with various animals and a fountain. The garden stretches behind a loggia in which a cavalier serenades his lady-love. This neatly trimmed park and the courtly personages in the foreground and background depart from the Giorgionesque pastoral landscape and prefigure the elegant pleasances of baroque and rococo masters.

It appears to me that the imagery of these paintings can best be explained by references to Petrarchan love lyrics and sonnets set to music by Renaissance composers and sung at courts throughout Europe. We see the stock situation of the Petrarchan lover: he implores his ideal lady through song, as did Petrarch, to take pity on him and return his love. But she is unmoved. Like Petrarch's Laura, Titian's lady is the cause of all effects of passion, misery, and frustration in her lover. Titian presents these Petrarchan motifs—the pangs of the lover, the beauty of his mistress, his fire, her coldness, and his devotion met by the aloofness of the beauty he adores.

The formal Renaissance garden behind the protagonists may well be extended metaphor for the beautiful lady in the loggia; if so, it carries an emblematic significance that can be interpreted in the light
of Petrarchan love lyrics that the suitor sings to his lady. Is it that Titian's dolorous courtier, like Petrarch, sings about a garden in which he and his love have previously embraced, but which, alas, now exists only in his memory? And is the hind, placed directly behind the lady in Titian's garden, illustrative of Petrarch's comparison of the hind to his love whom he pursues? Could the hart, lying to the left of the courtier, be the Petrarchan stag, who has sprouted new horns in the springtime, the season when the poet's sorrow still endures? Does Titian's fountain, so prominently placed behind the lady, signify the Petrarchan mistress as the fountain of health, her smiles the lover's springs to make his joys grow? And if Titian's "Garden of Love," as we may call it, can be interpreted in the light of contemporaneous love lyrics, which he surely knew, then its successor, Rubens' Conversatie, so close in spirit, can also be seen in this light. In fact Rubens' garden imagery, as will be pointed out in Chapter Three, closely parallels conventions of seventeenth-century love poetry. Titian's Garden prefigures Rubens' in still another way—the beauty of his lady is reflected in the beauty of the garden. In Chapter Four we shall see how Rubens adapts this metaphor to his own peculiarly seventeenth-century garden.

The garden, park, or forest became the setting for paintings of Feasts of the Gods frequently portrayed by Northern painters of the sixteenth century. One of these is Frans Floris' Feast of the 1550's which depicts a profusion of classical nudes à l'Italien enjoying
Twisted poses, mannerist distortions, and ostentatious anatomical display are the order of the genre in this period.

In Northern painting of the sixteenth century, the Love Garden was imbued with a moralizing note. This is true of the most famous picture of this genre, Peter Pourbus' **Allegorical Love Feast** now in the Wallace Collection (Fig. 13). The painting depicts fashionable Flemish couples feasting at a table in the forest. These characters are not merely figures of Flemish society, but have been transformed into the Three Graces and into personifications. They are labeled Pasithea, Aglaia, Euphrosine, Affectio, Cordialitas, Fiduta, Reverentia, Adonis, Daphnis, Sapiens, and Acontius. Cupid and a fool also attend the group. On the table is a sheet of music with a song written by Thomas Crecqillon and first published in Antwerp in 1543. The lines are as follows:

```
Ung gai bergier prioit une bergerie
En luy faisant du jeu d'Amours requeste
Alley, dict elle, tirez vous arriere
Vostre parler je trouve deshonneste.
```

Pourbus' **Love Feast** is didactic: Love and folly are for the young, but the old man (Sapiens) must be content with loyalty rather than the pleasures of love.

Gustav Gluck claims that Pourbus' Love Feast could have directly inspired Rubens' **Conversatie à la Mode**. He supposes that Rubens
incorporated three allegorical Graces into his painting, modeling them on Pourbus. But the three figures in Rubens' work are likely to be ordinary mortals rather than allegorical personages. However, it is possible that Rubens knew either the popular proverb about youth and age or its visual representation in the Pourbus painting or both, and used it in his Conversatie, where it may be manifested in the juxtaposition of the young couple at the left of the composition with the older pair at the right.

A moral and didactic tone permeates religious paintings throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in the North. The garden is often a popular setting in these paintings for the pleasurable activities of the Magdalene during her life of sin, for the Prodigal Son among the courtesans, Mankind Before the Last Judgement, and before the Flood. Lucas van Leyden's Magdalene During her Life of Sin portrays such a garden. In it she dances with her lover, while clowns and jesters make merry, unaware of their vain and sinful lives.

The Garden of Love as a locus for sensual pleasure was a common attribute of scenes depicting the Prodigal Son among the courtesans. Karel van Mander's print depicts the debauched young man feasting at a table in the garden with other amorous couples (Fig. 14). This and the many other didactic paintings such as Van Heemskerck's Prodigal Son, bespeak waste, debauchery, and condemnation for a sinful life.
At the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries this moralizing tendency continues in the work of Dirck Barendsz, an artist from Haarlem (1534-92). Influenced by Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese while he was in Venice, Barendsz was one of the artists credited with bringing the Italian style to the North. Barendsz's religious subjects such as Mankind Awaiting the Last Judgement and Life Before the Flood, engraved by Jan Sadeler, contain elegant genre settings and figures derived from his Venetian experience. In his Mankind Awaiting the Last Judgement of 1581, the terrace of a garden is the setting for a group of merry-makers feasting and embracing, sins sure to end in death and damnation (Fig. 15). But Barendsz minimizes the full impact of their punishment by relegating the Last Judgement to the background, barely noticeable through the openings in the wall. Instead he prefers to concentrate on the joyful experiences associated with the garden of earthly delights.

As Stechow has noted, scholars are often confused what themes of these "religious" paintings are; whether they represent Mankind Before the Flood, the Last Judgement, or the Prodigal Son Among the Courtesans. Without a title affixed to them, one is unsure of their actual subject matter. Prints, in this case, can be keys to understanding the iconography. For instance, Gerrit Pietersz Sweelinck's painting is entitled by Stechow the Prodigal Son or Mankind Before the Last Judgement (Fig. 16). However, the print executed after the painting by
Cornelius Galle, was entitled the **Dolce Vita**, and it contains an invitation to join the merry life (Fig. 17):

> You who wish to lead a quiet life without worries  
> Join our company here, we have plenty of fun  
> Sadness, sorrow and grief, far be they from our circle;  
> Truly mirth and play are our only desire.  

It is clear from these examples, as well as from Barendsz's religious subjects, that the Garden of Vanity was evolving into the independent genre of the Love Garden, being slowly divested of its moral and didactic messages. By the first quarter of the seventeenth century, painters such as David Vinckboons and Dirk Hals had established the Garden of Love as a separate genre. It is this genre which formed the basis for Rubens' **Garden of Love**, which will be the focus of my iconographic inquiry in Chapter Four.

The Garden of Love also appears in allegorical cycles of the seasons, months, ages of man, times of day, five senses, and the four humors, allegories whose ancestry dates back to the Middle Ages. **Spring**, designed by David Vinckboons (Fig. 18), shows a Renaissance terrace of a palace where fashionable couples promenade and engage in amorous discourse. **Adolescence**, engraved by Crispin de Passe in 1596, depicts a young man with a mandolin and other musical instruments serenading Venus and Cupid. Behind them is the Garden of Love, where youths frolic. The element **Earth** (Fig. 19), designed by Crispin
de Passe, depicts a lady and gentleman feasting at a table in front of a garden in which lovers talk and promenade. **Smell** is portrayed by Cupid offering flowers to a lady and her escort in a garden. And **Evening**, the time for love, is portrayed by a lutenist kissing his mistress after their evening meal in a formal garden.  

But like the paintings of religious subjects with moral and didactic content, representations of the seasons soon became divested of their allegorical content. Such is the case with Le Brun's **Tenture des Mois ou des Maisons Royales**, executed for the Gobelins. The astrological content is merely a pretext for depictions of activities of the nobility in Spring, which serve as pleasant decorations with no profound message intended.  

This is also true of J. van Valckenborch's **Spring Landscape** of 1587, now in Vienna (Fig. 20). Landscapes such as this are the sources for seventeenth-century **tableaux de mode**. The **Spring Landscape** is a panoramic view of a late Renaissance Flemish formal garden populated with courtiers and their ladies. Here, a knight kisses his lady's hand; there, knights on horseback joust at a tournament for their ladies' favors, amorous couples stroll, weave garlands, and dance to music among peaceful swans and rabbits. As one scholar has noted, tapestries with courtly subjects could be the stylistic sources for van Valckenborch's composition.  

In turn, panoramic landscapes such as this, portraying the courtly pleasures of a late, late Gothic society, probably
form the inspiration for Rubens' Tournament with the Castle Steen in the Louvre, veiled in the romanticism of the Middle Ages.

We have seen that the Garden of Love has taken on many forms since its advent in the late medieval era. We have noted its allegorical nature in cassoni paintings of the Quattrocento, and its symbolic meaning in the Garden of Wedlock in Early Netherlandish engravings. The garden took on several different forms in the Renaissance--the domain for lovers under the government of Venus in astrological engravings, the setting for Venus hortus, or a metaphor for the beauty of a Petrarchan lady. Other gardens in the sixteenth century became settings for the sinful life and were important attributes in paintings with vanitas allegories. At the end of the century this moral note waned and the genre metamorphosed into paintings portraying the dolce vita, a theme which characterizes Rubens' Conversatie à la Mode in the next century.
NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1 Paul Watson, "Virtu and Voluptas in Cassone Painting," Diss. Yale University 1970 is a scholarly study of the iconography of amatory images and allegories of love and marriage in early Quattrocento cassone painting. I am indebted to the section on the Garden of Love which serves as the basis for my discussion.

2 Roberta Favis, "The Garden of Love in Early Netherlandish and German Engravings," Diss. University of Pennsylvania 1974, is devoted to a study of the iconography of the Large and Small Gardens of Love presumably commissioned by members of the Burgundian court in the mid-fifteenth century.


4 Favis, p. 12.


6 Watson, p. 67.

7 Ibid., pp. 70-72.

8 Ibid., pp. 69-70. Watson concludes that the two gardens in the Yale panels are representative of chaste and lewd love.

9 Ibid., p. 197.

10 For a discussion of the illustrations of the Roman de la Rose, see the fundamental article of Alfred Kuhn, "Die Illustration des Rosenromans," Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaisershaues, 31 (1913), 1-56.
26

11 Favis, pp. 96ff. The following paragraphs explicating the Large and Small Gardens of Love contain the interpretation of Dr. Favis, the only scholarly analysis of the iconography to date.


13 Roberta Favis, p. 196, notes that perhaps the dominant theme of these Love Gardens may be the power of women.

14 Jan Davidsz de Heem, the seventeenth-century sonneteer, composed a verse inspired by the copper engraving of the Conversatie by Peter Clouwet and entitled it The Pleasure Court of Venus. See below, Chapter Four.


16 The swan is also a traditional symbol of music, associated with Venus and Apollo and thought to have sung immediately before its death. See The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, II (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 280-81.

17 A. P. de Mirimonde, "La Musique dans les Allegories de l'Amour," GBA, 68 (1966), 266.


20 Ibid., p. 257.

21 Ibid., p. 258.
22 Mirimonde, "La Musique dans les Allegories," p. 278. The attribution by Francis Richardson was through personal communication.

23 George Martin Richter, Giorgio da Castelfranco, Called Giorgione (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), p. 233, states that the picture was sold by the Duke of Mantua to Charles I in 1627; in 1671 it went from the Royal Collections of England to Louis XIV. Rubens was in the service of the Duke from ca. 1600-08 and was on a diplomatic mission in England in 1629. He surely must have seen the Concert in either or both of these collections. For Rubens' activity, see Julius Held, Donald Posner, 17th and 18th Century Art (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1972), pp. 197, 207. For Watteau, see Michael Levey, Rococo to Revolution (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 58. For iconographic interpretations of the Concert Champêtre, see Philip Fehl, "The Hidden Genre," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 16 (1957), 153-68 and Patricia Egan, "Poesia and the Fête Champêtre," Arb, 41 (1959), 303-13.


27 Erwin Panofsky, Problems in Titian, Mostly Iconographic (New York: New York University Press, 1969), p. 121; Harold Wethey, The Paintings of Titian, III (London: Phaidon Press, 1975), 197, states that the picture was in the Spanish Royal Palace at Madrid, described by Cassiano dal Pozzo in 1626. It was also recorded in the Alcazar Inventory of 1636.

28 The lady in the loggia has traditionally been called Venus; however, as I pointed out in a paper delivered to Professor Francis Richardson's seminar on "Titian and his Contemporaries," the lady could just as well be the mistress of the musician--his ideal woman, who embodies the physical perfection of Venus. The following interpretation of the garden is the one that I presented to the seminar in Spring, 1976, one which I hope to develop in a subsequent publication.


Banks, fig. 79.


Richard Judson, *Dirck Barendsz (1534-1592)* (Amsterdam: Van-gendt & Co., 1970) is the definitive monograph on Barendsz, who, in the opinion of the author, had a decisive influence on later painters of Merry Companies in Haarlem such as Dirk Hals.

Ibid., p. 25

Ibid., p. 78.

Stechow, pp. 165-67. Cornelius van Haarlem's so-called *Garden of Love* of 1596 in the Jagdschloss Grunewald, Berlin (Stechow, fig. 161), is another of these works; it looks like a pastiche of the Feast of the Gods, Prodigal Son, and scenes from everyday life.


Hollstein, XVI, 197, fig. 2; 80, fig. 297. *Smell* and *Evening* were both engraved by Crispin de Passe.

Banks, p. 205.
CHAPTER TWO

THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PLEASURE GARDEN

The jardin de plaisir was the primary setting for the pastimes of the nobility and upper bourgeoisie in the seventeenth century, recreations that often appear in the tableaux de mode of the period. Throughout Europe, people with taste and social position owned a garden for leisure and entertainment; they engaged in activities, such as the promenade, the fête, and the conversation, frequently in gardens or parks, and these diversions were often represented in pictorial "conversations." However, the pleasure gardens were most interestingly and lovingly described in the literature, and therefore, I shall refer frequently to literary descriptions.

Around the year 1600 the botanist Konrad Gessner made a catalogue of the most popular types of gardens cultivated by his countrymen. The lower classes had to be content with simple vegetable plots and physic gardens; others of higher, but still modest, origin built small gardens for contemplation and the admiration of nature. Next, relevant to our study, were the gardens for "noble ladies and rich gentlemen." These elegant pleasances were made for recreation only; "they contained arbors, summerhouses, labyrinths, noble evergreens, and all the
shapes topiary art can produce." Also of great interest to us are the "gardens of luxury" owned by wise men or princes of state and decorated with magnificent buildings, ponds, fountains, artificial hills, playing fields, and aviaries. This genre includes such estates as Versailles and Het Loo, which will be discussed later. These luxury gardens, along with the gardens of noble ladies and rich gentlemen, were the models for the imaginary gardens of seventeenth-century Dutch, Flemish, and French paintings. Also many of the activities portrayed by artists in the Love Gardens were based on reality, rather than on mere pictorial convention.

The only documented actual Garden of Love was located in Villandry in the Valley of the Loire. The site was divided into four large square compartments, each symbolizing a different aspect of love. "L'Amour Tendre" was represented in box motifs of hearts and flames; "L'Amour Tragique" took the form of beds shaped like daggers filled with red roses; "L'Amour Valage" was conceived in terms of shapes of butterflies, chrysalids, and folded love letters; and the last, "L'Amour Folie" had twelve hearts filled with variously colored flowers spinning like pin wheels. It is not known what the actual function of this Love Garden was; perhaps its conceits were to suggest amorous games for the people walking in them. The names attached to each of the segments reminds one of the fictive Love Gardens of Fragonard, especially the *Progress of Love* in the Frick Collection, in which each separate
section of the garden and the protagonists' behavior in it symbolize various stages of love.³ Be that as it may, nowhere to my knowledge is an actual garden of love mentioned again in the seventeenth century—one has to turn instead to its counterparts in painting.

The seventeenth-century garden of pleasure was an elegant place, suited to the needs of elegant people. Arnold Hauser labels these personages "the new aristocracy" and describes how, in the early part of the century, they brought about a renaissance of chivalry. The new code was founded on a self-conscious politeness (politesse), which was supposed to imitate the manners of "a new Round Table."⁴ This neo-chivalric code manifested itself also in the building of a garden to fit the social needs.

The ideal pleasure garden combined the charms of nature and the conveniences of the city in one plot of land. It also had to provide a framework for the interaction of a sophisticated society and thus express the notion of "delicatesse." Benserade, a poet of the period, described his favorite pleasure ground as a "beau jardin brillant de la delicatesse, de celui qui s'aduste et de sa politesse."⁵ Nature here takes on the qualities of the society that inhabits it and provides a suitable backdrop for its social amenities.

In France, this social delicacy and politesse were expressed in the controlled formal garden, regulated like the tightly controlled etiquette of society. The formal garden had axial and radial avenues,
which provided the framework for grottoes, parterres, bosquets, and treillage. Promeneurs and lovers ambulated in its shaded allees; sculptured fountains and vases evoked mythological scenes and amorous allegories, perhaps sometimes reflecting the situations of the lovers who inhabited this ideal pleasance. The bosquets, cabinets, and labyrinths of the Tuileries, the grandest Parisian garden, were largely frequented by lovers. Sauval, an author of the seventeenth century, describes the galant encounters of lovers in these formal gardens: "Si les cypres pouvaient parler, ils nous apprendraient quantité de jolies aventures qu'on ne sçait pas."

In the Low Countries most of the bourgeoisie owned gardens, rather small ones, it is true, compared to the French aristocracy. But the person who rose in the social strata acquired a correspondingly larger plot. Particularly in the second half of the seventeenth century, wealthy Dutchmen built large rural lusthoeven or buitenplaateen in the country for recreational purposes. They preferred places situated on river banks, such as Betruve, Veluwe, and the regions around Delft. Their villas were quite large and built on grassy slopes dotted with enormous trees and foliage. The gardens of these country homes were at first limited to a few walks or lawns, at times with ponds, and surrounded by a fence. Later in the century with the influence of France, Dutch gardens expanded and became more geometrical and embellished; just as in French gardens of the period, there were grottoes,
bowers, small lakes, and ponds. Het Loo, the country château of William and Mary, exemplified one of these later pleasances. It became known as "the second Versailles" because of its resemblance to the French château and its gardens.  

By and large, Dutch gardens were more embellished than their French counterparts. One sees some of this ornamentation in the later paintings of De Hooch, such as the Game of Ninepins at Waddesdon Manor and the Dutch Formal Garden at Windsor, in which there appear ornamented statues (at times emblematic of love), pavilions, and grand châteaux. Interestingly, the trend toward pastoralism in the belles lettres of the period influenced the concept of these gardens; they were considered small arcadias and were frequently influenced by literary descriptions, engravings, and paintings of pastoral subjects.

The Flemish garden of the seventeenth century continued a rather retardative Renaissance pattern consisting of individual parts with no united organization. It was up to André Le Nôtre to design the formal garden in terms of a unified, dominant scheme, one that finds its supreme manifestations in the gardens at Vaux-le-Vicomte and Versailles later in the century. Rubens' garden at Antwerp typifies the Flemish garden in the earlier part of the century: it consisted of separate parts--a section of parterres de broderie enclosed by a hedge, which divided it from another plot containing a pavilion of latticework between pergolas. Behind this was still another section, consisting of a tree garden.
The neatly pruned garden of the seventeenth century complemented the society which inhabited it. Wherever gardens appeared, whether in treatises, paintings, or in literature, they were shown, not as separate entities but in relation to la bonne compagnie. Nature for the leisure classes was a simple accessory of daily life—an extension of their well-ordered and tightly regulated code of behavior. This cultured and refined society, in love with délicatesse and ornament, arranged their gardens to reflect their own characteristics. Some elements of these gardens, as mentioned before, appear in paintings of the period and in Abraham Bosse's engravings of the seasons and months. We can also gain insight into the garden and its significance for society by turning to the literature of the epoch, which contains passages helpful for understanding its role. In literature, just as in life, la bonne compagnie was the real subject of interest, while the garden was merely a stage set for the enactment of politesse.  

The belles lettres of the period, particularly those in France, illustrate the function of the pleasure garden. In general, the elite classes of France and other countries transported the recreations of the city into the country. Gardens attached to châteaux were to them a coin de nature voisin de la cour 14—what they needed for elegant pastimes in the country. La Calprenède's Cléopâtre illustrates the use of the garden as a backdrop for its inhabitants. The characters stand on a terrace where they engage in conversation while enjoying the
limitless view over the garden and park of a chateau. The garden is to be enjoyed from afar—a subject for conversation.

An analogous view of the pleasure garden as a setting for social interaction appears in the engravings of the period. Gaily dressed figures in the middle ground of Le Pautre's Garden stand on a terrace occupied with their conversation (Fig. 21). The parterres de broderie complement their elegant garb and set off their social interaction rather than detract from it.

Mlle. de Montpensier and Mme. de Sévigné, noted authoresses of the period, give us an insight into seventeenth-century attitudes about the countryside. These attitudes are quite foreign to the twentieth-century reader, who generally regards nature as an overpowering force, in the vein of nineteenth-century Romanticism. Mlle. de Montpensier, by contrast, gives as the purpose of her desire to be in the country, "qu'on dînât sur l'herbe verte des mets rustiques et convenables aux bergers et qu'on imitât quelque fois ce qu'on lu dans l'Astrée lorsque serait revêtu de l'habit de berger." Thus nature was considered a suitable setting for imitating pastoral behavior, sometimes that described in the fashionable romance, L'Astrée, lines which are spoken in a highly refined manner, reflecting the nurtured pleasance. Mme. de Sévigné had a similar view of nature. Her enjoyment consisted of walking through allées, cane in hand, gazing at the beautiful things around her. To show her direct empathy with the natural elements of the garden,
she wore a flower at her throat. 18

Madeleine de Scudéry, 19 known as Sapho to her côterie, described with great accuracy many gardens of the period, particularly those at Vaux-le-Vicomte and Versailles. Of equal interest to us is the social interaction in the gardens and parks since these descriptions parallel analogous situations in contemporaneous tableaux de mode. Her Promenade de Versailles, published in 1669 and dedicated to her close friend Louis XIV, is the most faithful account of the grandest gardens in Europe. Her discourse takes the form of a conversation between ladies and gentlemen making their way through the gardens and of a commentary on the effect of this pleasance on their delicate sentiments. We see here and elsewhere nature through the sophisticated eye of seventeenth-century aesthetes—a nature made for cultivated activities: "Ce magnifique jardin, aussi bien que les autres, a ses vases de fleurs sur les terraces. La veüe des bosquets qui sont à droit et à gauche au dela, inspirent l'Amour et les plaisirs à ceux qui ont le coeur capable." 20 In the eye of the sensitive beholder, the gardens at Versailles were Gardens of Love, paralleling the Jardin d'Amour in painting.

The Promenade

A prince living in the galant age once said, "La vie me parait une promenade dans un jardin." 21 This was not far from the truth, since the garden promenade was one of the passions of seventeenth-century
society. The garden was the place to see "le beau monde" and the site where galants went to sell their ladies "leur gazette d'amour." Not surprisingly, the promenade is one of the major themes illustrated in painted Gardens of Love in the seventeenth century. Rubens depicts it in the *Conversatie à la Mode* and the *Château in a Park*, in which he and Helena Fourment wander into the garden and park where couples convene to play games of love.

The *promenade à la mode* in seventeenth-century France was the Cours-la-Reine in Paris, the rendez-vous of fashionable society. Marie de Medici gave the walk its name since she and her court frequented the site regularly; undoubtedly Rubens knew this promenade since he was a favorite of the Queen, having glorified her reign in the series of paintings destined for the Luxembourg Palace. The *allées* of the Cours contrasted with the thickly wooded area of the Champs-Élysées, the place later haunted by the elegant characters of Watteau's *Les Charmes de la Vie* and *Gathering in the Country*. In the seventeenth century, the ritualistic promenade lasted just until evening when the *hautes compagnies* rested and supped in the Jardin de Renard.

Under the reign of Louis XIII the promenade also served to demonstrate the chivalric inclinations of the courtly gentlemen. They frequented many walks in Paris, dressed in high boots, carrying long swords, and sporting flamboyant moustaches. Similar frills characterized the ladies' fashions of the day. The author of *Les Plaisirs des Dames*, a
seventeenth-century courtesy book, used an hyperbolic metaphor to describe the beautifully clad ladies promenading on the Cours-la-Reine. He compared them to "little suns who promenade on earth in the highest apparel of glory, as the sun promenades in the sky with his car of light." 27 One can get an idea of what the modish dress worn at the promenade was like by glancing at the Frontispiece of Abraham Bosse's Le Jardin de la Noblesse Françoise (Fig. 22) in which hommes du monde lean on a balcony overlooking elegant ladies and gentlemen at the promenade in a formal garden. The fashionable world, such as it was recorded in Bosse's prints, greatly appealed to Rubens and his northern contemporaries, who sometimes modeled their subjects after figures in French prints. The type of divertissement in the Bosse Frontispiece was adapted by Rubens and made more poetic and personal in his Conversatie.

Madeleine de Scudéry's novel, Cyrus, contains a description of the Cours-la-Reine as it was in 1650. "Cette promenade est tout ensemble promenade et conversation, et est sans doute fort divertis­sante. Ces grandes allées . . . dans lequel les plus belles dames de Suze étoient et auprès de qui un nombre infini d'hommes de qualité admirablement magnifiquement vêtus, alloient et venoient en les saluant." 28

The Tuileries was a haunt for "les belles et des galants" throughout the seventeenth century. One saw there and sees still in Charles le Brun's tapestry for the month of October people "dans les habits tout ce que le luxe peut inventer des plus tendre et de plus touchant. Les
Not only the public parks, but also the gardens of châteaux were created for the promenade. Designed for the slow pace of promeneurs, the gardens had a succession of different points of view to keep their interest and to create topics of conversation. The main allées diverted into smaller pathways where small buildings, statues, and waterfalls provided surprising touches for the promeneurs. Whether in the country or the city, the promenade and the game of love, which accompanied it, were set into the framework of the garden.

Abraham Bosse's L'Odorat, one of the engravings of the senses in his allegorical series, gives us some idea of the mise en scène of the promenade in a garden of the period (Fig. 23). Bosse interprets this age-old allegory in contemporary terms, with fashionably dressed promeneurs strolling in a sweet-smelling pleasance, whose elements conspire to beguile them into love. However, they view nature as do the characters in La Calprenède's Cléopâtre—from afar; the garden is principally a conversation piece and a backdrop for their amorous activities.

The passion for the promenade, as evidenced by literary descriptions and engravings, was not confined to France; it was also one of the great loves of English society at the period. At the beginning of
the century, James I was known to have promenaded in the Garden of Theobalds; the plot was decorated with a mount of Venus set within a labyrinth which provided a conceit for the games of love carried on there. 30

The popularity of the promenade in England continued to the time of Charles I: Spring Gardens adjoining St. James's Park was a resort of the gentry, where they promenaded, dined, and played games. Galants frequented the dark, sequestered walks, looking for ladies willing to join them. "The Ring" as it was called, was the track in the park where ladies and gentlemen in carriages would circulate and observe one another. 31

Later in the century, after the Restoration, the upper classes regularly frequented the walks in Hyde Park, St. James's, and Cupid's Garden. Samuel Pepys "observed ladies and gentlemen making love together till twelve o'clock at night." 32 And Charles II composed a poem about his activities in the parks and gardens of the period, looking down every pathway for his love:

I pass all my hours in a shady old grove
But I live not the day when I see not my love;
I survey every walk now my Phyllis is gone
And I sigh when I think we were there all alone;
O, then, tis O then, that I think there's no hell
Like loving, like loving too well. 33
The Fête

The fête, a galant festival or lavish entertainment for the leisure classes, was one of the principal social recreations held in a garden or park. Dancing, boating, fireworks, and dramatic entertainments were all featured at the fête. It was a popular entertainment under the Regency of Marie de Medici. The Queen favored the collation, a light but galant meal eaten with great ritual. Often the collation was a major enterprise, and serenades were composed for it. The collation is one of the most popular diversions illustrated by Northern painters at this period; it seems that the artists equated it with love since many of the meals represented show people embracing at the table. The courtesy books of the epoch underscored the banquet as an activity for love: one of them instructs a gentleman to entertain his love by offering her a suitable collation and a promenade in the garden.

These entertainments became especially popular around mid-century, when they were recorded in the Gazette of Loret (25 June, 1651) as delicious "festins, ballets, danses dans les jardins, (with) feux regals et magnificences." Included in the activities of the fête were colin-maillard, bowling (a game of love in the emblem books), cards, and tennis.

The most lavish festivals were held in the gardens of Versailles under Louis XIV. Les Plaisirs de l'Isle Enchantée of 1664, which lasted
for three days, was perhaps the most famous; it was recorded by Israel Silvestre, along with the Fête of 1668 held in the gardens at Versailles to commemorate the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Mlle. de Soudéry records in the Promenade de Versailles that the King and Queen took the pleasure of the promenade, walking through the large parterre to the park, where they came upon the great fountains. There they found large tables set up for the grand collation, lighted by candles and surrounded by ladies and gentlemen of the court.

The water fêtes such as those enacted at Versailles have a long history in the seventeenth century. They appear most frequently in the paintings of David Vinckboons, in which galant couples in boats and gondolas glide along lakes and ponds of country estates. During Louis XIV's reign we hear of the King supping with his lady-friends to the music of hautboys and violins in flotilla or ships constructed after Venetian gondolas. On the occasion of his marriage to Mlle. de Nantes, the King and his entire matrimonial entourage glided in boats on the Grand Canal and held a collation.

In Holland, fêtes and recreations were often held in the countryside, and one gets a glimpse at their pastoral setting by looking at the paintings of David Vinckboons, which are often set in a glade or clearing of a forest. Two of the major diversions of Dutch society were picnics and dinners, counterparts to the French collation. Another pastime was the traditional springtime trip to the forest of Zevenhuyzen made by the
youth of Leiden; they enjoyed meals underneath green arbors and trees which served as canopies. Similar pastoral banquets were the subjects of Flemish and Dutch "conversations," often set in either a park or a forest. The rites of Spring were generally celebrated in the country. On the first of May, an official holiday, people engaged in erotic customs that dated back to ancient springtime folklore.

These pleasure trips were topics for the novels of the day, such as Johan van Heemkerck's Batavische Arcadia, whose plot revolves around a group of Dutch aristocrats on a speelreisje (pleasure trip) to the country house of Rosemond, the heroine of the novel. Many of Heemskerck's characters were modeled on his own acquaintances. A modern scholar has labeled this book a description of mid-seventeenth-century aristocratic society.

Dancing in the open air was one of the chief recreations of the Dutch gentry, a pastime that is reflected in the works of Jérôme Janssens. The Dutch upper classes were fond of French dances such as the minuet, scaramouche, and galliard, all known by their original French names. The games were colin-maillard (portrayed in paintings as a game of love), Kloospel, an ancestor of croquet (the subject of an emblem book portraying the lusus amoris), and Kaatsen, an outdoor tennis game. Ninepins, one of the most popular games, is the subject of some of De Hooch's paintings, a diversion which carries an erotic significance.
Seventeenth-century conversation painting reflects the primary occupation of good society at this period—the civil conversation, or cultured communication. Conversation was a practice refined into an art form, and expressing civility, gentility, and politeness. Its role in seventeenth-century culture must be clearly understood.

The Grand Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française of 1695 defines "conversation" as agreeable and easeful interchange among people and also as a circle of acquaintances, society, or company. It is used, for instance, in its seventeenth-century connotations in Dryden's Marriage a la Mode: "A gentleman, Sir, that understands the grand mond so well, has haunted the best conversations." Conversations were the center of social life at the period; Le Manuel d'Amour, an early seventeenth-century courtesy book, states that civil conversation and the frequenting of la bonne compagnie are the principal pleasures of polite society. Each day groups of people gather in gardens of a château or hôtel to exchange witty and eloquent phrases about the nature of love. Conversation was considered honorable and virtuous and the greatest pleasure of love. It was cultivated and developed into an art (L'Art de la Conversation) by the Precieuses in Paris, and this art was imitated by cultivated persons all over Europe.
instance, van Heemskerck, the author of *Batavische Arcadia*, engaged in conversations at the Castle of Saint Germain, modeled on those of Precieuses. 48 Pieter Cornelisz van Hooft, whose songs and poems will be discussed in a later chapter, held literary conversations in his salon at the Château Muiden, a center of cultural activity in Holland in the first quarter of the century. 49

The art of conversation was accompanied by rules for its practice: for example, one was expected to speak with a light and rapid spirit and to give the impression of ease, in the manner of the sprezzatura that the characters exhibited in the *Cortegiano*. Like singing, conversation was often accompanied by the lute and violin, which brought out the delicate nuances of its sound. This new civility of language was united with a delicacy of sentiment that produced a highly refined code of behavior, 50 behavior that we see in Rubens' *Conversatie à la Mode*.

Novels of the period reflect the avid interest in conversation. Perhaps the most popular and influential of these was the previously mentioned pastoral novel, *L'Astrée* by Honore d'Urfe, written in four installments from 1607-27. This romance, taking the form of conversations between shepherds and their lady-loves, was a kind of manual of polite conduct. The discourses chiefly concerned the nature of love and courtship, a problem that occupied the European upper classes throughout the century. The conversational format and codes of
behavior had an enormous impact on the manners of this society. L'Astrée was the model for Madeleine de Scudéry's La Promenade de Versailles and La Fausse Clélie, both written in the form of dialogues. We see one of these fashionable conversations depicted on the Frontispiece to La Fausse Clélie; the garden is the backdrop for interaction of the principal characters in the novel—a most delightful ambiance for their social intercourse (Fig. 24).

Fashionable people all over Europe imitated the dialogues of L'Astrée; they disguised themselves as shepherds and shepherdesses and made excursions into the countryside to hold conversations. The Dutch were especially fond of the romance; it was translated and adapted to verse in Holland several times throughout the century. They also imitated the chivalric codes of behavior and even adopted French names derived from the characters.

Illustrations of the novel often locate the dialogues of its major characters in gardens and parks. Rabel's Frontispiece to the Conclusion of 1628 depicts the lovers in an ideal landscape beside the Fountain of Truth and Love (Fig. 25). The 1633 edition, also illustrated by Rabel, portrays the characters as personages of seventeenth-century French society and sets them within the confines of a French formal garden (Fig. 26).

Courtesy books and treatises were devoted to rules governing conversation. One of the most influential was Stefano Guazzo's
Conversazione civile, first published in Venice in 1574 and strongly influenced by Castiglione's Il Cortegiano. The Conversazione civile was a major influence on Charles Sorel's La Maison des Jeux of 1642, a book in which a pleasant company sets the standards for honnête conversation and the pleasures of society. Other tracts such as René Bary's L'Esprit de Cour, ou les Conversations galantes of 1662 and La Journal de conversations of 1673 became very popular with the aristocracy and upper bourgeoisie. L'Art de Plaire dans la Conversation, published in Paris in 1688, explains that he who attempts to please should carefully choose bon mots that amuse the assembly, he who wishes to be successful in conversation must have an elegant appearance and polished manners. Incidentally, the Frontispiece to L'Art de Plaire, engraved by Thomassin, shows a terrace near the garden, the setting where elegant personages participate in the game of conversation.

The garden in its social aspects, including the promenade, fête, and the conversation, should be kept in mind when one views seventeenth-century pictorial conversations. The paintings frequently reflected these pastimes, even though they were at times overlaid with symbols and pictorial conventions. One cannot understand Rubens' Conversatie and other paintings of the same genre without knowing the social milieu of the period, whose significance for artistic creation cannot be underestimated. On one level, Rubens' Conversatie à la
Mode is a pictorial parallel to L'Astrée and to tracts concerning polite conversation. Its very title is significant proof of its meaning as a conversation piece, the most notable example of this genre in the seventeenth century.
NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO


3 For a discussion of the iconography of Fragonard's panels, see Donald Posner, "The True Path of Fragonard's Progress of Love," Burlington Magazine, 114 (1972), 526-34.


10 These works will come under discussion in Chapter Five.
Zumthor, P. 28, states that some of these pleasure grounds were patterned after the Gardens of Armida and other literary gardens with the aid of engravings and paintings.

Gothein, History of Garden Art, II, 19, 22.

Morley, Le Sentiment de la Nature, p. 138 explains that "la bonne compagnie" and "politesse" are popular terms used in social and literary tracts of the seventeenth century to characterize the nature of the age.

Émile Magne, Les Fêtes en Europe au XVIIᵉ Siècle (Paris: Martin-Dupris, 1930), pp. 235-36. Magne quotes the term "un coin--" which is presumably taken from a seventeenth-century tract or literary piece. However, the source for the quotation is not given.

La Calprenède (1614-63) is the author of the pseudo-historical romance, Cléopâtre (1647-56), written in twelve volumes. Morley, p. 125, quotes from Cléopâtre (Paris: A. Courbé, 1658), XI, 205.


Magne, p. 171.

Madeleine de Scudéry (1607-1701) is the author of two famous romances, Le Grand Cyrus (1649-53) and Clélie (1654-60). Both novels depict the society of the mid-seventeenth century in the form of conversations which contain ideas on the education of women and other timely subjects. Harvey, Oxford Companion, pp. 667-68.


33. Quoted in Ryan, *Stuart Life and Manners*, p. 314.


42. Alison M. Kettering, "The Batavian Arcadia: Pastoral Themes in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art," Diss. University of California, Berkeley, 1974, pp. 123-25. Dr. Kettering's dissertation is a scholarly treatment of Dutch pastoral themes in literature and art. I am indebted to her discussions of the literature of the period, which at times, connects with the garden theme.


44. De Hooch's *Game of Ninepins* will come under discussion in Chapter Five.


47. Magendie, I, 247, quotes passages from Le Manuel d'Amour, published in Paris in 1614: "La conversation civile est un de principaux effets de la conversation humaine, et la frequentation des bonnes compagnies sert d'une lime pour polir nos imperfections." Magendie goes on to explain that in the book, several people of high birth retire to a château at Saint-Germain-en-Laye to discourse on several subjects, principally that of love.


50. Magendie, La Politesse, I, 327.


52. Kettering, "Batavian Arcadia," pp. 16-17, 325.


Seventeenth-Century tableaux de mode which feature Gardens of Love are paralleled by a number of contemporaneous poems and dramas with similar themes. This chapter will treat these subjects. The first of them is the lady who possesses all the attractions of nature. This metaphor is frequent in poetry, and, as I shall show, it also dominates Rubens' Conversatie à la Mode, in which the woman's radiance extends to, and even dominates the garden around her.

The second convention in literature paralleled in painting is the "amorous grove." The garden here is a locale for courtship and amorous dalliance. The English Cavalier poets, the French Libertins, their counterparts in Flanders and Holland, and several dramatists describe galants making love away from the restrictive life of the court. Here, as in painted Gardens of Love, nature is a backdrop for the gentleman devoted to winning his lady. An offshoot of this topos is the theme of the Isle of Love, an enchanted far-away place where pilgrims go in order to pay homage to the Goddess of Love or just to be alone. This theme, which influenced the conception of Watteau's Embarkation from the Isle
of Cythera was a popular one in the seventeenth century.

Amorous dalliance in gardens leads sometimes to marriage—hence the need to study the epithalamium, a poetic genre whose conventions Rubens also used. He could have known epithalamia from his reading of the classics and he is likely to have been familiar with the epithalamic poetry of his own time. Therefore I shall investigate these conventions and apply them to the painting.

The last section in this chapter will be devoted to a discussion of the Happy Man in his Garden, a theme which permeated the literature and philosophy of the seventeenth century. The beatus ille, as this man was known, was the gentleman who chose a life of retirement at his country estate away from the confines of the court. This topos seems to have had a direct influence on Rubens' late pictures, such as the Conversatie and the Château in a Park, which show the artist with his wife enjoying the tranquil life of the garden and country.

The Garden and the Lady's Beauty

The ladies are the central subjects of Rubens' painting, lending their beauty to the garden around them. Certainly Rubens wished his viewer to make a direct association between the radiance of the ladies and the beauty of the garden. The most famous poetic association of this kind is in Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis of 1593, in which Venus says to her young friend:
Since I have hemmed thee here
Within the circuit of this ivory pale,
I'll be a park, and thou shalt be my deer
Feed where thou wilt, on mountain, or in dale;
Graze on my lips, and if those be dry,
Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie.
Within this limit is relief enough,
Sweet bottom grass and high delightful plain,
Round rising hillocks, brakes obscure and rough,
To shelter thee from tempest and from rain;
Then be my deer, since I am such a park,
No dog shall rouse thee, though a thousand bark. (11.229-240)

If we look at Titian's Venus and the Organist in the Prado (Fig. 12), we may see this type of metaphor at work. The formal Renaissance garden behind the protagonists may well be an extended metaphor for the beautiful lady in the loggia.

The image of the lady as a garden continues into seventeenth-century love poetry, a literary equivalent to Rubens' Conversatie. Some quotations from the poems of the period should suffice to draw the parallel.

At times seventeenth-century poets make nature pay tribute to the beauty of the mistress; she not only commands her lover's respect, but that of everything around her. One might say that the "pathetic fallacy," prevalent in Romantic nature poetry, is at work in these poems. The Promenade Poem typifies this trend; in it a poet's mistress walks through the garden, showering her favors on every plant and tree. We see this convention at work in the sixteenth century in Ronsard's Elegy to Mary Stuart; the Queen here is depicted as promenading through her gardens at Fontainebleau. This type of poem provided a
model for seventeenth-century poets, who continued and expanded the
genre. I quote a translation from the French by H. M. Richmond:

Thoughtful and bathing your bosom with the fine chrysal of your fallen tears, sadly you used to walk by the long avenues of the great gardens of the royal palace . . . All the paths whitened beneath your clothes . . . while of the rocks, although they lacked souls, seeing so fine a lady walk, and the bare spaces and the fine sands, and the pool where dwells many a swan clothed all in white, and the high pines with their green-painted tops, all gazed at you as something sanctified, and thought they saw, as they had seen nothing similar, a goddess clothed as a mortal walking.

Upon Appleton House (ca. 1652) by Andrew Marvell (1621-1678) is a tribute to the mistress of the country estate where the poet resided for a number of years. Mary, the heroine, is responsible for the splendor of the garden. The poet addresses her with an hyperbolic rhetoric implying that her beauty is necessary for the survival of perfect order and beauty of the garden. The poem, besides extolling Mary, gives us an insight into the meticulously cultivated formal gardens of the seventeenth century where real ladies would have promenaded.

Tis She that to these Gardens gave
That wondrous Beauty which they have;
She streightness on the wood bestows;
To Her the Meadow sweetness owes; . . .
She yet more Pure, Sweet, Streight, and Fair,
Than Gardens, Woods, Meades, Rivers are.

This convention is also prevalent in Dutch poetry of the period. Joost van Vondel's (1587-1679) Lucifer (1653) contains a paradisiacal garden whose treasures are sanctified by the presence of the lady to whom
they pay homage. The heroine and her garden habitat possess erotic charms that possibly inspired Milton's *Paradise Lost*:

```
Tis He whose kind and generous care
This lovely garden's range hath planted
Where nought that charms desire is wanted,
And joy's a guest immortal here . . .
O sister-daughter-fairest bride,
What shall I call thee? Paradise
Has million flowers that smelling rise
To kiss thy feet well satisfied.  
```

Richard Lovelace (1618-1658) and other poets of the period pay tribute to their ladies in what Hadfield calls "seed catalogue verses"—lines in which flowers testify to the mistress's charms. Richard Lovelace's Aramantha enters a garden and is admired by a number of flowers, including the "noble Heliotropian (which) now turns to her, and knowes no Sun." The lady is the source of life for both the sunflower and her lover.

A parallel to this line appears in Philip Ayers' *Emblemes D'Amour en Quatre Langue* of 1683 (Fig. 27). Cupid sits in a formal garden and gazes at a sunflower, which bends towards him. The emblem is accompanied by the verse entitled, *My eye towards my sun*. "As the sunflower in turning follows the flame which burns in the sky / Thus the lover always follows the goddess who serves as the sun to its soul." Jacques Callot (1592?–1635), the noted French etcher and draughtsman, in similar terms pays homage to the lady he admires. His *Palace Gardens at Nancy*, an etching of 1625, is dedicated to the Dutchess of
Lorraine, who is shown promenading in her garden (Fig. 28). The Dutchess is centrally placed in the foreground of the composition, surrounded by courtiers and protected by an umbrella encircling her head. Her central placement and the umbrella both evoke the sun as a symbol for a ruler, fully exploited by Louis XIV later in the century. Callot's tribute is made even more explicit by the dedicatory poem at the top of the print: it compares the Dutchess with the beginning of spring and, by extension of this metaphor, with the garden in springtime. I quote H. Diane Russel's translation: "This drawing fashioned with the honors of springtime, beautified with objects of various pastimes, represents your time of life, Milady, during which each sweetness there enclosed is like another flower or precious rosebush which will unceasingly produce sweet-smelling roses whose fragrance will please mankind and heaven." 10

The Dutch poet Jacob Westerbaen (1599-1670) compares the lady's charm and beauty to his garden (probably at his country seat at Ockenburg). Westerbaen's poem uses the carpe diem convention; the lady's charms, like the garden's, must be enjoyed while they flourish, since they soon will fade. Lines from his Denkct niet dat den lieven geur will illustrate the point:

Maidens are like garden bowers
Fill'd with flowers,
Which are the spring-time's choicest treasure;
While the budding leaves they bear
Flourish there,
They will be a source of pleasure
But whene'er the lovely spring
Spreads her wing,
And the rose's charms have fleet'd;
Nor the bowers,
Shall be with former praise be greet'd . . .
Maidens! who man's suit deride,
And whose pride
Scorns the hearts that bow before ye;
From my song this lesson learn
Be not stern
To the lovers who adore ye.  

Jacob Cats' emblem, *Turpe Senilis Amor* (Disgraceful Aged Love), illustrates the *carpe diem* theme of Westerbaen's poem, a theme prevalent in the thought of the period (Fig. 29). Cats' emblem depicts a rose garden, a symbol of transient beauty like that of a young woman. The verse tells us that she once was the object of much admiration, but is now forsaken because she is growing old. Cats tells the young woman that she must yield to love while youth is in full bloom like the rose garden.12 Throughout, the garden is associated with youth and beauty, and therefore with love—hence it is the ubiquitous setting for amorous activity in painting in the seventeenth century.

Thomas Carew (1595?-1633), the Cavalier poet, uses the delicious imagery of the garden to describe the seduction of his lover. A few lines from his *Rapture*, published in 1640, illustrate the point:

So I will rifle all the sweets, that dwell
In my delicious Paradise, and swell
My bagge with honey, drawne forth by the power
Of fervent kisses, from each spicie flower.
I'le seize the rose-buds in their perfum'd bed,
The Violet knots, like curious Mazes spread
O're all the Garden, taste the ripned Cherry,  
The warme, firme Apple, tipt with corall berry:  
Then I will visit, with a wandring kisse,  
The vale of lillies, and the Bower of blissee:  
And where the beauteous Region doth divide  
Into two milkie waways, my lips shall slide  
Downe those smooth allies.  

It is this kind of unabashed sensuousness that Rubens portrays in his Bower of Bliss about the same time as Carew. His ample women dominate the garden, lend their beauty to its beauty, and become metaphors for the splendor of nature's life-giving powers.

The Garden as the Locale For Love

The garden, originally the place of unfallen innocence, became for seventeenth-century poets the "locale identified with a naturalist glorification of sensuality." For example, the Libertin poets, active in the first quarter of the century, used a paradisiacal enclosure to exalt the sensuality of the lovers who inhabited it. Thus, they proposed the abolition of chastity and honor, virtues formerly connected with the paradise of innocence. They described nature as sensuously as the amorous activities transpiring there. With "pathetic fallacy" the lovers transfer their feelings to the garden around them, and in turn, the natural ardor of the garden incites the passion of the lovers. These conventions appear in the works of a poet such as Saint-Amant (1594-1661?), in the English poetry of Thomas Stanley (1625-1678), and Thomas Randolph (1605-1635), and in the Dutch poems:
of Joost van Vondel (1587–1679) and P. C. Hooft (1581–1647).

Love-making is at its best in a natural setting far away from the court, whether it be in a park, garden, grove, bower, or field. Thus, one of the most popular poems of the early seventeenth century, La Jouissance, written by Saint-Amant ca. 1629, begins with the following:

Loin de ce pompeux édifice,
Où nos princes font leur séjour,
Et lasse de voir à la cour
Tant de contrainte et d'artifice.

Far from the court, there are pleasurable locales suitable for the amorous activity of the poet and his mistress, such as a lovely grove:

Tantôt, dans un bois écarté,
Où n'entre qu'on peu de clarté,
Nous visitons la Solitude

Here a myrtle provides shade for further amorous discourse:

là, sous un myrte que les fées
Respectent comme un arbre saint,
Où Venus elle-même a peint
Ses mystères et ses trophées.
Nous faisons des voeux solennels
Que nos feux seraient éternels.

Gardens, groves, parks, and bowers are stock settings for love in these French poems, whose conventions artists adapted for their painted pleasances. They utilized idyllic settings as backdrops for amorous invitations to their mistresses. These invitations to the lady to forget duty, fears, and virginity in order to seize the day out in nature are common in erotic poetry. This is paralleled in Rubens' Conversatie à la Mode when the artist invites his Helena to enjoy the
carefree life of the garden.

The garden, the maid, and the *carpe diem* theme are the ingredients of a song from the *Academy of Compliments* of 1650. The song instructs the youthful lover on his way to court:

He that intends to woo a maid  
With youthful heat, must shun the shade.  
When Flora's gardens are i' th' prime  
Let him and her pluck May and Time  
There, where the sun doth shine, birds sing,  
Let them two both kiss and fling,  
Till summer's fairest carpet spread  
Yields them a green and pleasant bed.

The writer of this delightful song claimed that youthful love is best in the springtime when the garden of love is in bloom; youth thus reigns in it. Abraham Bosse (1602-1676), a French engraver and contemporary of Rubens, portrayed this same message in his *Adolescence*, from the allegorical series *The Ages of Man* (Fig. 30). A youthful courtier and his lady walk in a garden of love where Cupid reigns. The gentleman declares love to his companion, intending to "pluck May and Time." The inscription below the engraving tells us that the lovers are in their adolescence, whose youthful ardor compares to the vigor of spring, the season of rebirth and growth:

*Ces Amans en Adolescence*  
Qui de leur age est le Printemps,  
D'Amour espreunant la puissance,  
Cherchant a se rendu contans.

Cupid's arrow will put the lovers into his prison:
Par l'obiet des plus belles choses;
Qu'estale l'aimable saison,
Qui produit les lys et les roses.

Their prison is like the season of spring in the garden, where lovely lilies and roses bloom. Bosse makes a direct connection between the garden in full bloom and the regeneration and growth associated with love in the prime of life.

Gardens, groves, and arbors are saluted in a poem of ca. 1620 attributed to James I; they are the settings for the enjoyment of his lady's favors, as they were for so many courtiers in the tableaux de mode of the time:

See that Garden
Where Oft I had reward in
For my true love . . .
Oft in that arbour while that she
With melting Kisses . . . did ravish me
Hail to those groves
Where we enjoyed our loves
So many days! . . .
More several ways of pleasure than Love's Queen
Which once in bed with Mars by all the gods was seen. 22

In France, La Fontaine's pastoral ambients and gardens parallel those in paintings of the seventeenth century. It has been pointed out that these dreamy pastoral settings set the stage for Watteau's fêtes galantes at the end of the century. 23 But La Fontaine's response to the gardens at Vaux-le-Vicomte in his Songe de Vaux of 1658 fits in with the familiar poetic convention of the seventeenth century:

Errer dans un jardin, s'égarer dans un bois,
Se coucher sur les fleurs, respirer leur haleine,
Ecouter en rêvant le bruit d'une fontaine.
In this delightful garden the poet thinks of his lady:

Quant à moy, j'ay bonne envie
De n'en bouger de ma vie;
On y voit souvent les yeux
De l'adorable Sylvie²⁴

For La Fontaine, "le printemps" is the season for love in the garden, the same theme which characterizes Abraham Bosse's engraving Le Printemps, depicting two lovers in front of a Garden of Love (Fig. 31). The explanatory verses tell us that the beauties of the garden in springtime, though lovely, cannot compare to the pleasures of the two lovers. These verses, like La Fontaine's poem, mention the trickle of the fountain; they also praise the sweet breath of Zephyr and the fragrant flowers that Cupid, the gardener, culls from the pleasance behind.

The literature of Flanders and Holland is of special interest to us since its Gardens of Love parallel those in Flemish and Dutch paintings of the period. In fact, these poets used conventions such as the garden, springtime, and courtship in a way similar to authors in England and France. In general, there was a strong influence of English and French literature throughout the century: L'Astrée, the works of Madeleine de Scudéry, and the Arcadia of Sir Phillip Sydney were translated and imitated. The Dutch especially had a predilection for romantic, poetical works, such as the love poetry and the amorous songs mentioned earlier.²⁵
Thus, Laurens Reael's *Moghte Ick Nu Mijn Krans Van Roosen*, one of the most popular lyrics of the period, celebrates love in a pastoral setting:

```
I will twine a wreath of roses
Round my shepherd's flowing hair,
And the world will then declare
That the wreath my love declares.
```

Jan van der Noot (1535-1601) of Antwerp wrote pastoral love poetry akin to the French and English love poems of the period. He traveled to France and England, where he was in touch with literary circles. His *Bosken*, published ca. 1570, a book of pastoral lyrics, belongs to the international genre of pastoral love poetry:

```
I saw my Nymph when sweetest was the year
In a green lea extending alongside
A quiet grove--alone, modest and blithe.
```

Van der Noot, like other contemporaneous poets and painters, paid tribute to the promenade, which he observed at the Champs-Elysées in Paris:

```
La vont ils donc parmy la douce plaine
Heureusement libres se pourmener,
Et aucuns s'eux près de quelque fontaine
Vont reposer, dormir et sommeiller.
```

Like Van der Noot, Pieter Cornelisz van Hooft (1581-1647) wrote love lyrics and pastoral poetry inspired by French, Italian, and German models. As mentioned previously, later in life Hooft settled at his country mansion at Muiden, which became the center of literary activity in Holland. "Le Circle de Muiden," as it was called, was permeated
by the spirit of Louis XIII's court. The works of French authors were read, and the *politesse* of French salons was cultivated here. Hooft portrayed himself as a brilliant lover in his lyrics, which often appeared in songbooks of the period; couples frequently hold such books in *tableaux de mode* of the seventeenth century. We can imagine them singing lines such as these:

I'll hie me to the forest now,
The sun shines bright in glory;
And of our courtship every bough
Perchance may tell the story.  

Daniel Heinsius (1580-1655), a professor at the University of Leiden, was a noted emblematist and composer of love lyrics; his poems and emblems represent a genre which can be shown to parallel the amorous society paintings. His lyrics were mostly laments of languishing swains to their cold, cruel mistresses—a poetic convention we have noted earlier. Heinsius' *Emblemata Amatoria*, which we will be investigating in a later chapter in reference to the iconography of society paintings, was a collection of lyrics and emblems celebrating the beauty of pastoral life and the loveliness of Dutch maidens. The emblems of the book closely resemble the society paintings and at times illuminate their significance.

The *Gezelschapslied* is perhaps the genre of poetry which most closely parallels and, indeed, explains the iconography of many "conversations" in the seventeenth century. A song of this kind was a gay,
light lyric, sung by people who made a pleasure trip into the country. Every town above a certain size in Holland published a *liederboek*, which contained amorous poems, composed to be sung at outings. Some of the most popular society songs are in song books which we will be investigating in Chapter Five with reference to paintings of the period; these books contain engravings and woodcuts that depict fashionable people in the open air singing lyrics from similar volumes.

Another genre of poetry, which had connections with society paintings of the period is the *hof-dicht* or country house poem. It celebrates the pleasures connected with country châteaux, the garden, and the landlord’s property. Written for the newly rich landowners, the *hof-dicht* celebrates the prosperity of the country estates and lovingly describes their lavish sculptural decorations and imposing architecture. These songs praise the life of landed noblemen or of well-to-do intellectuals, such as Rubens, who have chosen the life of retirement on their country estates. The themes of the country house poem—the pleasures of the retired nobleman, his wealth and prosperity—are precisely those which Rubens portrays in the *Conversatie à la Mode*, *Château in a Park*, and *Landscape with Castle Steen*.

**The Isle of Love**

The Isle of Love, closely related in iconography and spirit to the Garden of Love, was a well-known subject of seventeenth-century
literature. It is best known to art historians by Watteau's *Embarkation from the Isle of Cythera*, probably inspired by the theme as expressed in *gravures de mode* of the later seventeenth century and by Dancourt's play, *Les Trois Cousins*, first performed on October 18, 1700, and revived in 1709. But the Isle of Love was popular long before that.

The Isle Of Cythera was a central motif in the *Hypnerotomachia*, a Venetian romance written by Francesco Colonna in ca. 1499 and translated into French with the title *Le Songe de Poliphile* (Fig. 32). As Anthony Blunt has noted, the peristyle on the Isle of Cythera, described in the romance as an elaborate circular garden with trees, bosquets, and fountains, probably influenced the Colonnade in the gardens at Versailles, built from J. H. Mansart's designs between 1684 and 1687. Blunt also notes the connection of *Le Songe de Poliphile* with pastoral romances, such as *L'Astrée*, and the fanciful islands described by les Precieuses. This ideal pleasance was praised in France as a place of enchantment and as an appropriate environment for love. The Abbé of Tallement described such an enchanted place in his *Le Voyage de l'Isle d'Amour*, published in Paris in 1663: "Nous nous trouvâmes près d'une isle, bordée de jardins fort agréables... et cette isle agréable est l'Isle d'Amour à qui chaque mortel rend hommage à son tour."

The travelers to the Isle of Love see a plaque which contains the following lines:
Vous qui cherchez d'un amoureux désir
A gouster icy-bas les plaisirs de la vie,
Abordez en ce lieu pour passer votre ennui
Sans amour il n'est point de solide plaisir.

Surely these sentiments anticipate the tenor of Watteau's *Isle of Cythera*. Its landscape is a descendent of these poetic lands.

*Le Royaume de Coquetterie* of 1654 by Francois Hedelin, Abbe’ d'Aubignac, is another prose variation on the theme of the island of love (Fig. 33). The author's description is accompanied by a print of a lost island in the middle of the ocean, overgrown with flowers, brooks, and fountains. The Queen of the realm is "l'Amour Coquet," who reigns in her capitol, "Coquetterie," guarded by "Jeunesse." Her subjects are coquets and coquettes who wander near the "Temple de Pudeur" and the "Place de Cajolerie." A citizen who reaches the Palais de la Bonne Fortune enjoys the privileges of love under the aegis of the Dame la Mode and the Dame l'Intrigue.

Mrs. Aphra Behn's *Voyage to the Isle of Love* of 1663 typifies the joie de vivre of Restoration poetry in England. The Isle is described as a garden pleasance—the description would have appealed to painters of the Love Garden at the period.

A thousand gloomy walks the Bower contains
Sacred all to mighty "Love",
A thousand winding turns where Pleasure reigns,
Obscur'd from day by twining Boughs above,
Where Love invents a thousand Plays,
Where Lovers act ten thousand Joys:
Recesses Dark, and Grottos all conspire,
To favour "Love" and soft desire,
Shades, Springs, and Fountains flowering Beds,
To Joys invites, to Pleasure leads,
To Pleasure which all Humane thought exceeds.42

These isles are related to the enchanted realm of friendship and
love cartographically described by Madeleine de Scudéry on the Carte
de Tendre, a section of her novel, Clélie (Fig. 34). This map outlines
a metaphorical country where lovers pass from one region to the other
on their voyage to the town of Tendre. On their metaphorical journey,
lovers begin with the town, Nouvelle Amitié and pass then through
three routes, Estime, Reconnaissance, and Inclination. They must pro­
ceed through the tree-emboved hamlets of Grand-Esprit, Joli-Vers,
Billet-Galant, Billet-Doux, and Sincérité in order to reach their ultimate
destination. The map as a whole outlines the "Kingdom of Sensibilité."
Scudéry’s friend, Chapelain, called it "discreet, confidential, and
enchanting," and the sensibility of the Carte de Tendre appealed to
ladies throughout Europe.43 Clélie was the Bible of women and gentle­
men of taste—perhaps the same people who were wont to commission
tableaux de mode, such as Rubens’ Conversatie.

Other imaginary realms and kingdoms of sensibility are prevalent
in seventeenth-century literature. Tristan l’Hermite published in 1659
the Carte du Royaume D’Amour, a description of the region where love
rules and the way to get there.44 La Fontaine’s Amours de Psyche et de
Cupidon of 1669 alludes to the departure of Venus from her domain,45
and Théophile de Viau’s (1590-1626) Le Parc de Silvie, translated by
Thomas Stanley in 1651, extolls the enchanted Isle of Love:

In th' midst is placed a little Isle,
   Crowned by an Arbors shady crest,
   Where Spring eternal seems to smile
   With flowers by careful Nature drest.

Parks and Gardens in the Theater

Parks and gardens were conventional settings for courtship and love-play in drama; on the stage, they became backdrops, usually painted panels with a few trees and perhaps a fountain. It is worthwhile to explore some theatrical garden scenes, since often the garden in paintings of the period resembles a stage set. This is especially true of, for example, Dirk Hals' Promeneurs in a Garden in Vienna in which the summery garden hedge behind the protagonists provides a stage-like backdrop for their conversation (Fig. 35). In several plays of the period, entire scenes are devoted to the promenade and to conversations in a garden, precisely those pastimes which society painters portrayed.

In the English theater of the Caroline period, the garden was often used as a backdrop for the social activities of galants and their ladies. Richard Brome's Sparagus Garden, acted in 1635, depicts the dialogue of a group of courtiers and their ladies on a walk in the garden. Act III, Scene vi is a spoof of their fashionable pastimes; the gentlemen use hyperbolic and artificial language when they invite their ladies for a promenade set in front of a park backdrop:
Come Madams, now if you please after your garden Feast, to exercise your numerous feet and tread a curious knot upon the grassie square, you shall fresh vigor adde unto the spring, and double the encrease, sweetness and beauty of every plant and flower throughout the garden.

After reading these lines, it is difficult to take seriously the poems of Ronsard, Marvell, and Vondel.

Settings of parks and gardens for amorous dalliance carried over into the Restoration period, where they appear in nearly every comedy concerned with love and intrigue. William Wycherly's *Love in a Wood*, or *Saint James's Park* of 1671 was devoted to the goings-on in that fashionable gathering place. *The Virtuoso* by Thomas Shadwell of 1676 depicts the puritanical Lady Gimcrack exclaiming that indecent love-play is carried on in her garden:

Lady Gimcrack: Mr. Bruce and Mr. Longvil in the Garden with my nieces, say you! young Sluts do they snap at all the Game that comes hither? What are they discoursing of?

Sir Samuel: Why to the tune of Love Madam; what should young gentlemen and Ladies talk of else?

The park and garden backdrop was an international convention in the seventeenth century. It appears in French drama, specifically in *La Comedie des Tuilleries*, composed in part by Richelieu and performed in 1636. The lovers Aglante and Cleonice here meet for a tête à tête in the famous Parisian garden, whose physical features are described with realistic detail. Perhaps the scene in Richelieu's play somewhat resembled that depicted in F. Ertinger's Frontispiece for Molière's
Melicerte, in which the amorous protagonists engage in conversation before a garden backdrop (Fig. 36). L'Intrigue des Carrosses à Cinq Sous by Jean Simonin, called Chevalier, depicts the manners of the society which frequented the Tuileries and Luxembourg Gardens. Played in 1662-63, the comedy depicts women entering coaches wearing "loups" (satin masks for intrigue), while rakes about town seek to flirt with them. 50

Stefano della Bella, the Italian engraver and etcher working in Paris from 1639-50, designed stage settings which use fashionable gardens as backdrops for the drama of the period (Fig. 37). His designs for Mirame, the tragi-comedy composed by Desmarets-de Saint-Sorlin, Richelieu's henchman, have come down to us. The play was performed for Richelieu in 1641 and its important love scenes transpire in a formal Italian garden. The pleasance is decorated in the foreground by Italian rusticated pavilions with niches for statues; these pavilions recede into the background to a balustrade topped by classical female sculptures. This elaborate decoration serves as the setting for the rendez-vous between Mirame and her lover, Arimant; here they pledge their love before he goes off to war. 51

Stefano also etched the designs for the Giardino de Venere, one of the scenes of Le Nozze degli Dei, an opera performed at the nuptial celebrations for Vittoria della Rovere, Princess of Urbino, and Ferdinando II in 1637 (Fig. 38). Venus, her amoretti and children, and the...
Three Graces sing love's praises in a garden enclosed by gilded loggias. In the background, a fountain spouts water and a grand allée recedes into the depth behind it. Adonis and Venus later have their rendez-vous here, but the love scene is interrupted by Juno, who flies through the heavens on her chariot drawn by peacocks. Stefano's Garden of Marriage contains a number of mythological personages and garden decorations which also appear in Rubens' Conversatie à la Mode. In fact garden decorations such as these comprised the artistic repertoire of theater designers and painters throughout the century. These artists not only drew upon the conventional Garden of Venus as their models, but also copied from actual gardens. Rubens' Conversatie is a part of this artistic tradition. It partakes of the conventional elements of Venus' garden as a backdrop for love and courtship and combines these with the traditional garden of marriage, which also appears in the plays and dramatic masques of the period.

The Epithalamium

Whatever else Rubens' Conversatie à la Mode may be, it is a painting celebrating marriage (Plate I). As we shall see in the next chapter, it contains many of the familiar symbols associated with wedlock; in addition to these symbols, the painting has more discreet allusions to marriage whose sources can be found in literary epithalamia of antiquity. As a man schooled in the classics, Rubens would have
known epithalamic poets of antiquity. Also, Rubens' letters testify that he was a man steeped in the literature of his own time; he could have drawn upon wedding songs of his contemporaries. Typical conventions and images of marital poems can be shown to be paralleled in pictorial imagery of his painting.

In antiquity, certain epithalamic images were developed by poets and continued unaltered into the seventeenth century. The "Bower of Venus" was one of these, which often provided the setting for marriages in these poems. The most famous Bower appears in Claudian's Epithalamium for Honorius and Maria of 398 A.D. The following verses describe the sensuous Paradise of Venus, lines which greatly influenced artists from the later Middle Ages to the time of Rubens. I quote from the English translation:

Whereover ever brood the blessings of eternal spring . . . that a golden hedge encircles, guarding its meadows with yellow metal . . . Fair is the enclosed country, ever bright with flowers though untouched with no labouring hand, for Zephyr is husband-man enough therefor. Into its shady groves no bird may enter save such as has first won the goddess's approval for its song . . . The very leaves live for love and in its season every happy tree experiences love's power: palm bends down to mate with palm, poplar sighs its passion for poplar, plane whispers to plane, alder to alder.

Here spring two fountains . . . and in these streams 'tis said that Cupid dips his arrows. A thousand brother Loves with quivers play all around upon the banks . . . Amid them all wanton youth with haughty neck shuts out Age from the grove.

Poets of antiquity were wont to liken the state of the bride before marriage to a flower in an enclosed garden, a metaphor familiar from
the Song of Solomon. Catullus' *Epithalamium, Carmen LXII*, celebrating the marriage of Manlius Torquatus and his bride, uses the same image:

```
Ut flos in saeptis secretus nascitur hortis
sic virgo dum intacta manet, diem cara suis est.
```

As a flower springs up secretly in a fenced garden so a maiden, whilst she remains untouched, so long is she dear to her own.55

In the Renaissance, Ronsard employed a similar image, inherited from antiquity, in his *Chant Pastoral sur les Nopces de M. Charles Duc le Lorraine et Mdme. Claude Fille II* (1559):

```
Comme un belle rose est l'honneur du jardin
Qui aux rais du Soleil s'est esclose au matin,
Ainsi Claudine l'est de toutes les bergères,
Et les passé d'autant qu'un pin fait les fougères. 56
```

Flowery meads and gardens are locales for the wedding procession in many marriage poems. Thus Robert Herrick, a contemporary of Rubens, exploits the image in his *Epithalamie to Sir Thomas Southwell*. He asks

```
The fair Virgin to enter Cupid's field,
Now forward your rosy feet
To make each thing you touch turne sweet;
And where your shoes you sett there spring violet,
Let all balmy meades smell where your soft foot treades,
Make earth as flourishing as in the painted spring.57
```

Ben Jonson's *Masque of Hymen* (1606) compares the bridal chamber to "Venus' Meade." Also, the ground where the bride steps is described with garden imagery akin in spirit to Rubens' garden:

```
With what full hands and in how plenteous showers
Have thy bedewed the earth where she doth tread,
As if her airy steps did spring flowers,
And all the ground were garden where she led!58
```
Another convention important for understanding Rubens' Conver-
satie à la Mode as a marriage picture is the procession to the bride's
new home while the hymenal is sung to the God of Marriage. Such a
procession is celebrated by maidens and youths in Homer's Iliad,
translated by George Chapman in 1616:

Observing at them, solemn feasts: the
Brides from forth their bowres . . .
Youths and maidens in lovely circles danc't
To whom the merry Pipe and Harpe, the
spritefull Sounds advanc't

Jonson's Epithalamium of 1633 describes the wedding procession of the
couple and their attendants with exuberance.

See the procession! What a holy day,
When looked the earth so fine,
Or so did shine
In all her bloom and flower,
To welcome home a pair, and deck the nuptial bower.

Rubens incorporated the epithalamic wedding procession into his Con-
versatie à la Mode and made it one of the major images in the painting.

In the ancient epithalamium, the bride is always attended by
maids at the wedding feast. Catullus and the poets after him praise
these maidens for their beauty and youth and console them about their
unmarried status, predicting that their time for marriage will soon come.

Lines from Catullus' Epithalamia will illustrate the convention:

Vosque item simul, integrae
Virgines, quibus advent
pardies, agite in modum, O Hymenaeae, Hymen.
Yee too with me, unwedded virgins,
for whom a like day is coming,
come, in measure say,
O' Hymenus, O Hymen. 61

The Catullan convention is translated into a seventeenth-
century Cavalier idiom by Robert Herrick, who adds the frivolous
touch typical of his wit:

Virgins, weep not; twill come when,
as she so you'll be ripe for men
Then grieve her not with saying
She must no more a Maying. 62

Frequently, mythological personages attend the wedding ceremony
in the ancient epithalamium. Often the first section of the wedding song
is dedicated to Hymen himself, who bears torches and flowers. Juno,
the protectress of marriage, blesses the knot and Venus is often the
guest of honor. Statius' Epithalamium in Stellam et Violentillam of
90 A.D. depicts Venus as the central figure of the ceremony, accom­
panied by Cupids, little loves, and the Graces. 63 The famous con­
vention of comparing the bride's beauty to that of Venus was introduced
by Sappho in an epithalamium of the seventh century B.C. This con­
vention has been utilized by poets and painters throughout the ages to
extol the beauty of the young bride, the emissary of Venus on earth.
Indeed, Rubens too exploited this literary convention in his Conversatie
à la Mode; here Helena is compared visually with Venus, the patroness
of marriage, who sits on a dolphin at the extreme right of the composi­
tion.
Perhaps the most important epithalamic sources for Rubens' marriage picture are the **fescennini versuri**. These were ribald songs, some of them sung at the procession to the thalamus (bridal chamber) believed to ward off the evil to which man is most susceptible in the time of good fortune. 64 In essence, the singers of the fescennini accompany the new wife at the procession and urge her to forget her fears about the marriage bed; they exhort her to come forth unabashedly to receive her husband. I quote the following lines from Catullus:

\[
\text{Nupta, tu quoque, quae tuus}
\]

\[
\text{vir petet cave ne negas,}
\]

\[
\text{ni petitum aliunde eat.}
\]

\[
\text{io Hymen Hymenaee io,}
\]

\[
\text{io Hymen Hymenaee.}
\]

You too, O bride, be sure you refuse not what your husband claims, lest he go elsewhere to find it. Io Hymen Hymenaueus io, io Hymen Hymenaus! 65

Perhaps the most well-known fescennine verses are those of Claudiu, who urges the bride to forget her shyness:

\[
\text{lam nuptiae tremidat sollicitus pudor}
\]

\[
\text{Cresaunt difficile gaudia iurgio}
\]

\[
\text{Accendit que magis, quae refugit, Venus}
\]

\[
\text{quod flenti tuleris, plus sapit osulum.}
\]

Maiden shame now over comes the anxious bride ... The refusals of coyness do but increase the joy; the desire for that which flies us is the more inflamed; sweeter is the kiss snatched through tears. 66

Besides adapting these lines, which urge the bride to come forth, Rubens used the convention which stresses the gentle and loving physical union of the newly-married pair; phrases such as those quoted
above explain the tenderness of the couple at the left in Rubens' picture. Ausonius' *Cento*, which appeared in the 1708 edition of Dryden's *Miscellanies* also illustrates this loving embrace:

> There meets the bride and round her slender waist,
> He folds his manly arm and thus embraced.
> They kiss, and have of future joys a taste.

Besides urging the physical union of the pair—a device Rubens adapted for the couples in his painting—epithalamic poets exhorted the young bride to mature and to recognize her duties as wife and mistress of her husband's house. The image of the home, where the couple will live happily, is frequently mentioned. I believe that the pavilion in Rubens' painting, which locates his marriage in his own garden, springs from this convention in the *fescennini*. Lines from Catullus are appropriate for understanding part of the iconography of Rubens' *Conversatie*:

> En tibi domus ut potens
> et beata viri tui,
> quae tibi sine serviat

> See how mighty and rich for you
> is the house of your husband,
> be content to be mistress here.

**The Theme of the Beatus Ille**

The Happy Man in the seventeenth century was a person who threw off the onerous duties of court and city life and withdrew into the country where he could enjoy the tranquility of gardens and châteaux. This theme became widespread in the arts and letters of the period; as
mentioned before, one of its manifestations in Holland was the celebration of the country house in the *hof-dicht*. The theme is of special interest to us since it impinges on the actual retirement of Rubens in the year 1630. Rubens stated in his letters that he wished to retreat from his duties at court. His letter to Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, the noted French scholar, documents this retirement:

Now for three years, by divine grace, I have found peace of mind, having renounced every sort of employment outside of my beloved profession . . . When I found myself in that labyrinth, beset night and day by a succession of urgent duties, away from home for nine months, and obliged to be present continually at Court; . . . I made the decision to force myself to cut the golden knot of ambition, in order to recover my liberty. Realizing that a retirement of this sort must be made while one is rising and not falling; that one must leave Fortune while she is still favorable . . . Now by God's grace, as you have learned from M. Picquery, I am leading a quiet life with my wife and children, and have no pretension in the world other than to live in peace.  

Rubens' *Conversatie à la Mode* and *Château in a Park* illustrate the kind of life gentlemen preferred at this period. They retired from public life, but not into isolation. Rather, Rubens and his fellow retirees conducted an active social life marked by freedom and ease removed from the formal etiquette of the court. They sought good companionship and sophisticated conversation in the ambience of the countryside, garden, or park. These *loci amoeni* then became the backdrop for social interaction and friendship in the poetry and paintings of the period.
William Herbert, the third Earl of Pembroke (1580-1630), was a member of the so-called "fugitive aristocracy" who withdrew into the country. His poem, published posthumously in 1660, illustrates his country house's park as his "natural" home away from court. He addresses his love with the words:

Dear leave thy home and come with me
That scorn the world for love of thee.
Here we will have within this park,
A court of Joy and Pleasures Ark.\textsuperscript{72}

Authors of the seventeenth century drew on ancient poets, on Epicurus, Lucretius, Horace, Theocritus, and Virgil; as well as on Renaissance authors such as Ariosto and Guarini as their models of retirement. The odes and epodes of Horace were frequently translated and adapted by English poets in the second half of the century. The European Garden was considered the ideal place for leisured ease. Also, Virgil's loving description in the \textit{Second Georgic} was a model for the life of retirement and was translated several times in the century:

Happy the man . . . who invites his Genius forth to innocent Delight on Earths fair bed beneath some shade,
Amidst his equal friends carelessly laid,
He sings thee Bacchus Patron of the Vine (and) to active Games and manly sport at length their mirth ascends.\textsuperscript{73}

Innocent delight, a pleasant shade, good friends, and fine drink--these are elements of the life of leisure that the cultivated gentleman wished to lead.
Rubens' mentor, Justus Lipsius, was perhaps the most eloquent spokesman for the life of rural happiness. Sections of his *De Constantia* illustrate his neo-Stoical philosophy of peace, constancy, and contentment in the garden. In the following lines he praises the ancients who retreated from the city to the country or garden as "philosophers and wise men, who eschewing the cities and troublesome assemblies of people, contented themselves within the bounds and limits of their gardens." Lipsius seems to suggest that the essential constancy of the virtuous man can be achieved only in gardens or rustic seclusion, not at court or in cities within the active life. Lines from *De Constantia* show Lipsius' enthusiasm for the physical beauties of the garden, an enthusiasm that his student, Peter Paul Rubens, shared: "O the true fountaine of joy and sweete delight! O the seate of Venus and the Graces. I wish to rest me and lead my whole life in your bowers."

And indeed Rubens took the advice of his mentor around the year 1630, choosing the contemplative life of the garden over the restrictive duties of the court; he eschewed all diplomatic duties and devoted himself entirely to painting. The *Conversatie à la Mode* and *Château in a Park* reflect the mental attitude of peace and contentment that accompany retirement. Rubens' own garden in the *Conversatie* became his "court of Joy and Pleasures Ark."
NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE


3 Quoted in Richmond, School of Love, pp. 163-64. For the original French, see "Elegie XXV," in Œuvres Complètes de Ronsard, Texte de 1578, ed. Hugues Vaganay (Paris: Librairie Garnier Frères, 1923), V. 145-46.


5 From John Bowring, Batavian Anthology or Specimens of the Dutch Poets (London: Taylor and Hessey, 1824), pp. 135-36.


10 *Jacques Callot, Prints and Drawings*, compiled by H. Diane Russel (Washington: National Gallery, 1975), pp. 11, 28. The Callot etching, signed and dated October 15, 1625, was executed during the artist's Lorraine period. The work selected for exhibition is in the Rudolph L. Baumfeld Collection. The original French is as follows:

> Ce dessein façonnéd^des honneurs des printemps,
> Enioiue^dobiectz de divers passetemps;
> C'est uostre aage, Madame, où les douceurs encloses
> Nous sont autant de fleurs, ou Rosiers precieux
> Qui pousseront sans fin des doux-flairantes roses
> Dont l'odeur agréréa aux hommes et aux Cieux.


14 Frank Kermode, "The Argument of Marvell's Garden," *Essays in Criticism*, 2 (1952), 231. Kermode's essay stresses the importance of the French Libertins for European love poetry of the seventeenth century. He states that their attitude towards nature influenced Marvell's poems, *Upon Appleton House*, and *The Garden*. This sensu­alist approach towards nature is manifest in the poems of Randolph, Carew, Lovelace, and Spenser. I thank Professor Lee S. Cox, English Department, The Ohio State University, for recommending Kermode's article.
Oxford Companion to French Literature, ed. Paul Harvey, p. 414, defines the Libertins as the free-thinkers of the 17th and early 18th centuries, who were intellectual descendants of Rabelais and Montaigne. They refused to be bound by doctrines or moral conventions of any orthodox religion. A typical Libertin is Don Juan in Molière's play.

Kermode, p. 231.


Ibid., p. 112.


I thank Professor Charles G. Dempsey of Bryn Mawr College for this suggestion.

Speculum Amantis, p. 38.

A. P. de Mirimonde, "Les sujets musicaux chez Antoine Watteau," GBA, 58 (1961), 286, nt. 15; 287, nt. 41.


Bowring, Batavian Anthology, p. 83.


Zumthor, Daily Life, p. 213.


Wevers, *Poetry of the Netherlands*, p. 78.


*Ibid.*, pp. 157-58. Some of the poems celebrating the country house are the following: Jacob Cats' *Ouderdom, buytenleven en hofgedachten op Sorghvliet* (1656), van Borsseln's *Binckhout* (1613), and the work of Hygens Hofwyck. The reader is referred to P. A. F. van Veen, *De Soeticheydt des Buyten Levens, Vergheselschap met de Boucken, Het Hofdicht als tak van een Georgische Litteratuur*, The Hague, 1960.


*Oxford Companion to French Literature*, ed. Paul Harvey, p. 568, defines les Precieux (euse) as a group in Paris in the seventeenth century who were interested in the pursuit of elegance and distinction in manners, style, and language. The movement was begun by Madame de Rambouillet, who entertained poets and people of society in her famous "Salon Bleu."


The poet Claudianus lived from c. 370 A.D. to 410. The Epithalamium celebrates the marriage of Honorius and Maria, the daughter of Stilicho, which took place in Milan in February, 398.

Claudian, ed. E. Capps, trans. Maurice Platnauer (London: Heinemann, 1922), I, 247-49, ll. 50 ff. The Latin is as follows:

aeterni patet indulgentia veris . . .
hunc aurea saepes circuit et fulvo defendit prato metallo
intus rura micant, manibus quae subdita nullis
perpetuum florent, Zephyro contenta colono,
umbrosumque nemus, quo non admittitur ales,
ni probet ante suos diva sub iudice cantus . . .
vivunt in Venerem frondes omnisque vicissim
felix arbor amat; nutant ad mutua palmae
foedera, populeo suspirat populus ictu et platan
platanis alnoque adsibilat alnus.

Labuntur gemini fontes . . . unde Cupidineas
armari fama sagittas. mille pharetrati ludunt
in margine fratres, . . . quos inter petulans
alta cervice luventas excluit Senium lucro.


Tufte, Poetry of Marriage, p. 9.

Case, English Epithalamies, p. 117.


Tufte, Poetry of Marriage, p. 237.

Ibid., p. 58.
I thank Professor Charles Dempsey for his suggestion of the *fescennini* as a possible iconographic source for Rubens' gesture in the *Garden of Love*.


Catullus, LXI, l. 151 in Catullus, ed. E. Capps, p. 79.


Ibid., p. 347.


Ibid., p. 395.

CHAPTER FOUR

RUBENS' CONVERSATIE À LA MODE AND CHÂTEAU IN A PARK

Rubens' *Conversatie à la Mode* and *Château in a Park* are the only society paintings that we know in the master's oeuvre. During the seventeenth century, the *Conversatie* and possibly the *Château* were referred to as "conversations."¹ Having discussed the importance of conversation in seventeenth-century society, we should not be surprised that paintings portraying this activity, such as those of Rubens, were given this appellation. Besides depicting "conversations," these works portray the happiness and contentment of the garden and country life that persons of leisure enjoyed. They also contain themes and images of love and courtship widely used in the literature of the period. In these respects, these two works of Rubens are documents of their time depicting, as they do, everyday pleasures; but they are raised to a poetic level far above that of his contemporaries.

The *Conversatie à la Mode*, which I shall discuss first, has come down to us in three original versions. There are two painted variants, one at Waddesdon Manor in England (Fig. 39); the other, better-known, at the Prado in Madrid (Plate I). In addition, Rubens executed drawings
for woodcuts made by Christoffel Jegher (1596-1652/3) (Figs. 40, 41); the drawings are now housed in the Metropolitan Museum. The Waddesdon Manor and Prado paintings have been variously dated; modern scholars have refuted Rooses' notion that the Prado version dates from ca. 1638. Most scholars have placed them within a five year period using December, 1630, the date of Rubens' marriage to Helena Fourment, as a *terminus post quem*.

Gustav Gluck in the 1920 *Vienna Jahrbuch*, dated the Prado painting ca. 1632, "in the first years of Rubens' second marriage, that to Helena Fourment." He compared its subject to the painting of *Rubens, Helena, and His Son Nicholas Promenading in Their Garden*, now in Munich and dated 1631. On stylistic grounds, Gluck compared the *Conversatie* to the *Judgement of Paris* in London and the *Holy Family With Saints* in Madrid. Julius Held pointed out that Rubens' drawings for the Jegher woodcuts are based on the Prado painting and therefore dated them 1632-34. Held agrees with other scholars that the *Conversatie à la Mode* breathes Rubens' happiness in the first years of his marriage to Helena Fourment. Ludwig Burchard, whose findings were published posthumously by his son, Wolfgang, dated the Prado painting and the drawings for the woodcuts ca. 1630-32. The Waddesdon Manor variant presents dating problems since Rubens began work on the composition before he executed the Prado version, but he seems to have
interrupted it and later repainted it, after the Prado variant was completed. Ludwig Burchard was responsible for categorizing the extant versions of Rubens' *Conversatie à la Mode*. He determined three stages of the work as it is known to us: the first, the Waddesdon Manor variant, the second preserved in two drawings by Rubens for the Jegher woodcuts, and the third, the Prado painting. Counter to Burchard's and Glück's attribution of the Waddesdon Manor *Conversatie* to Rubens, Anna-Gret Glang-Süberkrüb denies the master's full authorship. She assigns the highly repainted work to Rubens' atelier, specifically to the hand of Theodor van Thulden. In agreement with other scholars, she dates the Prado *Conversatie* to 1630-32.

Both paintings engendered copies in the seventeenth century. Ludwig Burchard counted at least ten executed after the Waddesdon Manor painting, and five after the Prado variant. Glang-Süberkrüb traces all known extant versions and copies of the *Conversatie*, counting twenty and establishes their provenance down to the present day.

Like other scholars, I shall use for a description the Prado version of Rubens' *Conversatie*, which has generally been thought to be the more authentic (Plate I, Figs. 42, 43, 44). A group of seventeen men and women are gathered in a garden. The foreground area, populated by these people, is enclosed by a gate; behind it, is a meadow covered with various trees. In varying sitting and standing positions, eleven couples occupy the shallow foreground area displayed in a
planar fashion. Behind them on the second plane, is a portico with a triangular pediment, flanked by Solomonic columns. Two Atlantids stand on either side of the arched entrance. A shell motif decorates the tympanum. In the portico, which presumably houses a grotto, five women and two men are crouched or seated. Behind the men and women, a statue of the Three Graces surmounts a circular fountain basin in the shape of a shell. A rose bush climbs up the foremost column on the exterior of the portico.

These elegantly clad figures, for the most part in Spanish dress, are disposed all along the foreground plane, taking up the entire width of the painting. At the extreme left, a putto pushes a lady escorted by a gentleman towards the center of the painting. To their right a couple sits on the ground, presumably engaged in amorous conversation—the gentleman who has laid a sword between them, is whispering into the lady's ear. Three ladies are seated in the center of the painting. The woman at the left sits on a chair and gazes at the viewer; behind her a winged cupid looks over her shoulder, ready to hit her with his arrow. The female in the center looks upward toward the sky, holding a small dog in her right hand and a fan in her left. Her companion is a Cupid, who flies toward her with a songbook in his hand. Below her, a lady sits on the ground, looking up at another lady approaching her—presumably the seated lady attempts to pull the second woman to her side on
the ground. A putto lies prone on her lap. Behind her, a melancholy lutenist gazes outward. At the extreme right, countering the couple at the left, a man and woman walk down the stairs towards the left, accompanied by their dog. The woman holds an ostrich fan; the courtier a sword. They descend the stairs from a fountain adorned with a crouching Venus (Venus alma) riding on a dolphin. Water spouts forth from her breasts and from the dolphin's mouth. She is flanked by a peacock and two putti. One of these shoots an arrow downwards; the other flies down with roses in his hands. Above the central group, a Cupid with the attributes of Hymen--a flowered garland and a torch--is about to descend upon the earthly figures. At the extreme left, three putti fly above the heads of the couple below. The one at the outside is shown in half length, the one in the center carries an arrow in his right hand, and the third holds a bow in one hand and a yoke in the other; two doves fly above his head.

The Conversatie à la Mode has evoked a number of interpretations in this century, which I shall summarize. The first was written by Gustav Glück in the 1920 Vienna Jahrbuch. Glück saw Rubens' painting ultimately descending from paintings and engravings of the Love Garden, dating back to the later Middle Ages. He traces the theme through the Hausbuch Master, Venetian art (Giorgione, Bonifacio Veronese) to Caravaggio and his followers, who portrayed brothel scenes from biblical tales. The theme, Glück argued, continues to the peasant
pictures of Breughel and Brouwer and ultimately to the higher genre scenes of Buytewech and Dirk Hals. Rubens' *Conversatie* indeed stems from the tradition of the Love Garden; but it is unwarranted to include peasant scenes à la Breughel and Brouwer in this tradition. Nor should biblical-moral scenes of brothels be included; they belong to a different genre.

Glück saw Rubens and his recent bride, Helena Fourment, at the left of the painting—so do I—but he also saw the entire family of Helena in the other participants since, he said, they all resemble her; he furnished no proof for this identification, but merely proceeded by analogy to the couple on the left. Mussia Eisenstadt in her book, *Watteaus Fêtes Galantes und Ihre Ursprünge*, seconded Glück's interpretation by seeing a "happy fellowship with congenial inlaws, relations by marriage and brothers and sisters." In his study *Peter Paul Rubens* of 1942, Hans Evers implied that the original title, *Conversatie à la Mode*, was not descriptive enough and should therefore be supplanted by the *Garden of Love*, a title given the painting in the eighteenth century. Evers isolated the three seated ladies in the center foreground as belonging to a "more idealized world" than the other participants because of their supposedly less magnificent garments. This distinction I do not see. He went on to identify these ladies as the Three Graces, "goddesses among men," whom Rubens introduced into a painting of polite society. Evers cited
Peter Pourbus' *Allegorical Love Feast*, now in the Wallace Collection, as a precursor to Rubens' painting because Pourbus was the first and only artist to have portrayed the Graces as real human beings. He also speculated that the goddesses personify hearing, seeing, and feeling because of their differentiated postures and attitudes. Evers was not troubled by the fact that the Three Graces appear as fountain decorations in the structure behind, but felt these inanimate statues come alive in the persons of the three ladies below. He assumed that the Graces were being celebrated below in a "new cult," which had its origins in antiquity. He went on to label the portal housing the goddesses the Temple of the Graces. All this is idle speculation; I can see no distinction between the alleged Graces and the other personages in the painting.

A more elaborate interpretation is advanced by Anna-Gret Glang-Süberkrüb in her dissertation, *Der Liebesgarten: Eine Untersuchung über die Bedeutung der Konfiguration für das Bildthema im Spätwerk des Peter Paul Rubens* (1975). She sees the female protagonist at the left as being initiated into the realm of love by passing through different stages represented by the three seated female figures in the foreground. The differences in posture, height, and attitudes of the ladies must carry symbolic value, she suggests; they must therefore stand for the different orders of love. The woman at the left, who looks at the viewer, is in the realm of the senses and therefore personifies sensuous love; the center figure, who lifts her head heavenward, is celestial
love; and the matronly figure on the ground is earthly or human love. Süberkrüb discerns here a sequence of events unfolding in time represented by the movement of the female protagonist, who appears not only as the central figure but also as the darkly clad figure who leans over to touch the putto and once more as the woman descending the stairs. Süberkrüb would like to see three stages of love represented by this one-in-three figure: the initiation of love, the maturation, and the culmination of it in marriage.

It seems to me more reasonable to assume that Rubens was merely varying the positions of the three ladies at the center for compositional purposes rather than seeking to establish a hierarchy of love. It is difficult to believe that Rubens intended to show us three different stages of love represented by one figure. In fact, I see more than one figure: the young woman at the left does not sufficiently resemble the lady touching the putto in the center to be identified with her, and there is no visual evidence for her changing into the so-called "married" woman at the right. Glang-Süberkrüb imposes upon this social painting an intricate philosophical system that is neither supported by the tone nor the visual details.

The latest and most fanciful interpretation is that of Leo Steinberg, advanced in a lecture delivered in Cleveland in April, 1978. Rather than seeing a pleasant garden of love, Steinberg sees a garden of decay and death. He supposes that the artist inherited these themes from
moralizing pictorial gardens in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. He argues that Rubens sought to overcome his subconscious fear of death, which expresses itself in this painting, by drinking from the fountain of youth (as he styles what is surely the fountain of the Three Graces); Rubens was, after all, at the advanced age of fifty-three when he remarried Helena Fourment, a sixteen year old girl. Unconvincingly, Steinberg identifies the foreground figures with the Four Temperaments and Three Divinities of Love; he attributes to Rubens a choleric humor because Roger De Piles in the seventeenth century called him a "fiery painter." Equally unconvincing is the identification of the portraits: he thinks that the lady descending the stairs at the right is Susanna Fourment, the sister of Helena, promenading with her "fat" husband; any comparison with the numerous extant portraits of Susanna will prove this false. To equate Rubens joyous garden with decay and death is to totally misunderstand its message and tenor of joie de vivre; there are no symbols, gestures, or expressions associated with death and to guess at Rubens' subconscious feelings is mere folly. Further, to say that the "earthbound" couple seated on the ground personifies lust and melancholy is to misunderstand the charming portrayal of an amorous conversation. And to label Rubens the incarnation of the choleric humor on the basis of a commonplace adjective is so amateurish as to need no comment.
The application of moral-philosophical systems to the painting has made it more of an enigma than it is. The main problem is that scholars have not placed it in its proper cultural context, particularly that of seventeenth-century literature and art, as I have sketched in Chapters Two and Three. On its basic level, the painting portrays the kind of activities enjoyed by the person of leisure at the period. On another level, it has allegorical overtones, not in a moral-philosophical sense but in an erotic sense. Even though the figures in the painting are not personifications of abstract concepts, they are accompanied by mythological and emblematic characters such as the putti and the Venus, along with emblems of love and marriage. Rubens uses these conventions to embellish his narrative in a manner similar to that of poets of this time. Rubens places doves above the heads of the newly-married couple to symbolize conjugal fidelity (Fig. 42); Ben Jonson, similarly, has "turtles" to characterize his bridal couple in the *Masque of Hymen* of 1606. Like Rubens' conventional Cupids drawing their bows, Jonson's "Cupid calls to arme" to usher in the time of love. In the painting and the masque, baroque symbols and conventions provide an allegorical flavor.

We remember that the seventeenth-century pleasure garden was a primary setting for the social activities of the leisure classes, and Rubens' own garden in Antwerp was no exception. We know what it looked like from an engraving by Harrewyn of 1684 (Fig. 45). There
was a frontal court flanked by buildings on either side, leading to a
gate with rusticated columns and three arcades, topped by a balustrade.
The central arch was capped by a broken pediment with a cartouche in
the tympanum. Statues and mythological figures bedecked the buildings
and the portico. A small grotto stood just to the right of the arcaded
portico, which housed sculptures and a water spout. Behind the gate
were rectangular parterres leading to an Italianate pavilion with a
triangular arch. Rubens' house and garden were purchased in 1611; both
the portico and gate were constructed after his designs. 17

Rubens' Conversatie à la Mode is an inspired account of his life
and love in the garden. The painting sums up all of the pleasures of
love, companionship, and marriage that Rubens had been enjoying since
his marriage of December, 1630. The pavilion with the rusticated
columns recalls the pavilion of his Antwerp garden. The Atlantids
framing the top of his real pavilion reappear in the Conversatie at
either side of the entrance. Rubens also alludes to the grotto of his
garden by placing such a grotto inside the painted porch, where couples
attempt to shield themselves from water sprays jetting out from the
fountain (Fig. 43). 18 One can see better what is depicted inside the
portico by looking at Jegher's woodcut after Rubens' designs (Fig. 46).
Water jets like those clearly visible here were common features of
garden decoration in the seventeenth century; Stefano della Bella por-
trays one of them in an etching of 1640 of the Gardens at the Villa
Pratolino (Fig. 47). It was a frequent joke to have the water sprays open up on promeneurs who walked to the Grotto of Cupid at the end of the path. 19

The social context of Rubens' painting sheds some light on its meaning. It is a Conversatie—that is "a circle of acquaintances, society, or company" engaged in easeful interchange. It also may reflect the other meaning of the word in the seventeenth century, "the manner of conducting oneself in society," that is, Rubens' personages conduct themselves in the latest fashion of the day. From Le Manuel d'Amour, the seventeenth-century courtesy book, we remember that civil conversation and la bonne compagnie were the principal pleasures of polite society--and Rubens has conveyed these pleasures with elegance and imagination.

Rubens apparently admired and mastered the art of conversation; correspondence from his contemporaries attests to his eloquence in social intercourse. Gaspard Scioppius, scholar and theologian from Bavaria, wrote in his notebook, Hypnerbolimaeus, "Mr. Rubens, a man in whom I would find it difficult to know what to praise most, ... [has] a special charm in conversation." 20 Nicolas Claude Fabri de Peiresc, the French Humanist and scholar, remarked, "I cannot but admire him exceedingly and I cannot let him go without regretting the loss of the most scholarly and pleasing conversation that I have ever enjoyed." 21 Peiresc also remarked on the "infinite sweetness of his conversation." 22
It is fitting that Rubens would commemorate this art in his painting.

The Conversatie of Rubens included the promenade, the great passion of seventeenth-century society. The couples at the left and right demonstrate this pastime, central to the social life of the leisure classes. The painting may also reproduce the fête of love, which transpired at many European courts throughout the century. The social conversation, like the fête, or galant festival, is embellished and raised to a level beyond mere human existence; Rubens does so by placing mythological figures in the milieu of human beings.

This was not the first time Rubens had attempted a program of this kind. Around 1631 Rubens painted a picture (now in Munich) in which he portrayed himself with his bride, Helena Fourment, and his son Nicholas promenading in their garden in Antwerp (Fig. 48). This painting is the point of departure for Rubens' Conversatie à la Mode, since it already portrays the lovely garden life that he and his wife were enjoying. Many of the elements are present here that reappear in the Conversatie: Rubens, his wife, their garden pavilion, the fountain decorated with a dolphin, nude female statues, caryatids, dogs, and a peacock. The posture and dress of Rubens and his young bride forecast the attitude of the couple at the left of the Conversatie. This same theme of the joyful garden life was used again by Rubens one or two years later in his Conversatie, a painting which raises this theme to that of the blissful garden life.
I concur with Glück, Eisenstadt, and Steinberg that the couple at the left, who promenade toward the festive group, are Rubens and his wife Helena Fourment. The motif of Rubens and his wife at the promenade was a favorite one of the artist in later years. Besides being in the Munich picture of 1631, it is the major theme of a picture in the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wrightsman, now on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 49). Datable late in the artist's life, probably ca. 1639, the painting lyrically depicts the artist, his wife, and their infant child in their garden, lusciously decorated with a fountain, a parrot with brilliant red plumage, climbing roses, and a female herm.23 Rubens' gentle gesture of guidance and his loving and protective gaze remind one of the couple at the left in the Conversatie and the Munich picture. The motif of the promenading couple again is a major one in the Château in a Park (Fig. 50). In the Conversatie, the physical characteristics and dress of the pair at the left sufficiently resemble Rubens and his wife in the New York painting to conclude that they are indeed the same couple. In all four paintings featuring this pair, the gentleman sports a flamboyant mustache and the tipped hat, which are characteristics of Rubens' self portraits of the period from 1630-40.

Another indication that the couple in the Conversatie are Rubens and his wife lies in the fact that soon after the artist's death, a copyist extracted the couple at the left of the Conversatie and painted them
together with a Cupid holding a wedding torch in a landscape (Fig. 51); the work was in the art trade in Vienna in 1920. Apparently the artist was convinced that the couple represented a marriage portrait of Rubens, quite apart from the original context. There are two references to this work in eighteenth-century inventories; the Collection van Zwieten recorded "Rubens zyn Vrouw Soenede" on the 12 April, 1731, and in 1768, "een Stuk verbeeldende Rubbens en zyn Vrouw" was mentioned in reference to this copy in the Collection of Johan van Nispen. 24

It is interesting to note that two of the gentlemen in the Prado painting carry swords, symbols of knighthood and nobility. This fits in very well with the notion of a society picture. Rubens himself was knighted in 1629 at the court of Charles I, and afterwards lived the life of a nobleman on his estate at Steen. He was reluctant, however, to portray himself as a knight wearing his golden chain and sword until very late in his life--his Self Portrait in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna is one of the few exceptions. 25 Apparently, in the Conversatie Rubens wished to portray his leisured existence as a chevalier by depicting himself and his friends retiring to a life of ease in the fashion of the beatus ille theme. The picture features courtiers paying homage to their ladies, far away from the restricted life of the court.

The ladies are the literal and figurative center of Rubens' Conversatie; they are being promenaded, escorted, serenaded by the
lutenist's song, and they listen to the amorous conversation of eager courtiers. Rubens pays homage to the beauty, grace, and wit of women like no other artist of the period. His Helena, as we shall see below, is compared to Venus, just as Marie de Medici, another great lady, is compared to the goddesses of Olympus in Rubens' series of pictures dedicated to her glorious life, originally housed in the Luxembourg Palace.

This painting reflects the importance of women in seventeenth-century society. They presided over the art of conversation, they were the highlight of the promenade and the fête. This new prestige of women was accompanied by tracts dedicated to them. One, entitled Triomphe des Dames, was written by M. du Soucy in 1646. Another, La Panégyrique des Dames of 1650, written by Gabriel Gilbert, stated that women were more perfect than men because of their beauty, grace, and delicacy, traits that a man does not possess. Their physical beauty was the outer manifestation of their inner perfection. Gabriel Gilbert lauds their virtues in his L'Art de Plaire, which praises their accomplishments in the fine arts, games, dance, music, and the writing of novels. Their good manners are to be emulated since they are natural and without artifice. In Saint-Gabriel's treatise, Le Merite des Dames, published in Paris in 1655, women are the agents of peace, politesse, love, and galanterie.
Interestingly, the ladies in Rubens' painting were the subjects of a poem written by one of his contemporaries. Jan Davidsz de Heem (1606-1683/4), the still-life painter and sometime sonneteer, composed a verse inspired by the copper engraving of Rubens' Conversatie executed by Peter Clouwet in 1665 (Fig. 52). This poem confirms my judgement that on the basic level, Rubens' painting is a light, witty work about the beauty of the ladies and the love they inspire. The verses entitled The Pleasure Court of Venus, are a frivolous ditty about the activities of the ladies. In the eyes of his contemporaries Rubens' Conversatie was viewed as a secular, light-hearted conversation of fashionable people, not as the abstruse allegory that modern critics make it out to be.

De Heem's verses prove this; they describe the activities starting from right to left:

Look how Clotis puts on airs; she does not want to come to the dance, and how Amant gets hold of her and pulls her and drives her onward: Really she likes to be here, but it appears that she be coy about it . . . The more reluctant it appears, the more surely it is done.

But Phyllis at her side, she listens to the lamentations and she pays attention with full astonishment to what Damon says. And what he tries to do in daytime she wants for whole nights. For this reason there is so much sighing and anxious waiting.

The blond Amaril, she gazes rigidly and full of suspicion and doubts he will come who fills her soul when the hour is long past; Heart, Soul, and Mind wave, O, if the sun would shine once more, then it would be a new day.
And Tirce comes on bravely when she hears her Song sung
but as soon as the lutenist hits the Tone
where Florisel used to sing, then it is what moves Soul,
Heart and everything.

But Gallathe lies voluptuously on the ground
And the cause of her pain lies in her lap.
She draws to herself her playmate: come, she says,
Soul of worth.

Hero, make a little game, Leander is dead.
But look how Roosement with quick and hurried paces runs
down from the Fountain of Venus, and Clooris at her side
look, how he makes big steps
for he now has her yes, but he paid dearly for it. 30

The verses leave no doubt de Heem thought Rubens' painting pays
homage to the ladies' beauty, grace, and influence. And so it does.
Rubens surely wished his viewer to make a direct association between
the beauty of the ladies and the beauty of the garden as did seventeenth-
century poetry. His ample and sensuous women, metaphors for the
splendor of nature's life-giving powers, dominate the garden and lend
their beauty to its beauty.

Amaril, Phyllis, Gallathe (to give them de Heem's names) are
paragons of beauty and charm. Their physical beauty typifies the ideal
of womanhood at the period. They recreate the exemplar of womanhood
in the Merite des Dames. Here, an ideal woman has "a magestical
carriage, good proportions, abundant-ash-blond hair, frizzed and
curled ... coral lips ... rosy cheeks, vermilion with two dimples,
a fat and stoutish throat, high bosom, [and] sweet white hands." 31

Or, as William Sanderson addresses the perfect woman in the 1658 edition
of Graphice, "You have an unaffected freesome, the Bon Mene of fashion, a goodly, Plump, Fat, well-favoured, well-formed Figure; fat-fleshed Shoulders, plump breasts, well-coloured Skin, and altogether able to endure a man's handling. [Her chief advantage] is the pleasing humour of Plumpness." Living incarnations of Venus, whose court they serve, the ladies of the Conversatie are paragons of beauty as the seventeenth century understood it.

On its second level, that of a marriage picture, Rubens' Conversatie à la Mode contains many traditional symbols associated with wedlock, such as a yoke which the Cupid holds above Helena's head at the left (Fig. 42). The yoke as a matrimonial symbol appears in Ripa's Iconologia (Fig. 53). A newly-married man wears here the yoke of matrimony around his neck. Ripa's explanation is the following: "The yoke demonstrates Matrimony, the Loss of Liberty by submitting to the capricious Humours of a Woman."33

Doves are also symbols of wedlock; here they fly above the heads of the newly-married pair. Such birds are illustrated as symbols of nuptial love and fidelity in two emblem books of the seventeenth century. The first from Camerarius, Symbolorum et emblematum ex re Herbaria . . . Centura of 1654 describes their fidelity by calling it "Fida Coniunctio." Similarly, Jacob Cats's Silenius Alcibiadis depicts nuptial doves resting peacefully in nuptial Palms (Figs. 54, 55).34
The Cupid above the center group has the attributes of Hymen, and should be seen in the role of the God of Marriage. He carries a torch and a flowered wreath, both important matrimonial symbols (Plate I). According to the Dictionnaire Iconologique of 1779, Hymen, the god who officiates at marriages, holds a torch in one hand and wears a crown of flowers on his head. He also bears roses on the day of the wedding; there is a reference to these roses in the painting in the flowering rosebush climbing up the column of the portico. The Dictionnaire also states that Hymen can have wings, as does Rubens' figure, but they are usually closed to denote the constancy of spouses, who must not fly away from their duties.

Cupid as Hymen in the Conversatie has all of the attributes that appear in Rubens' Marriage of Marie de Medici with Henry IV, a panel in the series painted for the Luxembourg Palace (Fig. 56). In the Luxembourg panel, the torch and garland of flowers bedecking Hymen's head are associated with marriage. The dog is a traditional symbol of marital fidelity. Similar attributes of wedlock also appear in Rubens' designs for the Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi. The marriage of Maximilian of Burgundy and the marriage of Philip the Fair and Joanna of Castile are symbolized by Hymen with the torch, the dog, and the peacock (Figs. 57, 58). The marriage garland appears in an emblem illustrating "the sweetness of marriage" in Gilles Corrozet's Hecaton Graphie of 1543. The woodcut depicts a bride at her wedding crowned with a garland; in
this case, the garland symbolizes pleasure and fruitfulness associated with a happy marriage. 36

Other references to love and wedlock appear in Rubens' painting in the statue of Venus and the peacock next to her (Fig. 44). These emblems of love and marriage are charmingly intermixed by the artist, effective symbols for this work. In addition to being the Goddess of Love, Venus is the patroness of procreation in marriage. According to Paul Watson, Venus implants in mankind desire, which is the cement of marriage. She fosters procreation, which is the chief end of wedlock. 37 Rubens portrays Venus alma, the nurturing Venus, whose breasts pour out water. A similar image of Venus as a fountain decoration appears in Arnold Bon's emblem, The Fountain of Love in the Delfs Cupidoos Schighie, published in Delft in 1652 (Fig. 59). Here the Goddess' breasts spout water, which is the source of love for the young couple at the fountain. In Rubens' Conversatie, the Goddess rides a dolphin, her usual companion and another attribute of love. Ovid's Fasti, verse 81 mentions the "Delphinus fuit occultis felix in amoribus index" (the dolphin is the happy guide of secret love). Aulus Gellius Noctes Atticae, VII, 8 states that "dolphins are voluptuous and inclined to love." 38 The dolphin will reappear as an attribute of love in the works of Watteau such as Les Agréments de l'Été and L'Automne, paintings that descend from the Northern tradition of love and marriage pictures, such as Rubens' Conversatie. The Three Graces appear in Rubens'
Conversatie since they are constant companions of Venus, illustrating her charms. The last epithalamic symbol is the peacock seated on the fountain next to the statue of Venus. The bird is the familiar attribute of Juno, the protectress of marriage. Both the goddess and her peacock appear also in Rubens' own Henry IV Receiving the Portrait of Marie de Medici, now in the Louvre (Fig. 60). Juno and her spouse, Jupiter, are symbols, rather ironic at that, of the happily-married couple, and they forecast the blissful marriage of the two mortals below.

In addition to these obvious symbols, I believe that the painting contains more discreet allusions to marriage, allusions whose sources can be found in literary epithalamia. We may recall that marriage poems since antiquity contained conventional images that appear in Rubens' Conversatie. Such is the Bower of Venus from Claudian's Epithalamium for Honorius and Maria, where the marriage of the emperor and his bride took place. I believe that Rubens drew upon this image as the setting for his marriage (Plate I). The marriage bower was called by a contemporary of Rubens, "cupid's field." I believe that the artist intended the viewer of his picture to make an association between Helena stepping into her bower of marriage and the convention in the literary epithalamium.

I also believe that Rubens' used the Sapphic convention of comparing the bride's beauty to that of Venus, her patroness. The artist reinforced this association by placing his bride directly across from the
statue, who gazes directly at her disciple. The gaze is assured visually by the downward diagonal which stops at the figure of Helena. As Professor Dempsey has suggested to me, at no time does a woman more resemble the goddess of love than on her wedding day.

We recall from de Heem's verse that the fair Amaril, who gazes out at us, waits for her lover; Tirce at the center of the painting, is moved by the tune that her Florisel used to sing, but now, alas, he is gone; Gallathe, on the ground, is in pain because of love, and Hero's Leander is dead. We also remember that in ancient wedding rites bridesmaids were praised for their beauty and youth and were told that soon they could expect to be married. I believe that these charming ladies at the center of Rubens' *Conversatie* are such "unwedded Virgins" who await their lovers.

Rubens, I suggest, also drew on the literary convention of mythological personages attending the wedding ceremony. Hymen attends with his torch and garland; Juno's peacock is present, and so are the Graces and Cupids, and Venus herself. As mentioned before, the fescennine conventions are at work here in Rubens' urging his bride to forget her fears, gently leading her towards the thalamus and the statue of Venus.

The posture and attitudes of Rubens and Helena walking into their garden are strikingly similar to Conjugal Love represented by a couple promenading in Ripa's *Iconologia* (Fig. 61). In both the emblem and the painting, the couple join hands and walk close to one another. Rubens,
like the groom in the emblem, gazes adoringly at his bride, embracing her as they promenade. This act of holding hands denotes the fidelity and steadfastness of married life. The promenading bridal couple appears elsewhere in Rubens' oeuvre, for example, in his oil sketch of *Henry IV Walking with Marie de Medici*, destined for the Luxembourg Palace but never completed (Fig. 62). This pair, like Rubens and his wife in the *Conversatie*, is accompanied by a Cupid holding the wedding torch as does the Cupid-Hymen in the center of the painting. It is apparent in both works that the promenade is associated with the bridal couple.

I do not think that Rubens drew on Dürer's promenading couples as models for Rubens and Helena (Fig. 63), as some scholars claim. He would have known promenading couples from seventeenth-century emblem books. If a particular source is asked for, Abraham Bosse's prints of ambulating lovers such as the one in his *Adolescence* of 1629 (Fig. 30), have a better claim than engravings of a century before. They widely circulated in Europe and influenced Northern artists. Rubens surely knew this French master's work. Bosse's couple promenaded in a Garden of Love in springtime, as do Rubens and Helena. Both couples walk toward a fountain of love, either guided or pushed on by a Cupid. In both, the garden is an important symbol of love and fruition. We know that Rubens was familiar with these notions because of a letter he wrote to Lucas Fayd'herbe on May 9, 1640, when he congratulated
his friend on his recent marriage. I quote the text of the letter: "I have heard with great pleasure that you planted the May in your beloved's garden; I hope that it will flourish and bring forth fruit in due season."

The Garden of Marriage appears in other Northern Baroque paintings prior to Rubens' Conversatie. Frans Hals' Portrait of a Couple in a Park of 1622 is one of them (Fig. 64). The identity of the couple has been disputed by art historians; their suggestions range from Hals and his second wife and Frans' brother Dirk and his bride to Isaac Massa and his wife. It is a marriage portrait, since the woman in the foreground prominently displays a wedding ring on her index finger, a new fashion at the period. Other allusions to marriage are the vine clinging to the tree, the thistle, and the urns. The love garden behind the protagonists is an emblem of the Garden of Venus and the Garden of Marriage. Peacocks walk through the landscape and are probably a symbol of Juno, alluding to the married couple in the foreground. These peacocks appear in marriage medals of the period.

Alciati's woodcut of 1608 illustrating In fidem uxoriam also uses the park or garden as a symbol of love and marriage (Fig. 65). In the woodcut, a newly-married couple with joined hands are seated in a wood in a similar way to the couple in the Hals portrait; they are accompanied by a dog, symbol of marital fidelity.

Perhaps the most famous precedent for Rubens' Conversatie is the artist's own Self Portrait with Isabella Brandt of 1609-10.
Slive speculates that this may have been the model for Hals' *Marriage Portrait* which the Dutch artist may have seen on his trip to Antwerp in 1616. The Rubens painting has been shown to stem from the pictorial tradition of love couples in gardens, a lineage dating back to the Middle Ages. The honeysuckle plant behind the couple also has a long ancestry in both literature and art; it is an appropriate symbol for a marriage portrait.

The Garden of Marriage appears in a work subsequent to Rubens' *Conversatie* in the younger David Teniers' own *Marriage to Isabella de Foch*, painted in 1651 (Fig. 66). The painting is in the possession of Mrs. Alphonse de Rothschild. Teniers' Garden of Wedlock contains many of the elements of Rubens': the pavilion, fountain of love, a dog, a musician, bridesmaids, and a procession. Certainly portrayed in a more banal manner than it is in the *Conversatie*, the garden continues to be a special pleasance for the rituals of marriage in Northern painting of the seventeenth century.

The *Château in a Park*, like the *Conversatie*, is a *tableau de mode* (Fig. 50). The couple at the left, as we have noted, remind us of Rubens and Helena in the *Conversatie* because of their location in the picture and general attitudes. The *Château in a Park*, as much as the *Conversatie*, illustrates the theme of the retired life that the happy man enjoyed in the seventeenth century in his garden or park, away from court. But the mood and technique of the *Château* differ considerably from those of
the Conversatie, pointing, I believe, to a later date in Rubens' oeuvre. Generally scholars have dated it to the general period of the Conversatie, that is between 1630-35, but its greater freedom of technique and sketch-like character betray a later date, around the period of Rubens' late landscapes such as the Landscape with a Rainbow in London or the Tournament Before Castle Steen at the Louvre, both datable to the period 1635-40.

The painting has come down to us in two versions, one in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna and the other, whose authenticity has been questioned, owned by Gaston Dulière and on display in the Rubens House in Antwerp (Fig. 67). There is also an engraving by Schelte à Bolswert which is substantially altered from the paintings (Fig. 68). Even though the Dulière version is more detailed than the Vienna variant and is populated by birds and wildlife that do not appear in the other painting, it has been called a copy because of its inferior execution. Puyvelde, however, believes that the Dulière version is the better example, since it served as the basis for Schelte à Bolswert's engraving. The picture in Vienna has been cut down at the right, severing one of the figures and part of another.

The traditional identification of the castle in the background of the painting has been that of Castle Steen near Elewijt, purchased by Rubens in 1635 and portrayed in the landscape in the National Gallery in London. Glück rejects the notion that it is this Castle Steen, simply
because of its physical dissimilarity, and speculates that it represents another Steen, near Eeckeren north of Antwerp, that Rubens purchased in 1627. In my view, the building was not meant to portray in a specific way any château that Rubens knew, but, like the other elements in the painting, imparts a mood of fantasy.

This mood is also conveyed by characters playing games and making music in an enchanted pleasance like those portrayed in seventeenth-century pastoral novels such as L'Astrée. Many of the elements of the arcadian life depicted in the literature of the period are present: fashionable couples, shepherds and their lady-loves, music, and games. The games that these characters play are specific enough to convey an erotic mood, but too intangible to make this a picture of everyday life.

In its transmittance of a dream-like mood associated with arcadian life, Rubens' Château in a Park is the seventeenth-century heir to Giorgione's Concert Champêtre, which more than any other pastoral painting, forecasts the tone of this painting. Rubens' Château is a major link between the Concert in the sixteenth and Watteau's fêtes galantes in the eighteenth century. Its technique and coloring augment the dream-like atmosphere. Sketchily executed in pastel greens, pinks, and yellows, the entire landscape is bathed in an ethereal light. The figures are attenuated, mannered, and elegant. This is the stuff Watteau's fêtes galantes are made of. And indeed it is possible that the
rococo master saw one of the versions of this painting. The Kunsthistorisches Museum traces their variant back to 1783, when it is mentioned for the first time in the Imperial Collections; it probably was housed there during the time of Charles VI. However, nothing can be said of its location before that period. The Dulière version can be traced only to the third quarter of the nineteenth century, when it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1873. The Château was engraved by Schelte à Bolswert and was probably widely circulated, so that Watteau may have seen it. There was also a large copy made after the Dulière version, entitled Le Printemps, which is undated; it was recorded for the first and last time in the Edwards Collection in 1857 and sold in 1868. It is a short step from this enchanted park to the Isle of Cythera, where similar sentiments of love and nature are expressed in the subtle, bitter-sweet way of Watteau.
NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1 See Appendix.


5 Julius S. Held, Rubens: Selected Drawings (Garden City: Phaidon Press, 1959), I, 154. For a description of all the drawings connected with the Conversatie, see Held's account in this section, pp. 142, 153-54.


8 Burchard, "Garden of Love," p. 432.

9 Glang-Süberkrüb, Der Liebesgarten, pp. 87-114. The reader is referred to her account of the original seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources of the painting. The author's catalogue contains complete information regarding the various versions and their provenance.


11 Ibid., pp. 7, 50-60.

12 Ibid., pp. 63, 96.


15 Anna-Gret Glang-Süberkrübl, Der Liebesgarten, pp. 13-35 for her iconographic analysis of the Conversatie.


18 Held, Rubens, p. 153. There is little likelihood that these people are playing a society game called "Hamknocking," as Evers states. This entails a man quoting verses to three girls who promenade by him; the last in the entourage, who wears a hat, pulls her skirt over her head. For a description of this bizarre game, see Evers, p. 345.


21 Ibid., p. 331.

22 Ibid., p. 331.

23 For a recent discussion of the iconography and date of this work, see Michael Jaffe, "Ripeness is All," Apollo, 107 (1978), 290-94.


25 The idea of the cavalier and the sword was expressed in a lecture given at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1978, by Zirka Zaremba Filipczak.
123


28. Gabriel Gilbert, *L'Art de Plaire, à la Serenissime Reine de Suede* (s.l.n.d.).


30. The verse was translated from the Flemish into German by Anna-Gret Glang-Suberkrüb, and then from the German into English by Rolf Soellner. The dedication reads as follows:

```
PRAESTANTISSIMO PROBOQ IUVENI D. IOANNI VAN WEERDEN IOT S.F. INGENARUM ARTIUM ADMIRATORI, HANC TABELLUM, ADMIRABILI NOB. D. PET. PAULI RUBENI PENICILLO DEPICTAM, BENE VOLONTIAE ET AMORIS SYMBOLUM EX ANIMO DD. C. Q. RUMOLDUS VANDE VELDE
```

The verse in Flemish reads as follows:

```
Siet eens hoe Clootis veynst, sy will ten dans niet coomen en Amant vatt en sleurt en port haer stadich aen,
sy will nochtans eer hy, maer t'schynt sy moet wat schroomen te noyer soo het schynt, te veyligher gedaen.

Maer Phillis op haer hant, die luystert naer clachten en acht verwonderlyck, het gheene Damon seyt, en dat hy's daeghs versoekt, dat wenst sy heele nachten waerom; dan soo gesucht soo ang en Bang gebyt.

De flonde Amaril, die ster-ooght vol bedencken en twyfelt uende compst, van die haer siel behaecht.
Wan't d'uhr is lang voorby, hart siel en geest will wencken, ach! scheen haer son maer eens, het waer weer nieuw gedaeght.

En Tirce wackert her, so sy haer Aer, hort singhen oft soo de luytenist de thoon maer eens en raeckt, daer Florisel wel aer, haer naen wist in te wringhen, is dat daer hert, en siell en alles gaende mackt.
```
Maer Gallathe int sant, leyt dertel op de eerde,
en d'orsack van haer pijn, leyt midden in haer schoot.
Sy treckt haer spelgenoot, comt seytse siel van Weerden,
Hero, vermaeckt u wat Leander die is doot.

Maer sit hoe Roosement, met vlugg en wacker treed en
en Cloris aan haer sy, van Venus Bronn naerdelt
siet oft hy niet en maeckt, heel ongemeene schreeden,
want hy heff nu het wort, doch diergenochar betaelt.

31 Le Merite des Dames, pp. 19-23, quoted in M. Magendie, La
Politesse Mondaine et les theories de l'honnête-en France au XVIIe
siècle de 1600 à 1660 (Paris: Librairie Alcan, 1925), II, 713.

32 William Sanderson, Graphice (London: R. Crofts, 1658),

Also in the edition (1603; rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1970),
pp. 305-306.

34 Joachim Camerarius, Symbolorum et Emblematum ex re
Herbaria . . . Centuria (Frankfort, 1654), III, ix, lxiv; and Jacob Cats,
Silenus Alcibiadis (Amsterdam, 1622), p. 19, cited in Rosalie Colie,
30, 31.

35 Honoré Lacombe de Prezel, Dictionnaire Iconologique (1779;

36 Reproduced in Arthur Henkel, Albrecht Schöne, Emblemata
(Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche, 1967), no. 1255. In Ben Jonson's
Masque, Hymenai of January, 1606, Hymen is crowned with roses
and carries a torch of a pine tree. The bride wears a garland of roses
on her head. After she appears, she and her groom proceed to the nuptial
bower for the ceremony. For a description of the masque, see Stephen
Orgel, Roy Strong, Inigo Jones, Theatre of the Stuart Court (Berkeley:

37 Paul Watson, "Virtu and Voluptas in Cassone Painting," Diss.

38 Cited in Guy de Tervarent, Attributs et Symboles dans l'Art
39 Lacombe, *Dictionnaire Iconologique*, p. 263.

40 See my Chapter Three for the epithalamium written by Herrick.

41 See Michael Jaffe, "Ripeness is All," p. 292. Also suggested in the Steinberg lecture delivered in Cleveland, April, 1978.

42 I thank Professor Walter Liedtke for this suggestion.

43 Bosse's prints influenced Jérôme Janssens, the Flemish society painter; see my Chapter Five.


48 For an iconographic discussion of this work, see Hans Kaufmann, *Peter Paul Rubens*, (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann Verlag, 1976).


50 I have not seen the Dulière version; however Professor Julius Held has suggested to me that it is a copy.


52 For these identifications, see Demus, "Der Schlosspark," p. 132.

53 I thank Dr. Klaus Demus for kindly informing me of the picture's provenance.

54 I am grateful to M. Gaston Dulière for the information regarding the provenance of his painting.

55 Demus, "Der Schlosspark," p. 133.
CHAPTER FIVE

SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CONVERSATION PICTURES

Rubens' Conversatie à la Mode is a type of tableau de mode produced by Flemish and Dutch painters throughout the seventeenth century. Even though there are precedents for Rubens' painting in Love Gardens of earlier periods, they cannot be considered generic sources. Rather, garden fêtes of seventeenth-century painters such as David Vinckboons, Dirk Hals, and Louis de Caullery must be considered as direct sources for Rubens' painting. Just as Rubens drew on the native tradition of Flemish kermesses in the manner of Breughel for his late Country Festivals, he late in life turned to Flemish and Dutch society paintings as models for his Conversatie à la Mode.

These paintings are important documents of upper-bourgeois taste. Like contemporaneous paintings of middle class people in their homes, these garden pictures were either commissioned or sold on the open market to a clientele that wished to be portrayed as prosperous citizens. Just like Vermeer, De Hooch, or Terborch, these painters of garden conversations significantly reflected the life style of an epoch. They are also important for inspiring Watteau's fêtes galantes in the next century.¹ But the works of painters, such as David Vinckboons, 126
Dirk Hals, and Christoffe van der Lamen, should be considered in their own right. Their Gardens of Love at times prove to be iconographically interesting, especially against the background of the emblem literature of the period. This chapter will be devoted to a discussion of the iconography of these paintings in their emblematic context. The Gardens of these petit maîtres, which ostensibly are genre pictures, turn out to be symbolic locales of love and courtship when one compares them to emblematic gardens. For purposes of discussion, I shall present them under five headings: Love Gardens in general, allegories; banquet scenes, music and dancing, the promenade, and games.

Commissioned for the most part by the haute bourgeoisie, these pictures of merry companies in the open air reflect the prosperity and happiness that the nouveaux riches were enjoying in the parks and gardens of their country houses. We remember that much of the literature and philosophy of the period celebrated the good life in the country; the hof-dicht or country house poem was devoted to the virtues of the country life; the "Happy Man" was a person who withdrew from the bustle of the city into the idyllic countryside for the contemplation and enjoyment of nature and for social intercourse with other people of leisure. We may also recall that the garden or park of pleasure was a popular motif in poetry and drama, providing locales for courtship, love-making, and gaming—a literary counterpart to the paintings of pleasure gardens populated by the leisure classes. The paintings,
however, contain at times a level idealized or intellectualized beyond reality. In order to interpret the symbolic and allegorical content, one must turn to the emblem literature.

**Love Gardens in General**

These General Conversations in gardens portray no specific activity. They usually depict happy men and women smiling and laughing in a generalized garden setting. We shall label these pictures "conversations" in the definition of the term as "agreeable, easeful interchanges among people and circles of acquaintances." The garden, for the most part, is a backdrop for these activities and is usually of a general character.

Dirk Hals' *Tuinfest* in the Rijksmuseum (Fig. 69), dated 1618 portrays a large group of revelers in the garden or park of a country house. The couples engage in very little tangible activity; they pose elegantly, smile, and look out at the beholder with laughing visages. They appear to me to be personifications of the pleasant garden life—symbols rather than actual persons engaged in specific activity. The relative ambiguity of the setting reinforces this view—the edifice behind, rather than being modeled after a specific building in Holland, loosely resembles an Italian villa. The landscape is an odd combination of the mythical and the realistic, combining the generalized view of a garden with specific details, such as statues and terraces. The personages inhabiting
this garden exhibit the same equivocal qualities. Most are general types; however, it has been suggested that Dirk Hals himself appears among the crowd, perhaps represented by the gentleman in the left foreground who gazes at the viewer. He may have portrayed himself and his friends in these lovely surroundings because he wished to escape from the restrictive city life with its Calvinistic climate to an arcadian realm of pleasure.

This ideal life of the pleasure garden also characterizes Dirk Hals' *Party Near a Lake*, recorded as being in the Wengraf Collection, London in 1956 (Fig. 70). The elegantly dressed characters who smile with satisfaction radiate the pleasure of the ideal garden life and are extensions of it. Their attitudes correspond to the idyllic land- and waterscape at the right, serene, and evocative of sensuous pleasure. The lake and forest behind and to the right are bathed in a soft, glowing light that calls to mind Watteau's *Assemblée Dans un Parc* in the Louvre (Fig. 71). This idyllic landscape and the amorous figures within it presage also Rubens' *Chateau in a Park*, executed probably some ten to fifteen years after Hals' painting (Fig. 50).

The meaning of the pleasure garden of this period can be illuminated by reference to Henry Hawkins' *Partheneia Sacra: The Mysterious and Delicious Gardens of the Sacred Parthene* (1633), an essay accompanying emblems of the seventeenth-century pleasure garden. Hawkins describes the garden as a theater, whose actors enchant and allure
those who gaze upon it: "The Garden is a goodlie amphitheatre of flowers, upon whose leaves delicious beauties stand, as on a stage to be gazed on, and to play their parts, not to see so much, as to be seen; and like wantons to allure with their looks, or to enchant with their words, the civets and perfumes they wear about them."  

Like the inhabitants of Hawkins' Garden, Hals' figures and those of Esaias van de Velde's Garden Repast, sold at Christie's 26 April, 1925 to a private owner, are displayed on a stage in order to be gazed upon (Fig. 72). This stage-like quality perhaps indicates the influence of the theater. The beholder, like the audience, is included in the festivities, invited by the actors to join the fun. This invitation is explicitly spelled out in Esaias' picture by the placement in the left foreground of a lute without a player; it is for us to enter this theater of pleasures to play our part on the musical instrument. It has been noted that musical instruments prominently displayed in the foreground of Dutch paintings are generally solicitations to the viewer to join the pleasureful activities in the picture; Jan Vermeer's Concert in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum has instruments exhibited in such a fashion—an invitation to the viewer to join the concert.  

Hawkins goes on to describe the garden as an ideal community of pleasures that parallel the themes of the garden pictures: "A Monopolie of al the pleasures and delights that are on earth, amased togeather to make a dearth thereof els-where, and to get what price they list upon
them . . . It is a Paradice of pleasures . . . a world of sweets that
live in a faire communitie togeather, where is no envie of anothers
Happines, or contempt of others povertie."

Dirk Hals' Tuinfest at first glance seems to extol the "Paradice
of pleasures" as described by Hawkins. The idea of the Earthly
Paradise in the painting is reinforced by the garden itself and the parrots
and other exotic birds flying in the sky. The "wise and benevolent
parrot," as Panofsky calls it, appears in works of art associated with
Paradise: Dürer's Fall of Man and Rubens' picture of the same subject
are only two examples.7 The parrot is also called "a byrd of paradyse"
in John Skelton's Philip Sparrow, a satirical poem written in ca. 1535.8
Wine, the drink that induces the sexual appetite, is prominently dis­
played in the foreground of this Love Garden and may indeed be respons­
sible for the happy characters' behavior behind it. But we become less
sure that this garden is a positive pleasance of earthly delights when
we look a bit further into other attributes. Dogs, long considered an
attribute of friendship and love, attitudes which are delightfully por­
trayed in the personages enjoying themselves, also carry connotations
of lust.9 In this case, the dogs could be negative statements about the
irresponsibility of the garden inhabitants. The monkey, usually a
symbol of luxury, may also condemn the activities transpiring here.10
However, the simian is also the attribute of a person with a sanguine
temperament, which manifests itself in a joyful personality. According
to one source, the sanguine person with a happy character, has "le vin de singe."\textsuperscript{11} In this case, the monkey would be a fitting companion and positive attribute of these gay, carefree people. The sword, which most likely alludes to martial occupations that here have been set aside, is probably placed in the foreground as a call to duty to those viewers of "sanguin" temperament who are wont to escape their duties for the carefree life of the garden.\textsuperscript{12}

Hals presents the Love Garden in a positive light on one hand, obviously concentrating on the fun that its inhabitants are having. However, many of the elements therein may also carry negative connotations, thereby censuring the irresponsibility of these fun-loving inhabitants. It appears to me that the painting may work both ways—in that case it is up to the viewer to decide whether Hals is extolling the merry life of this painted pleasance or satirizing the less than responsible behavior of its citizens who have turned their backs on their duty in order to indulge themselves in luxurious behavior.

The \textit{joie de vivre} of the seventeenth-century pleasure garden appears in a more restrained and sophisticated manner in \textit{Jerôme Janssens' (1624-1693) Conversation on a Terrace}, (Fig. 73), sold at Sotheby's London, on 11 December 1974. \textit{Janssens}, a Fleming, was affected by the international baroque style and fashionable engravings, particularly those of Abraham Bosse.\textsuperscript{13} Janssens was also heavily influenced by his countryman, Rubens, and copied the \textit{Conversatie à la
Mode. The characters in the London picture are typical of Janssens' oeuvre—elegant, attenuated, and fashionable. They are situated on a garden terrace, flanked on one side by a grand portico with classical fluted columns; and on the other, by a seated garden statue. The rectangular garden behind, bordered by hedges, stretches back into the distance, bedecked by classical statues dans le goût français. The characters are displayed in the foreground in all their regalia for us to admire and perhaps emulate. These elegant characters anticipate those of Watteau's fêtes galantes some fifty years later; it is not surprising that Watteau should have been inspired by Janssens' works since they were both natives of Flanders. We have proof that Watteau did indeed know Janssens, since the rococo master's Les Plaisirs du Bal at Dulwich was modeled after Janssens' Le Bal in Lille. In the Conversation on a Terrace, Janssens' dreamy cavalier leaning against a statue at the right of the picture, prefigures the languid character of the Commedia dell' Arte at the right of Watteau's Guitarist and Seven Bystanders in Berlin (Fig. 74).

Simon de Vos of Antwerp (1603-1676), an older contemporary of Janssens, portrayed an analogous stratum of society in his tableaux de mode. De Vos' figures also show the strong influence of Rubens. This is true of his Conversation, which was in the possession of W. E. Duits in 1930 (Fig. 75). Quite clearly the vigorous couples engaging in galant activities, such as the promenade, amorous conversation,
singing, and music-making were modeled after those of Rubens' *Conversatie à la Mode* (Plate I). Most notable are the couple at the left-center engaging in amorous discourse, patterned after Rubens' seated cavalier and his lady. The corpulent woman with the lute, gazing upwards at the right of de Vos' composition, is an unabashed copy of the singing female in the center of Rubens' picture; the cavalier at the right, walking towards the left, is an obvious transformation of the older gentleman descending the stairs in the Rubens. At the left, the promenading pair is clearly patterned after Rubens and Helena in the *Conversatie*.

In both the Janssens and the de Vos, the garden is an essential attribute of pleasure, a setting where characters act out stereotyped scenes of love, symbolizing the idyllic state of the pleasure garden and its inhabitants. One finds a similar kind of iconography in song and emblem books of the period, some of which are very close in spirit and theme to these *tableaux de mode*. Jan Starter's *Friesche Lusthof* of 1621 is a *liederboek* with lyrics praising the garden life. The *Frontispiece* depicts a type of garden scene as a visual parallel to the lyrics of the songbook (Fig. 76). Couples sing, dance, play, and converse within a park; their activities are presided over by Venus and Cupid, represented as sculptural fountain decorations. Both the artists of the songbooks and those of the pictorial gardens of love used a similar iconography in order to portray the pleasurable lives of the bourgeoisie. They drew on
a conventional repertoire of motifs to depict the leisured existence associated with the new life of prosperity people were enjoying in the early seventeenth century.

The conventional imagery common to pleasure gardens in songbooks and paintings is also contained in *Le Centre d'Amour Decouvert sous Divers Emblesmes Galans et Facetieux*, published in Paris "chez Cupidon" probably in the first half of the century. The engravings were executed by P. Rollos, a Dutchman working in Paris. One of the emblems depicts several of the activities associated with the ideal garden life. The verses accompanying the picture tell us "that if this is the way to happiness; I am ready to be blessed" (Fig. 77). Another engraving illustrates the simple pleasures of the garden life—lute music, conversation, and the promenade (Fig. 78). The poet in the picture says: "Lutes, a maiden, a fountain in the garden—do not expect me to be melancholy." In these emblems we see that the necessary meeting ground for happiness is the garden—where love and pleasure flourish.

Jacob Cats' emblem, *The Labyrinth of Puppy Love*, uses the motif of the pleasure garden to illustrate a message about love. By this period, as noted previously, the garden itself became synonymous with love; wherever one appears in the *tableaux de mode* and emblems of the epoch, it most likely has an amorous connotation. Cats' engraving depicts couples and Cupid promenading about in a formal garden maze (Fig. 79). A common social activity, the promenade in the garden, here
denotes puppy love and the difficult tricky paths of courtship. The pathways, which go round and round endlessly in this labyrinth, are compared to desire, which never ends. Like the maze, love is full of deceptions about which all complain; but they still insist upon staying there.

The garden as an emblem of love is sometimes decorated with statues which are associated with love. Dirk Hals' Conversation On a Terrace in the Van Nemes Sale, Paris, June, 1913, is under the jurisdiction of Cupid (Fig. 80). We have seen that popular emblems, such as those in Starter's Freische Lusthof, show Cupid presiding over the amorous festivities beneath him. The Dolphin appears also in Hals' Conversation; we remember from Rubens' Conversatie that the dolphin was an attribute of Venus, the animal associated with love in Ovid. Cupid as the governor of love gardens occurs in other emblem books of the epoch. In George Wither's Emblems, the God of Love flies over a pleasance populated by lovers, ready to aim his arrow at his next victim (Fig. 81). The verse warns the people in love gardens, such as those portrayed in Hals' painting to do the following:

Good Folkes, take heede; for here's a wonton Wagge,  
Who, having Bowes and Arrowes, makes his bragg  
That he hath some unhappy trick to play;  
And, vowes to shoot at all he meets today. 20

Otto van Veen's Amorum Emblemata of 1608 depicts Cupid watering a flower garden—his domain and the home of lovers. We are told in
the verse that love, like the garden, grows by favor (Fig. 82):

    The yong and tender sproutes wee often watered see,
    And thereby to grow up and fragrantly to flowrith,
    So fauour donne to love kynd love the more doth nowrith
    Whereby the fruits of love at last enjoyed be. 21

The fountain of love is a ubiquitous symbol in *tableaux de modes* of the seventeenth century. Often a very elaborate structure that occupies a prominent position, it is so fancifully embellished and, at times, so monumental in proportion, that one is led to believe it symbolic. Such is the case with the fountain in Esaias van de Velde's *Garden Conversation*, signed and dated 1624 and sold from Soehle's, Munich, October, 1907 (Fig. 83). And the symbolic fountain of bliss appears also in another painting attributed (optimistically) to Esaias in the Dorotheum Sale in Vienna on March 3, 1971 (Fig. 84). In the Munich picture we know that the fountain is associated with love by the statue of Cupid atop the shell base. In both paintings, the figures appear to have drunk from the well of love and to function under its powers.

In both a character dips something into the well. What is it and what does it signify? Fortunately the motif also appears in the love emblems of the period, which help one to decipher its significance. Jacob Cats' *Proteus, ofte, Minne-beelden verandert in sinne-beelden* of 1627 contains an emblem entitled *Amor, Tela Penelopes*. A woman here dips a torch into the fountain of love, the cause of her ardor. The verse
in French explains the action (Fig. 85):

When I am aflame, you cool my soul,
When I am cool, you rekindle my flame,
Give a counterweight to one and the other humour
Of an immortal death, thus, I die.  

The convention of the fountain of love is most elaborately ex¬
pressed in G. A. Bredero's De Groote Bron der Minnen, the Large
Fountain of Love, published in Amsterdam in 1622 (Fig. 86). De
Groote Bron is a compilation of love songs composed for out-of-door
fêtes, such as those in contemporaneous tableaux de mode; its Frontis-
piece is an engraving of fashionable couples—pilgrims who have come to
the fountain of love in order to worship Venus and Cupid. The verse
tells us the meaning of the engraving:

Come and climb on the happy view of Idalus
And look at the youth that kneel in front of the altar of Venus
And bring offerings for her for Love
Who always gets his way and governs the world.  

The fountain of love was taken up by Antoine Watteau in the early
eighteenth century; no doubt he was influenced by its symbolic use in
Northern conversation painting. A case in point, which will be elabo-
rated later, is the Gathering in the Country Near a Fountain in the
Wallace Collection, in which the fountain plays a significant icono-
graphic part. Here the sleeping fountain nymph and the dolphin below
are glosses on the amorous courtship that transpires below.

The fountain of love decorates another emblem book of the seven-
A young girl dips her heart into the fountain of love, which is decorated by a Cupid, from whose hands and feet flow the water of love (Fig. 87). The girl's action reminds us of the figures in Esaias van de Velde's pictures who dip into the fountain of love. The verse in Amoris Divini . . . elucidates the meaning of the engraving: "I wash my heart in this bath in order to live in your heart."24

Allegories in the Garden of Love

Allegories occur in the paintings of the early seventeenth century; however, the masters who executed them were perfectly capable of painting straightforward genre scenes simultaneously with them, and did so. For instance, David Vinckboons depicted his Prodigal Son, now at the Rijksmuseum, with its moralistic overtones perhaps in the same year as the Merry Company in the Open Air of 1610, which extols the joie de vivre of the garden life. However, it is justifiable to say that pictorial Love Gardens began as allegories at the outset of the century and progressively evolved into genre scenes.

As to allegories, at the beginning of the century, painters such as Frans Francken II, Sebastien Vrancx, and Louis de Caullery, painted works that were for the most part variations on the themes of the previous century. They used conventional formulae of the sixteenth century, such as the allegories of the seasons, and executed their works with a charming and delicate decorative quality reminiscent of pleasance tapestries.25
L'Amour Triomphant, painted by Frans Francken II (1581-1642), is one such allegory executed at the beginning of the century (Fig. 88). It was recorded in the sale of the Palais des Beaux-Arts on 23 March, 1976. The painting shows Venus in her triumphal chariot drawn by animals; she holds the torch of love, and her cour d'amour surrounds her. Two devotees kneel in front of her cart, worshiping her and imploring her favors. The vivacity and immediacy of this composition reminds one that actual triumphal processions and tableaux vivants were frequent occurrences; an actual one may be depicted here. The motif of Venus riding on her chariot was then a popular convention in the pictorial arts; for example, Starter's Freische Lusthof has the goddess flying down from the sky in her triumphal cart towards two of her devotees (Fig. 89). The verse explains the effect of Venus' power upon the lovers:

When Lady Venus comes attended by her train
Where Cupid himself is usually left out,
Then know joyfully lover, the end of your sorrow,
That is the beginning of your joy, the taking of your vows.

The light, witty spirit of Francken's tableau is captured in the verse, a literary counterpart to these charming pictures.

The most engaging pictures of allegorical society subjects were executed by Louis de Caullery, a painter probably born near Cambrai and active in Antwerp in the early seventeenth century. Two of his works, Le Jardin d'Amour in the Rijksmuseum and Homage à Venus at
the State Museum in Copenhagen are interesting for the development of allegorical conversations in the seventeenth century as well as for being ancestors of Watteau's *fêtes galantes*.

*Le Jardin d'Amour* in Amsterdam depicts fashionable young couples underneath a vine-covered arbor, engaging in typical acts of love (Fig. 90). They are situated on their own *locus amoenus*, frolicking with Ceres and Bacchus, who sit at the table with them. The presence of these mythological personages, who are associated with the fruits of the earth and the vine, supports the theme of good feasting that this picture is meant to convey.

*De Caullery's Fête de Venus* at Copenhagen depicts modish couples worshipping an animated statue of Venus in a garden (Fig. 91). The goddess dispenses new hearts to her children, whose old hearts have been wounded by Cupid's arrows. The figure of Venus presiding over her court of Love recalls the similar motif in the *Small Garden of Love*, the Early Netherlandish engraving; however, the event in Caullery's picture may have a basis in actual *tableaux vivants* of the period, judging by the fact that the worshippers wear clothes fashionable at the court of Louis XIII.27 The painting may also reflect contemporary customs and *fêtes*, such as the Pilgrimage of Venus, which one irate contemporaneous cleric describes in the following terms: "They used to sit underneath a green arbor or go on the water to get an appetite, or again in the afternoon, they would make the pilgrimage of Venus. When
evening came, they sang and danced the whole night and made love in a way that cannot be told."

The theme of worshiping amorous deities or symbols was popular in the emblem literature of the period roughly contemporaneous with de Cauilly's painting. Two examples are in P. C. van Hooft's Emblemata Amatoria of 1611. The first, entitled I Nourish a Wound, shows Cupid gazing at his wounded heart, which lies on an altar of love (Fig. 92). The verse reads: "Let me nourish my pain, it is my eye which leads me astray / By this breach Love obtains my heart as a prey." Both the wounded heart and the altar evoke similar motifs in de Cauilly's painting. Another emblem of Hooft shows Cupid again, this time worshipping the flame of love on the altar. The verse, entitled To Serve I Die, explains that love is both kindled and consumed by fire, as is the torch. The lover, in serving his mistress, is both inspired and destroyed by her.

L'Homage à Venus is a painting important iconographically for understanding Rubens and Watteau. Its motif of amorous couples worshipping a highly animated statue of Venus anticipates both Rubens' Feast of Venus in Vienna and his Conversatie à la Mode. Oliver Banks has recently suggested that the temporal progression of love in de Cauilly's Jardin d'Amour may have influenced Watteau's Embarkation from the Isle of Cythera (Fig. 93), where couples rise and walk away from the enchanted realm of Venus. If it is possible to see such a
progression in de Caullery's painting, it is much more explicit in his *Fête de Venus*, whose major theme of homage to the Goddess of Love more definitely prefigures the worship of Venus on the Isle of Cythera, painted by Watteau in 1717.

Allegories of love and courtship are creatively portrayed in Willem Buytewech's (1591-1624) *Deftige Vrijage* (Dignified Courtship) in the Rijksmuseum, dated 1616-17 (Fig. 94). Four persons here stand in front of a garden wall decorated with a fountain of love; a spider web is conspicuously placed in the left corner of the picture. The seated lady holds a rose in each of her crossed hands; this action is characteristic of a game of courtship entitled "Tossing Rosebuds." The gentleman seated next to her must choose between her and the other lady in the picture by picking a rose from one of their hands. However, there is no fair play in this game; the woman has the advantage of calling right left, and left right, if she has to in order to win her suit. When the gentleman's back is turned, she can cross and recross her arms so that her rose turns up as his choice. The spider web appears incongruous in this context. Jacob Cats' emblem of a spider web in the *Sinne en minne-beelden* of 1618 provides an answer to this iconographic enigma: the emblem is accompanied by a verse warning readers not to get caught in Venus' web of love. Another author, Johan de Brune de Jonge, writes: "Love resembles nothing in the world so much as a spider . . . the sting of a spider is deadly; the injuries of love cannot
be healed." The Deftige Vrijage, therefore, is no simple genre picture but an allegory of courtship and love.

Paintings of social conversations in gardens were often allegories of the senses. Dirk Hals' print, Visus, offers an example (Fig. 95). Here, a gentleman gazes intently at his lady-friend through a telescope, the latest scientific instrument employed as an iconographic tool by the artist. In turn, the lady looks back at him—a gaze symbolizing the faculty of sight. However, this is not the only meaning of the picture; it also refers to love, an emotion felt first through the eyes. The convention of love at first sight was popular in Renaissance and seventeenth-century love poetry, and was surely familiar to Hals and his fellow painters. The idea was based on the notion that attraction first came through the eyes, transmitted through optical rays; the eye then informed the heart, which then transformed the attraction into love. The general idea of sight and sexual attraction appears in the accompanying verse: "Five senses have been given us, showing to mind what has been created by the genius of nature or by wond'rous virtue. Do not look at girls, and if you do, be careful not to seduce them."

Jan Starter's Friesche Lusthof of 1621 contains an emblem illustrating the equation of sight with love. In a garden setting like that of the Visus, the lover gazes on his lady with a telescope (Fig. 96). The accompanying verse tells about the importance of sight for the astronomer and the courtier: "As one who measures the heaven's height with
his eye, setting his foot in a hole, I fall into a hole of sadness and misery, because I love, turning my affection to your high station."  

Another emblem of the period similarly illustrates the affinity between sight and love. Jan Starter's Friesche Lusthof contains a depiction of a cavalier whose gaze has been bent towards the lady of his affections by Cupid (Fig. 97). This gaze results in the following lamentations:

> Cupid, how have you bent my gaze?  
> Her heart is cold as ice, though her eyes are afire,  
> Now they sink into my heart,  
> Where they can't be turned out,  
> For there my flame burns your wings of wood.  

**Banquets in the Garden of Love**

Banquets form a popular sub-genre in Northern *tableaux de mode*. It is no wonder that they were depicted so often, since the collation was a very important social pastime. As noted previously, the collation was frequently represented on Italian Quattrocento cassoni, where eating and drinking took place in an environment devoted to love; here food was likened to love. The convention continued into Renaissance literature, where eating was often a metaphor for love. Modern critics call this gastronomic–erotic convention, "The Banquet of Love." It appears in a number of Renaissance and Baroque dramas. At times, an assignation takes place or seduction is attempted in a banquet scene. At other times, the language of eating is used as a metaphor for the
language of love. The banquet is usually followed by love-making, the fitting end to the amorous preliminaries of the repast. In drama, the words associated with sustenance have amorous connotations: "delicates," "dainties," "appetite," "feast," and "relish"—all are sexual innuendos. 35

Tatius' Leucippe and Clitophon, an ancient Greek romance, depicts a banquet of love: "The dinner she (Leucippe) provided was sumptuous; she took a portion of the meats set before her, so as to appear to eat, but could swallow nothing of the food. 'What costly dish,' said she; 'what wine could be more agreeable to me than the sight of you?' As she spoke, she kissed me... then, as she tore herself from me... 'That is my sustenance,' she said." 36 Chapman, the late sixteenth-century translator of the Iliad, uses the metaphor in one of his works dating to 1595. Offered food, the speaker answers his beloved: "Thanks gentle Samathis, but delicious love hath been the fig I eat before the wine, which kills the taste of those delicious cakes; will you bestow that banquet, love, on me?" 37

The Feast of Venus and Cupid, popular in tableaux de mode—a feast at which either the Goddess or her son presides—is a dominant scene in John Marston's The Insatiate Countess of 1613. Even the garden image is brought to mind as a setting for the Love Banquet: "Ile lead the way to Venus' paradise, where thou shalt taste that fruit that make men wise." The Love Banquet begins with the lines, "Sit to
Cupid's feast, the preparations to Papheon's dalliance." The banquet is sometimes accompanied by "Harmonious Musick [which] breathes silver Ayres to stirre up appetite to Venus banquet." 38

Modern scholars have linked the Banquet of Love with the "Feast of the Senses," as they call it, in which each of the senses is stimulated by the beloved's presence. 39 Perhaps the loveliest of these sensual banquets occurs in Shakespeare's Sonnet 141. These literary banquets are parallels to pictorial allegories of the senses such as Dirk Hals' Garden Party, dated in the 1620's, in the Frans Halsmuseum (Fig. 98). Sight is indicated by the man gazing at his beloved through the telescope--a fact pointed out before in relation to Hals' Visus, the print which most likely was the model for this figure. The lady whom he observes has a peacock pie held over her head by Hans Wurst; this appears to me to be a witty comment on the woman as a tasty morceau or object of prey sighted by her hunter through the instrument. Further, the lutenist probably personifies hearing, the seated couple with the flower, smell. The couple kissing may well refer to touch; the woman holding the drinking vessel, to taste. The allegory of the senses is here delightfully couched in naturalistic terms; the boundaries between allegory and genre are very tenuous. 40

The Banquet of Love in literature is a parallel to the collations represented in seventeenth-century society paintings and, in some cases, may even explain the amorous activities transpiring in these
pictures. These feasts are set into the garden, "Venus' Paradise," which, as we pointed out before, is an erotic symbol. Sensuality pervades Christoffe van der Lamen's (1606/7-1651/2) *Banquet in a Garden*, auctioned in the sale of the Gand Artistique on 16 June, 1930, in which amorous couples are seated at a table eating and simultaneously partaking of the sustenance of love (Fig. 99). The association of food with love is reinforced here by amorous glances and embraces: the gentleman at the left of the table puts his arm around his lady, the elderly man at the center looks lovingly at his companion, and the youthful cavalier at the right gazes longingly at his lady, as he holds up the glass of wine. The *promenade amoureuse*, fitting in this context, is depicted by the couple at the left. Van der Lamen's banqueters and the garden setting were obviously appropriated from Rubens' *Conversatie à la Mode*; as is typical with him, the robust figures of Rubens have been transformed into effete, attenuated paragons of elegance. The artist also adapted Rubens' portico and possibly, along with it, its significance as a portal of love.

Dirk Hals' *Banquet in the Open Air* in the Nyenrode Sale, Amsterdam on 10 July, 1923, depicts a similar amiable repast (Fig. 100). But here the viewer is invited to join the collation; the empty stool with its comfortable pillow in the foreground provides an *entrée* for the beholder. This invitation is reinforced by the gaze of the lady at the right who looks at us. The swan pastie at the center of the table indicates the
sumptuousness of the meal; the swan pie was a delicacy at the time and its head and tail were embellished in order to provide a fittingly elegant table decoration. The wealth of the banqueters is underlined by their dress, which is of the very latest fashion.

Banquets in emblem books contemporaneous with these pictures give us some idea of how the seventeenth century viewed these painted collations. \textit{Le Centre d'Amour} contains two refectons in the open air accompanied by verses. The first depicts a large banqueting table in the forest, with \textit{galant} couples gathered round it. Some eat, others drink, and some court (Fig. 101). The verse, translated from the German, reads: "I like food and drink very much, but a woman even more makes me jump." \textsuperscript{41} The accompanying French verse opposite the print explains that cuisine provides nourishment, while the drink of Bacchus excites the blood; however, culinary delights cannot compare with the charms of a sweet face. \textsuperscript{42}

One finds a similar message in a banqueting scene in \textit{Le Centre d'Amour}; here couples feast in a love garden decorated with a pavilion, enclosed by arbors and trellises (Fig. 102). The verse translated from the German is the following: "Banquet, music, my garden-girl, I consider this the best piece." \textsuperscript{43} There is an obvious erotic association between the food and the girl. The French verse opposite the print explains that the banqueter loves the pleasures that Apollo, Ceres, and Bacchus provide; yet when his lovely girl appears at the dinner table,
he forgets all of these delights. Both of these emblems are very close in theme to the love banquets portrayed in the literature of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Music and Dancing in the Garden of Love

Music and dancing are two of the most popular diversions of seventeenth-century society depicted in tableaux de mode of the period. They reflect the pastimes of the upper bourgeoisie, but they often carry also symbolic and allegorical meanings. These again can be elucidated by reference to emblems and song books.

One of the most charming society paintings of the early seventeenth century is David Vinckboons' (1576-1632) Merry Company in the Open Air in the Gemäldegalerie der Bildenden Kunst in Vienna, signed and dated 1610 (Fig. 103). The entire gamut of social activities is portrayed here—singing, dancing, and music-making—all transpiring in a park of delicate foliage with a lovely lake behind. It has been suggested that the stylized foliage and courtly ambience of this painting derive from pleasance tapestries with courtly subjects. However, the decorative quality of the picture may also be due to the influence of Gillis van Coninxloo, whom Vinckboons met in Amsterdam. The colors of the Vienna picture bespeak some Mannerist influence: azures and greens mixed with pinks, yellows, and roses, all imbue the composition with a decorative quality.
The foreground figures act out various pastimes associated with the Love Garden. The lady at the center plays the harpsichord in unison with a lutenist; a flutist and a guitarist accompany the players, while two ladies sing along. Also there are dancers and talkers in the merry group. The harpsichord lid is painted with a pastoral scene very similar to the one we are seeing in the painting itself: lovers in a park with a palace behind and a gondola on a nearby lake. This picture within a picture may be a gloss on the garden as a symbolic locale for amorous dalliance.

Vinckboons' Pleasure Park, as we may call it, has analogues in contemporaneous songbooks such as P. C. van Hooft's Lusthof (Pleasure Garden) of 1607 (Fig. 104). Compositionally and thematically, the Lusthof bears great resemblance to Vinckboons' painting: people in a pastoral setting, finely garbed, gathered round a harpsichord, singing and playing what appear to be love songs. The harpsichord lid, like the one in Vinckboons' work, portrays a courtly scene of couples in a park. Perhaps this scene refers to the type of pastoral love song that the singers are performing.

The introduction to Hooft's Lusthof elucidates the meaning of these pleasure gardens and also serves as a gloss on Vinckboons' painting. The Lusthof contains "honest amorous and happy songs such as those about May and Marriage." It is addressed to "honest youths," the same type of people that populate Vinckboons' Love Garden.
The couples in the Lusthof are gathered like those in Vinckboons' painting, in "green surroundings, where Cupid makes his fire burn in the loving heart." The lyricist directs his songsters to gather the couples in order to be joyous—"just to sing together in a sweet company."46 Hooft's Lusthof illustrates the essence of Vinckboons' Pleasure Park, whose amorous social activities can be explicated by the love songs composed to be sung in a pastoral setting. The songs themselves exhibit a relatively uncomplicated iconography of gardens, one which includes love, song, and an affable group of people.

The iconography of Vinckboons' painting can also be explained in terms of emblems of the period (Fig. 105). In these, music and love go hand-in-hand. George Wither's device, Love, a Musician, contains the lines: "Love, a Musician is profest, and of all Musicke, is the best." Wither goes on to say that by definition, musicians are lovers: "Love doe make them truly Musicall. For Love's a good Musician; and, will show how every faithfull Lover may be so."47 The musicians—lovers in the background of the emblem are set in a pastoral ambience, just as Vinckboons' musicians are, and are stimulated by the nature around them.

The power of music is emblematized in the Vienna picture by swans. Henry Hawkins discussed their association with musicians in the Partheneia Sacra: he called them "inventors of Musick" to whom the world is much obliged.48 They are fitting elements in the picture
since music is the agent of love, as we see in the amorous foreground couples.

The fisherman at the righthand side of the painting, though naturally at home in this setting, is also a symbol of love. The emblems of the period attest to this: P. C. van Hooft's Emblemata Amatoria of 1611, just about the same date as Vinckboons' painting, depicts Cupid in the role of a fisherman (Fig. 106). An amorous couple strolls toward the God of Love—another indication of the relation between fishing and love. Starter's Friesche Lussthof contains an emblem of a lover casting what appears to be a fishing line towards his beloved seated at her door. The verse explains that the cavalier is forced by Cupid to follow after his lady, whose heart is cold (Fig. 107). Crispin de Passe's emblem also links fishing to love. Just as the fisherman catches the fish, so the love couples at the right catch each other (Fig. 108). The word "vissen" in the seventeenth century carried a connotation of love, just as the term "birding" did. Elsewhere, Vinckboons portrayed a couple fishing in a drawing now at the Institut Neerlandais (Fig. 109). We are led here to assume that this is an amorous pair because of the position of the woman's hands as she reaches for the bait in her friend's lap. From this evidence, we are led to conclude that the fisherman has his rightful place in Vinckboons' Garden of Love.

The gondola populated by lovers, at the left, and the boat at the upper right of Vinckboons' painting also carry amorous connotations.
These vessels appear again in the artist's painting of a Water Fête in the Doyne Sale, Christie's, 26 February, 1926. Vinckboons no doubt observed these gondolas and fêtes in real life and patterned his paintings after them, but he knew from tradition that they were symbols of love.

We turn once again to Le Centre d'Amour for an emblem of galant couples in a pleasure boat in order to explicate the vessel in Vinckboons' paintings. The French verse opposite the print reads in translation (Fig. 110):

When the hot air fills my brain
And when Denice, whom I love,
feels the same heat,
Our greatest pleasure is the water
Where there is little difference between us.
She likes the movement
As much as I
of the small boat which slowly advances . . .
I like a small ship in the form of a shell
As soon as its sails are in the wind.

The German verse at the bottom of the print states:

I have never been stingy when it came to
be happy with a woman in a ship on the water
with the cool wind and some fiddling. ⁵²

Both verses equate ship and water with amorous pleasure. It appears that the cavalier will be content to pay for this pleasure. Here and elsewhere, the smooth sailing of a ship symbolizes the uncomplicated relationship between two lovers.
Other emblems compare a lover to a ship; and the sea, to love. One of Otto van Veen's emblems states that unrequited love is a ship that fails to arrive at the harbour; but happy love is like a ship sailing smoothly in the wind. Jan Harmensz Krul's Minne-beelden, Amsterdam, 1640 (Fig. 111), depicts a man standing on a ship, while Cupid steers it to land where the beloved awaits its arrival. The pleasure boat as a symbol of Spring appears in Den Bloem Hof van de Nederlantsche Leught by L. M. van Dis, published in Amsterdam 1608-1610. The engraving is accompanied by a conventional ode to the beauties of Spring, Lentes Clagh-Ghedicht in which the gods rejoice upon the arrival of the new season.

Dirk Hals' Music Party in a Garden, sold in the Nemes Sale, Müller, Cassirer, Helbing in Munich 16 June, 1931, and exhibited at the Ferens Art Gallery, Kingston on Hull, 1961, is another picture brimming with amorous symbolism connected with music (Fig. 112). Two groups of well-dressed couples make music and engage in conversation on a terrace, which leads to an extensive garden behind. The group which converses at the left is serenaded by a musical group at the right. The musicians play the flute, lute, and violin, and the lady at the center sings an air from songbooks lying on the table before her. We know that the group must be performing amorous songs since Cupid himself presides over the festivities. Like the couples at the left, he appears to have drunk too much; his little stomach bulges and he looks
a bit tipsy from the wine. His disciples have also imbibed; the overturned tankard and plate in the left foreground attest to their indulgence.

But this is no disharmonious group; rather, they are under the aegis of love. The flute or recorder played by the lady has traditionally been associated with eroticism—it is so, for example in Titian's Nymph and Shepherd in Edinburgh. This amorous significance continued in the seventeenth century, as is illustrated by an engraving of a flute player by Quesnel and Gasnière, which is accompanied by a commentary explaining that the musician is playing a song for the love of his mistress so to make his sadness disappear. The lute as an attribute of harmonious union is appropriate for the theme of Hals' painting—we may remember that Cupid held a lute alluding to love and harmony in George Wither's Emblemata Amatoria. Further, an emblem in Cupido's Lusshof published in Amsterdam in 1613, equates the harmony and accord of the lute to the joy of heaven (Fig. 113). This harmony is also illustrated by the amorous couple who play the instruments. The question of what are the musicians singing and playing imposes itself. Judging from the symbols in the painting, they must be performing a little ditty about the pleasures of love. Such songs appear, as we have seen in much of the emblem literature of the period; they are illustrated by engravings of couples analogous to those in Hals' picture. Such is the case with Daniel Heinsius' Emblemata Aliquot Amatoria of 1620, which shows couples in a garden singing and playing songs about the lovely
ladies in Holland (Fig. 114). The lutenist and the lady next to him sing: "The highest wish is to die within the womb of one's love, and thereby inherit Cupid's crown. Nothing is sweeter than the tears of the bride, whose liquid Cupid will gather." The song is dedicated to the young ladies of Holland, whom Venus has given grateful gentlemen. The songster swears by Cupid's arrow lodged in his heart that he loves these ladies of Venus. Light, amorous ditties such as this one, which accompanies a composition akin in spirit to Hals' picture, are the closest iconographic parallels to what the artist portrays.

Christoffe van der Lamen's *Lutenist on a Terrace*, in the auction at Sotheby's, London, 7 July, 1976, depicts a lutenist at a table strumming a tune from a songbook, while couples next to him converse (Fig. 115). Jacob Cats' *Quid Non Sentit Amor* (Who is Insensible to Love) from the *Proteus, ofte Minne-beelden* (Fig. 116) also depicts a lutenist seated at a table playing his instrument; behind him are two promeneurs in a tranquil garden; the harmony of their relationship extends to the nature around them, just as the sweet sounds of the lute symbolize concord. The verse admonishes us: "Behold the wondrous sympathy of the chords of the lutes, and then go to contemplate by them two lovers symbolizing an equal humor." In van der Lamen's picture, the harmony of the lutenist's sounds is visually expressed in the couple at the right, manifestations of accord in love. The gesture of the man--his hand over his heart--and the smiling countenance of his beloved
confirm their association. The garden and the well-ordered landscape behind it are extensions of the sweet harmony wrought by the melodies of the lute.

Dirk Hals' **Musical Party**, auctioned in the Asscher and Walker Sale, London, 1936, is presided over by Cupid riding on a dolphin. As a matter of fact, Cupid is often seen in the emblems as either governing musical activities or teaching lovers to play music. Such is the case in Jacob Cats' emblem, *Amor doet Musicam*; Cupid, at the center of the table, instructs the courtly musicians how to play (Fig. 117). And we can see further erotic effects of music and love on the reclining lady behind in the garden, who is reminiscent of a Titianesque Baccante or sleeping Venus, the object of the man's gaze and admiration at the left.

Dancing is another favorite pastime illustrated in the seventeenth-century **tableaux de mode**, and nowhere is it more charmingly or faithfully portrayed than in Jéro me Janssens, "Le Danseur." A pupil of van der Lamen, Janssens, perhaps more than any other Flemish painter of his generation, renders faithfully the members of a leisured society and their pastimes; he has often been compared to his French counterpart, Abraham Bosse, whose influence is notable in his *oeuvre*. But, as indicated previously, Janssens was in turn an important influence on Antoine Watteau. Nowhere is this influence more manifest than in **Le Bal** at Lille, signed and dated 1658 (Fig. 118), the direct model for Watteau's *Les Plaisirs du Bal* in the gallery at Dulwich (Fig. 119).
There is an unmistakable resemblance between the arrangements of the figure groups in the two paintings; the groups are aligned to either side of a central axis, where a couple dances. The fountain in the background of the Dulwich picture was inspired by the Lille painting; so were the two female caryatids, which are placed on either side of the niche at the right. Oliver Banks has noted the exaggerated perspectival treatment of the flagstones, the lack of integration of the architecture with the landscape background, and the awkwardness of the figures in Janssens' painting; however, as Le Grand rightly notes, "Le Danseur ouvre la voie aux XVIIIe siècle française." 62

Janssens also executed the galant scene of a dance which is now in the possession of Lord Hylton (Fig. 120). A young man, identified as the youthful Louis XIV, dances a courante with a woman, perhaps Marie Mancini, the niece of Cardinal Mazarin. They perform on a terrace, flanked on the left by a French classical building and behind a large niched arcade, housing a fountain. A large wooded park opens up behind the fountain, stretching into the distance. One scholar has speculated that the château belonged to the Duchess of Navailles, one of the ladies at the court of the Queen Mother. 63

Both the Lille and the Hylton pictures represent galant couples probably performing the courante, not the minuet, as has been speculated by critics in the past. 64 The courante was the most popular dance in the seventeenth century, and performed by Louis XIV and Charles II. 65
In the seventeenth century, the *courante* had become a stately dance of gliding movements executed by one couple at a time, who progressed around a room, separating and then coming together again for certain passages.\(^6\) The rectangular tiles on the floors of both Janssens' pictures were used to block out steps and patterns by the dancers as they moved about the terrace.

But why should the dance be placed in the Garden of Love? The question is simple to answer if one turns to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century treatises on the function of the dance in society. Here one finds that the dance is intimately associated with courtship, *le bel estre* (elegant presence), and grace. The *courante* began in the sixteenth century as a dance of wooing and courtship, pantomimed by various partners.\(^6\) \(^7\) Arbeau's *Orchesography*, written in France in 1588, contains sections which explain its philosophy and function. Written in the form of a dialogue, the tract features a conversation between Arbeau himself and another character, Capriol. Capriol states that "without a knowledge of dancing, I could not please the damsels, upon whom, it seems to me, the entire reputation of an eligible young man depends." Arbeau goes on to stress the value of dance as a tool of courtship: "A mistress is won by the good temper and grace displayed while dancing.\(^6\)\(^8\)

Dancing belongs in the Garden of Love because it is an amorous activity. A few passages from *Orchesography* will illustrate the point: "Dancing is practiced to reveal whether lovers are in good health and
sound of limb, after which they are permitted to kiss their mistresses in order that they may touch and savor one another." Arbeau suggests that some passages of the dance stimulate the feelings of love and desire. It is as if certain gestures said, "Love me, Desire me." The dance according to Arbeau "has the virtue of attracting hearts and awakening love."^69

The Promenade in the Garden of Love

Numerous Flemish and Dutch paintings feature ladies and gentlemen promenading in gardens and parks. Again, we remember that this pastime was one of the most popular in seventeenth-century society. Frans Francken I's (1542-1616) Gardens of a Palace, probably datable in the 1590's and in Christie's Sale 2 August, 1951, is the setting for the grand promenade of fashionable couples (Fig. 121).^70 In the left foreground, a gentleman bows to his lady; this posture is repeated at the center, where another cavalier entreats his lady to love. Other couples, such as the one in the right foreground, meander through the park, wearing the finest fashions of the period. We know that this is a park of love because Cupid and his Dolphin, sculptural decorations, preside over the center of the pleasance. Besides being a record of an amorous promenade, Francken's picture depicts the entire gamut of courtly activities: a lady at the left plays the lute, while her galant kneels before her, other couples in the left middleground gather round a
statue, presumably Venus, to worship her; in the background, people enjoy games.

Dirk Hals' *Promenade in a Garden*, datable ca. 1623, in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, is a more intimate record of the amorous promenade (Fig. 122). The gentlemen and ladies are set on a stage in the foreground of a garden restricted spatially by the hedge and tree behind. A classical colonnade rises up in the background to further enframe the couples in the foreground.

Dirk's vibrant brushstrokes, which knit his figures together by a series of criss-crossing diagonals, were appropriated from his brother Frans' group portraits. His rapid method of painting and his predilection for bright, luminescent golds, violets, and reds, highlighted by white, augment the vivacity of his characters; this method of cross-hatching and highlighting with white anticipates the technique of Watteau half a century later. In addition, the stylized postures of some of Hals' figures, such as the man gazing towards the right with his foot pointed out to the side and torso extended outward, anticipate several of Watteau's characters; one of them is the male with his torso extended outward and his head turned to the left in *Les Comédiens français* (Fig. 123). Perhaps even closer in pose to the Hals figure is the central female character in the *Embarkation from the Isle of Cythera*, who looks longingly over her shoulder, with her feet apart, and arm at her side (Fig. 93).
But Dirk's technique is not the only element that influenced Watteau; the popular theme of the promenade amoureuse in a garden or park was adapted by the rococo master and transformed from a rather superficially happy-go-lucky event into a promenade rêvée. Such is the case with his exquisite Assemblée dans un Parc in the Louvre, in which the promeneurs at the left walk into a dream-like park—enchanting embodiments of grace and elegance.

The theme of the promenade was popular in the emblem books; but usually the pictures of promeneurs were accompanied by verses that did not directly mention its significance though they were amorously oriented. Such is the case with two Fashionable Promeneurs in P. C. van Hooft's Songs of Apollo and the Muses, published in Amsterdam in 1615 (Fig. 124). The song beneath underscores the relation of the promenade to love: "Not to love is pain, loving is also hard, but most difficult is to live without joy."  

Another illustration of a promenading couple in the liederboek, Den Bloem Hof van de Nederlantsche Ieught, published in Amsterdam ca. 1609-10, relates the souls of a man and woman raised by love to the amorous promenade (Fig. 125). The gentleman addresses his lady, "Goon, mistress of my hope, why do you flee? Open the door of your heart for me to enter."  

The promenade also appears as a subsidiary feature of emblems with amorous themes. In Hooft's Emblemata Amatoria of 1611, the
emblem, "The Splendour of One is the Ardour of Another," features the devices of a mirror and the sun to illustrate the ardor of love (Fig. 126). In order to portray the reciprocation of love, the artist has also depicted a couple promenading in a pastoral setting emblematic of harmony. In a similar way, the emblem "Enemy Love Nourishes Me, but Extinguishes Me" in Rollenhagen's Nucleus Emblemata depict two pairs of promeneurs in a garden to illustrate one of the aspects of love. Altogether, the promenade is a favorite theme for painters and emblematists of the seventeenth century; it is intimately linked with the pleasure of love and courtship.

**Games in the Garden of Love**

Game-playing is a favorite subject of the society painters Jerôme Janssens and Pieter De Hooch in the second half of the century. Besides being of great interest to the cultural historian because of their accurate rendering of the pastimes of society, the pictures of games contain a recondite amorous symbolism. Again, by referring to emblem literature, we are able to decipher their erotic content.

Jerôme Janssens' La Main Chaude, executed in the late fifties and housed in the Louvre, is one of these pictures of society games (Fig. 127). It has been noted that this work was inspired by an engraving of Abraham Bosse, an artist whose societal subjects appealed to Janssens.76 La Main Chaude combines several games into one picture:
in the right background area, people play chess or backgammon; in the right foreground, a lady strums a lute, a fitting accompaniment to these pleasurable games, while at the left, a couple engages in a conversation galante.

The principal game, La Main Chaude, was a popular subject in the Middle Ages, when it was portrayed on numerous secular ivories and in courtly illuminated manuscripts. The game is played in the following manner: a man puts his head in the lap of a woman, while he places one hand with open palm behind his back. In turn, each member of the company slaps his palm, and he is supposed to guess who the culprit is; if he does not he is spanked on his derrière.

This divertissement was portrayed by Fragonard and other painters of fêtes galantes in the eighteenth century (Fig. 128). Fragonard’s version of the subject in Washington connects this frivolous pastime with love. A statue patterned after Falconet’s L’Amour Menacant dominates the festivities, setting the game within the Garden of Love. Janssens, like Fragonard, portrays the game within a joyful, carefree context. The amorous nature of his games is emphasized by the sculpture of Venus and Cupid in a niche above the company, both smiling approvingly at the festivities below.

Perhaps the most eloquent recorder of societal games in the open air is Pieter De Hooch (ca. 1629-ca. 1682). His three versions of the Game of Ninepins are now housed at Waddesdon Manor, Cincinnati
Valentiner dates the paintings ca. 1665-68 just about the time that the artist moved from Delft to Amsterdam, where he began working for a more affluent clientele. The game is set outside in a formal garden, which is attached to a country château. Elegantly dressed ladies and gentlemen, typical of De Hooch's later works, stand on a path, flanked on one side by tall trees, and on the other by a formal garden of clipped hedges. At the center, a man prepares to throw a ball at the ninepins in the foreground, while at the left, a couple intently observes the game. At the right, another pair engages in amorous conversation. There are slight variations in each of the versions: the Cincinnati variant has a smiling statue of a faun in the garden behind the sculpted Cupid, common to all three, who bears a dish of fruit. The Rothschild example has a large vase of poppies, lillies, and tulips in the right foreground, and the St. Louis version includes a ball in front of the man who plays the game.

This wonderfully lyrical scene is bathed in warm sunlight, which brings out the reds, golds, and whites of the costumes. The rectangular composition in which the figures are stationed at regular intervals, is very much akin to the quiet, well-ordered interiors painted during the artist's Delft period. In its stateliness and quiet, the Game of Ninepins is raised to a level which transcends a mundane genre picture --the figures are lifted out of their everyday world and placed into an
ideal sphere, where love and politesse are immortalized.

The iconic quality of these garden paintings leads one to speculate that they are symbolic; this hypothesis is confirmed when one turns to emblem books which depict the lusus amoris, the game of love. Le Centre d'Amour is the key to the iconography of De Hooch's paintings (Fig. 132). Not only does the emblem's composition resemble that of the painting in the placement of the couple to the right of the playing field backed by a garden, but its amorous iconography explains the meaning of their conversation about the game. In the emblem, a gentleman and lady observe the game of ninepins and he asks her: "Lovely girl, I want to ask you which is the best pin in the game." She answers, "Sir, I shall tell you—it must be the Kingpin, the one in the middle." The Latin verse as well underscores the erotic content of the emblem: "Tell me little Venus, which is the greatest pleasant cone?" "The best is the middle so I truly tell you." Needless to say, the kingpin is here a phallic symbol, and the conversation contains a double-entendre. I believe that De Hooch modeled his Game of Ninepins after an emblem such as the one in Le Centre d'Amour and imbued it with its erotic symbolism; he reinforced this amorous significance by placing the Cupid and Faun in the composition.

Looking further at the games in emblem books of the period, we find that they are all associated with love. By analogy, we can conclude that the society games of Janssens and De Hooch are overlaid with
erotic significance. The emblem book, *Amoris Divini et Humani Antipathia* of 1629 contains a picture of a boy and girl playing a game that is probably an early form of billiards, which has some affiliation with croquet (Fig. 133). In the emblem, however, this pastime illustrates the game of love. The verse in French at the bottom tells us the meaning of this competition: "There is a proverb: in the game of love, who loses, always gains."^{83}

*Le Centre d'Amour* contains an emblem illustrating a game of ball, a metaphor for love and sensual gratification (Fig. 134). The verse underneath is the conversation between the reclining gentleman and his love at the right: "I can throw the ball artfully, o little girl, if you do not believe me—perhaps you will play with me. You must do it with all the others."^{84} The speech is a racy invitation to get into the ring and play the game of love.

Does not the game of chess or backgammon in Janssens' *La Main Chaude* also refer to the game of love? If we compare it to an analogous divertissement in *Le Centre d'Amour*, (Fig. 135), we can perhaps understand its erotic significance: "One of them plays with Greta on the board; it is a better thing with the other one; I like his work place better than the first when he wins."^{85} In other words, the game of backgammon is merely a prelude to the real game of love at the left, just as it is in Janssens' painting, in which the amusements at the right lead to the real *divertissement amoureus* in the conversation of
love at the left. The association of chess and backgammon with love stems from a long tradition in art and literature. One can trace it back to the *Lancelot en Prose* of ca. 1220, in which Lancelot sends a magic chessboard to his lady, Guinevere, as a token of his love; the amorous significance of the game is made clear in an allegorical romance of ca. 1400, entitled *Les echecs amoureux*. The games of chess and backgammon are common in pictorial Love Gardens of the fifteenth century, such as that of Master E. S. in which two young lovers play the game in the center of the composition, while two other couples court and engage in amorous conversation. The galant connotations of chess continue into the seventeenth century pictorial arts, most interestingly depicted in a drawing of Gerrit van Honthorst in which the game is presided over by Cupid himself (Fig. 136).

De Hooch's late *Formal Garden at a Country Residence* in the Royal Collections at Windsor, depicts a scene of courtship in an elegant French formal garden (Fig. 137). The gentleman dressed in clothes *à la mode française*, doffs his hat in order to woo a lady. The act of courtship in a formal garden is analogous to the spooning of two lovers in Bredero's emblem of the Love Garden, in which another fashionable gentleman takes off his hat to his lady (Fig. 138). The verses tell us that his Queen of Love, the lady in the garden, instructs him to forget his troubles and have a good time in this pleasance. Her orders are being followed by the couple in the background, who court
and promenade in this Garden of Love.

We have seen that Dutch and Flemish Gardens of Love and the pastimes associated with them are imbued with erotic and amorous content, as becomes obvious when they are compared with contemporaneous emblem literature. Each of these *divertissements*, banal as they may seem to us, contain this symbolism, which was easily comprehensible to the seventeenth-century viewer familiar with these amorous images. Subtly couched in the naturalistic guise of the everyday world, these *tableaux de mode* contain meanings that transcend reality and become poetic statements about the nature of love.
NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE


3 Ibid., p. 125. The author of the catalogue entry assumes that this is a self portrait because the man looks at the viewer, an attitude not uncommon in group pictures which include a portrait of the painter. In addition, the gentleman in the Tuinfest is pointed to by his partner, who perhaps wishes to underscore his identity as Hals.


6 Hawkins, Partheneia Sacra, p. 6.


I thank Professor Francis Richardson for this suggestion.


*Le Centre d'Amour Decouvert sous Divers Emblesmes Galans et Facetieus* (Paris: Chez Cupidon, n.d.). Mario Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery* (London: Warburg Institute, 1947), II, 39, dates the emblems in the second half of the century, whereas the Folger Library, which houses the book, places it ca. 1650. However, both of these dates appear to be too late. Professors Walter Liedtke and Francis Richardson place the emblems in the 1620's because of the fashions that the characters wear, the figure styles, and the compositions.

*Le Centre d'Amour*, no. 52.


Otto van Veen, *Amorum Emblemata*, 1608, p. 79.


G. A. Bredero, *Groot Lied-boeck* (Amsterdam: Cornelius Lodowijcksz, 1622), n.p. I am grateful to Professor Marianne S. Meijer, Department of French, University of Maryland for translating verses from Bredero and several other Dutch authors.


26. Starter, Friesche Lusthof, p. 83. I thank Professor Walter Liedtke for translating this verse and several others from the Dutch.

27. For an iconographic analysis of the painting, see the article by Jeanne and Robert Genaille, "Deux Tableaux de Louis de Caulery," GBA, 67 (1966), 111-14.


29. Pieter Cornelisoon van Hooft, Emblemata Amatoria (Amsterdam: Willem Ianszoon, 1611), n.p. listing for either of the emblems.


31. This iconographic analysis was taken from Tot Lering en Vermaak, pp. 64-67.

32. This convention is often used by Shakespeare; see Romeo and Juliet, As You Like It, and Much Ado About Nothing.

33. Jan Starter, Friesche Lusthof, p. 245.

34. Ibid., p. 45.


36. Ibid., p. 424.

37. Ibid., p. 425.

38. Ibid., p. 427.


40. For an iconographic analysis of this work, see Tot Lering, pp. 122-23.

41. Le Centre d'Amour, no. 19.
The French verses in Le Centre d'Amour are printed on the page opposite the engraving, hence they cannot be seen in reproductions. The Latin and German verses are visible at the bottom of each engraving.

Ibid., no. 17.

Banks, Watteau, pp. 169-70.


P. C. van Hooft, Lushof (Amsterdam: Dirck Pietersz, 1607), p. 419.

George Wither, A Collection of Emblems, p. 82.


The iconography of fishing in emblems and painting is discussed in Tot Lering, p. 188.

J. Starter, Friesche Lusthof, p. 73.


Le Centre d'Amour, no. 38.

Tot Lering en Vermaak, pp. 269-71.


Tot Lering en Vermaak, p. 184.


60 For a discussion of Janssens' life and oeuvre, see Legrand, *Les Peintres*, pp. 87-95.


62 Banks, *Watteau*, p. 211.

63 The scholar, unidentified, wrote a commentary on the reproduction of this work in the Witt Library.

64 I thank Professor Angelika Gerbes, Department of Dance, The Ohio State University, for information regarding the *courante*, which was the most popular dance of the seventeenth century. Professor Gerbes speculates that these dancers perform the *courante* because of their positions in relation to the tiles on the terrace, which serve as patterns for their movements.


69 Ibid., pp. 12, 16-17.

70 For the date of this work, see the note accompanying the reproduction housed in the Witt Library.

71 The Kunsthistorisches Museum dates the painting ca. 1623; this sort of outdoor *fête* is typical of Hals' production in the 1620's.

This term was used by Leo Steinberg at a recent lecture given at the Cleveland Museum of Art, April, 1978, to characterize a theme in art that may have influenced Rubens’ promeneurs in the Conversatie.

P. C. van Hooft, Songs of Apollo and the Muses, Amsterdam, 1615, n.p.

Den Bloem Hof, pp. 178-79.

Legrand, Les Peintres, p. 88.

Tot Lering en Vermaak, p. 160.


After I had discovered the emblem in Le Centre d'Amour, I came upon a brief reference to it in Ellis Waterhouse, Paintings in the James A. Rothschild Collection at Waddesdon Manor (Fribourg: Office du Livre, 1967), p. 148, which mentions the emblem book but does not elaborate on the relationship between it and the De Hooch. No references are given by Waterhouse, and I have found no other allusion to Le Centre as the source for The Game of Ninepins.

Le Centre, no. 5.


J. Galle, Amoris Divini et Humani Antipathia, p. 98.

Le Centre, no. 9.

Ibid., no. 6.

For an illustration of the magic chessboard, see Richard Barber, King Arthur in Legend and History, colorplate opposite p. 65.
For a discussion of the games of backgammon and chess in art, see Tot Lering, pp. 155-57. I am grateful to Professor Harry Vredeveld, Department of German, The Ohio State University, for translating passages and verses from Dutch to English.
EPILOGUE

THE ROLE OF THE GARDEN IN THE
FÊTES GALANTES OF WATTEAU

Seventeenth-century conversation paintings culminate in the fêtes galantes of Antoine Watteau. It is not surprising that the rococo master adapted the pictorial conventions of Flemish and Dutch garden conversations because his birthplace, Valenciennes, provided a geographic link between him and the North. Watteau adapted the conventions of the pleasance, which serves as the locale for courtship and love, the music which fosters amorous sentiments, and symbolic statuary, which comments on the love-play that transpires in the garden. Watteau's versions of the Garden and Isle of Love are much more subtle and complex than those of his precursors, whose gardens provide only a general backdrop for carefree and relatively uncomplicated sentiments and amorous pastimes. In his compositions, symbol and expression combine to form an organic whole; mood, much more than allegory, defines the meaning of his works.

Throughout Watteau's oeuvre, the garden or park is a special locale reserved for lovers and their activities of dalliance. No longer is it a mere backdrop for social pastimes as it was in seventeenth-
century conversations; it assumes a major role in the iconography of love—at times overshadowing the personages which inhabit it. By its luxuriant foliage softly bathed in light and reflecting the colors of lovers' garments, the park is now the primary symbol of sensibilité. This role of the garden is augmented by symbolic statuary that often decorates it, as it did in seventeenth-century pleasantries, lending further amorous significance to the love-play transpiring within this enchanted realm. Such is the case with Les Amusements Champêtres in the Wallace Collection (Fig. 139). A company of ladies and gentlemen have gathered in a park in order to court, play music, and promenade. Their activities are presided over by a statue representing "L'Occasion." Her presence tells us that the time is ripe for love in this park; we can see the flirtatious young ladies at the right underneath the statue, attempting to arouse the attention of the gentlemen around them. As Donald Posner has shown, the ladies' orientation toward the men is emphasized by the two small girls at the left tugging their dog, a reference to the domination of the male by the woman.

Watteau adopted the convention of the pictorial Love Garden and the activities traditionally associated with it. He relied on tradition for motifs of courtship and love, but transformed them from mere conventions into gestures, movements, and glances that bespeak a new psychological reality. He portrayed the conversation which invariably transpires in a garden or park. An example is La Conversation in the
J. Heugel Collection in Paris (Fig. 140), which may represent the entourage of Pierre Crozat in his garden. The lady in the center, like those of Rubens' *Conversatie* is the focal point of the composition; her tall attenuated form is set off by the arching branches over her head, which come together like a halo. Like Rubens' Helena, she is being urged to join the conversation of ladies and gentlemen near her.

As in baroque pictorial Gardens of Love, music is the catalyst of love. Next to the park, music is the most important ingredient in the love games. For example, *La Surprise*, now in Buckingham Palace (Fig. 141), depicts a musician tuning his instrument, an action which stimulates the Rubensian couple at the left to a wild embrace. In Watteau, the act of tuning an instrument frequently contains erotic connotations as it does in Northern painting, as for instance, in Vermeer's *Woman Tuning her Instrument* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The lutenist's act is here connected with the expected arrival of her lover who will join her in a musical ensemble. Similarly, in Watteau's *La Gamme d'Amour* (Fig. 142), the amorous association of the singer and guitarist is underscored by the harmony of their music. And this agreement in music appears to lead to the amorous promenade in the right background, a fitting conclusion to the music party in front. To underline the amorous significance of the music-making couple, Watteau has set them into their own *hortus conclusus*, a garden within a garden that sets the pair apart from intruders; the way
they look at each other shows that their musical activity is a pretext for a lover's tryst.

In Watteau's oeuvre, dancing often takes place in a garden as it does in his Northern precursors' works. Such is the case with the couple in the Fêtes Vénitiennes who dance to the music of a rustic bagpiper, who is perhaps Watteau himself, dressed in ragged garb and out of place in this elegant entourage (Fig. 143). The central couple dance in front of a symbolic fountain statue, another reference to opportunity. L'Occasion here gazes not at the couple, but at the musician, perhaps beckoning him to join the dance of love. The gentleman who advances towards his friend in order to caress her, shows us the next step in the dance of love.

The promenade, also familiar to us from Northern conversations, is one of the most popular activities in Watteau's fêtes galantes. It is lyrically portrayed in La Cascade, housed in a private collection in Paris (Fig. 144). A couple promenades in a luscious garden serenaded by a guitarist at the left. The gentleman's gaze at his partner hints that he is entreating her to love via an amorous promenade. The statue at the right, comprising children and their kid, refers to budding love; this idea is in turn personified by the ambulating couple. The dolphin has his rightful place in this Garden of Love, symbolically commenting, as it did in the Conversatie, on the promenade and amorous conversation, here at the extreme left. Perhaps more famous is the
amorous promenade in Watteau's *Young Couples Near a Statue of Venus* in Dresden (fig. 145). Posner observes that the statue of Venus withholding Cupid's arrows from him is a comment that the time for love is not yet ripe for the couples who play beneath the sculptural group. The pair, however, who promenade outward from this group are ready for love; they shun society so to be alone in the meadow in the background.

Eighteenth-century prints by other artists similarly show the promenade as an amorous occupation (Figs. 146, 147). C. L. Lingée's *La Promenade du Matin* is accompanied by a verse informing us of the amorous consequences of the morning walk on the "Boulevards l'Amour" where ladies encounter a galant stationed in a hidden allée with his eyes fixed on them. *The Promenade du Soir* depicts two ladies encountering another suitor who will soon be followed by Amor himself waiting in the flower beds.

Watteau owed much to the seventeenth century. It has been often suggested that he may have been indebted to Rubens' *Conversatie à la Mode*, variants of which were in Parisian collections during his stay in Paris. He may also have seen either the painting or the engraving of Rubens' *Château in a Park*, which, more than the *Conversatie* anticipates the fête galante. The lyrical beauty of Rubens' *Château* is reflected in a painting such as *Assemblée dans un Parc* in the Louvre (Figs. 50, 71). Both paintings set figures within an idyllic park.
bathed in an ethereal light reflected by the water in the middleground and gently caressing the foliage. The promeneurs at the left of both pictures occupy similar positions, but the overt gesticulation of Rubens' cavalier has been transformed by Watteau into a subtle, longing glance of love. It is characteristic of Watteau's promeneurs that they walk away from groups, in order to be alone, such as does the couple at the right, whereas Rubens' couples typically belong to and are part of society. But there are figures and gestures in the Watteau which recall corresponding ones in the Château, such as the kneeling courtier who reaches out to touch the lady next to him—perhaps a conflation of the posture of Rubens' shepherd crouched on the ground at right center and the one running with outstretched arm at the extreme right. In other Watteau paintings, too, certain figures are strongly reminiscent of the Château, such as, for example, the lady leaning forward towards the viewer watched by her lover in the Guitarist and Seven Bystanders, who recalls the shepherdess crouching on her knees in the Château (Fig. 74). Where else could Watteau have found models for the exaggerated swaying, bending, and falling postures of his ladies in the Divertissements Champêtres, now in the Wallace Collection, but in the central couples of the Château in a Park (Fig. 50)? Granted, the movements have become more subtle and the proportions more attenuated, but the psychological meaning the exaggerated movements impart cannot be duplicated in any previous petits maîtres.
Undoubtedly there are some contacts between Watteau and these petits maîtres in other respects. Seventeenth-century prints of garden conversations were available to him on the art market in Paris and in the collections of connoisseurs, such as that of his friend Crozat. An etching entitled The Terrace in a Park with Three Gentlemen and Two Ladies, executed by Jan Fouceel, who was at work in Antwerp in the 1670's, anticipates Watteau's La Perspective in Boston (Figs. 148, 149). The compositional arrangements of the Fouceel print and the Watteau are similar—both landscapes are divided by a central allée leading back into space, framed on either side by tall clumps of trees that seem to dwarf the humans in their midst. In Watteau, elegant attenuated couples are set into, not against, a park with tall trees rising above their heads. The characters have become an integral part of nature and are extensions of its mood. We are a long way here from the gardens of a Dirk Hals, in which people are placed against a backdrop of foliage, detached from their surroundings.

Also, in late seventeenth-century France, galant sentiments analogous to those in Watteau's fêtes galantes were expressed in allegorical engravings widely known in his time. One such print is L'Arbre au beau fruit, dated ca. 1660 (Fig. 150). Cavaliers and their ladies worship a tree, out of which sprout the busts of men and women. The inscription tells us that the tree teaches the laws of love and marriage and that the sweet fruit of the branches (in this case lovely ladies
and galant gentlemen) will soften a cold heart. 10

L'Arbre au beau fruit is an early example of gravures de mode, which Hélène Adhemar has shown to have been direct influences on Watteau. 11 Engraved by minor French artists at the end of the century, these prints depict lovers in parks and on islands of love, engaged in galant activities like the inhabitants of Watteau's works. One of these is L'Ile de Cythère, engraved by Bernard Picart after the design of Claude Simpol in 1694 and now in the Cabinet des Estampes (Fig. 151). The theme and the disposition of the figures in amorous dalliance remind one of Watteau's Isle of Cythera executed in 1717 (Fig. 93)——men courting their ladies, couples debarking from the ship ferried by Cupid, and the park where it all takes place. Watteau substituted a statue of Venus for the Temple of Love in the right background of Picart's engraving. The print is accompanied by an inscription informing us of the activities transpiring on this enchanted island:

Dans l'Isle de Cithère
Cet aimable selour
Est un lieu solitaire
Dirigé par L'Amour. 12

Another engraving, entitled L'Entretien Galant, by Picart ca. 1700, presages some general features of Watteau's fêtes galantes, which came a few years after (Fig. 152). In a park attached to a French formal garden, couples sing and make music. The elegance of their attitudes, dress, and activities reflect those associated with seventeenth-century
gardens of love, but also strongly prefigure the eighteenth-century fete galante. The print is accompanied by a verse that explains the power of music to move one to love: "Ils auront tous deux leur victoire, Apollon au prelude et l'Amour a la fin."\textsuperscript{13}

In Watteau, the garden backdrop of seventeenth-century conversations and French fêtes galantes metamorphoses into organic, dream-like parks which encompass the elegant figures. Such is the case in the Assemblée dans un Parc (Fig. 71), in which the elegant figures in dalliance are extensions of the exquisite park around them; in turn the park, one might say panoptically, contains and extends their amorous feelings. The allegories of love in seventeenth-century gardens are transformed by Watteau into pictures that speak to the viewer through their evocation of sensibilité, not through codified gesture, symbol, or emblem. The outward symbols are digested and transfused into natural elements.

Watteau chose to set his amorous characters into the confines of luxuriant parks, clearings, and meadows--freer, more irregular and natural environments. The best explanation for this change of garden milieu seems to lie in a new spirit that was springing up in garden architecture, a spirit Watteau was quick to catch. In 1709, the year Watteau won second prize in the Prix de Rome competition, Dézallier d'Argenville published his La Théorie et la Practique du Jardinage. The views of the author regarding the relaxation of the French formal garden parallel the
new freedom expressed in the parks and gardens of Watteau's paintings. Dézallier d'Argenville states that in a garden, art must yield to nature ("le jardin doit plus tenir de la nature que l'art"). Decoration must be subordinated to nature: fountains must be less elaborately embellished and bowers, cabinets, and lattice work must be reduced since they owe more to the hand of man than to nature. He advocated more grass, more natural cascades, and more rustic statues. He demanded that parterres de broderie, a usual feature of French gardens, be replaced by parterres à l'anglaise or simple lawns. This new freedom in garden design is exemplified by the park in Watteau's Les Charmes de la Vie in the Wallace Collection (Fig. 153), in which simple lawns behind the figures stretch into the distance. This new informality in garden design and its manifestation in the parks of Watteau betrays the general reaction of the French against the tightly regulated order and solemn grandeur of the baroque—supremely manifested in the gardens at Versailles. Just as the Regent, the Duc d'Orleans, was free to play games of love with his mistresses in the gardens of the Palais Royal (executed in the new style), so Watteau's ladies and gentlemen were at liberty to court, embrace, and play in the unpruned parks of early eighteenth-century France.

Watteau frequented and sketched actual gardens in and around Paris. The Comte de Caylus mentions Watteau's drawings of the Luxembourg Palace gardens: "It was while he was living in the
Luxembourg that he . . . drew unremittingly the trees of that beautiful garden, which, less strictly planned as it is than those of other royal houses, provided him with innumerable viewpoints. 

Watteau's La Perspective (Fig. 149) in Boston shows a view of his friend, Crozat's country chateau and gardens at Montmorency, probably painted during the years 1714-15 while Watteau was lodging in the art collector's houses. It is apparent that Watteau was primarily concerned with portraying the romantic elements of the gardens—the full trees rising upward and the changing colors of autumn—and that he placed his figures into the landscape afterwards. But even though this picture and possibly others depict actual parks and gardens, they are transformed by Watteau into enchanted realms, fitting environments for amorous engagements that transcend mundane realities.

Watteau, like Titian and Rubens, took his departure from actual gardens and parks to create a language of love. Titian knew Renaissance gardens but fashioned his garden imagery in the Venus and the Organist on Petrarchan love lyrics with analogous themes. Rubens, in the Conversatie remembered his Antwerp garden but embellished it with mythological figures and symbols which lift it to a higher plane in tune with love and marriage poetry.

In literature as well as in art from the ancients to the rococo, fantasy more than fact has motivated the conception of the Love Garden. Garden love-poetry and pastoral novels were fashionable in the
Renaissance and the baroque. Seventeenth-century writers and artists looked upon gardens as places to poeticize the beauty of nature. The eighteenth century, Watteau foremost, modulated this fantasy into an enchantment of its own. There is no better way to convey this enchantment in Watteau's *fêtes galantes* than to quote the Goncourts:

And upon what stage he produced it, amid what natural prospects, fit setting for a halcyon existence, the painter aired his thoughts! Here is a region that conspires with his mood—amorous woods, meadows overflowing with music, echoing groves and overarching branches hung with baskets of flowers; solitary places remote from the jealous world . . . refreshed by springs and inhabited by marble statues, by naiads dappled with the trembling shadows of leaves . . . It is an amiable and pleasant country, where there are suns setting in apotheosis, beautiful lights sleeping upon the lawns, a verdant foliage where love is the light of the world.¹⁸
NOTES TO THE EPILOGUE


7 Mirimonde, "Statues et emblems," pp. 14-15, recognizes this sculptural group as one fashioned by Sarrazin.

8 Donald Posner, "The True Path of Fragonard's 'Progress of Love,'" Burlington Magazine, 114 (1972), 530.


Chacun pour son office
Y chante ses plaisirs
Et pour tout sacrifice
Vient offrir ses soupirs

On passe en ces Retraites
Des jours délicieux
Et bien des nuits secrets
Qui valent encore mieux

Quelle aimable demeure
Qu'elle a de quoi charmer
On s'y voit à toute heure
Sans cesser de s'aimer

Quoted in Émile Dacier, "L'Isle de Cythère Avant Watteau,", GBA, 71 (1937), 248.


Ibid., pp. 162-64.


APPENDIX

CONVERSATION PAINTING IN SEVENTEENTH- AND
EARLY EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY RECORDS

The Garden of Love was referred to in Rubens' inventories and other seventeenth- and eighteenth-century records as "Conversatie à la Mode" or as "Conversatie van Joffrs." The first reference to the painting appears in the Staetmesse "ende Rekeninge van all de goeden van wylen heer Pietro Paulo Rubens" (the sale of all the goods from the legacy of Peter Paul Rubens) in 1645. In the Staetmesse a Commis Maes of Brussels, who purchased "eenen doeck begonst van een Conversatie à la mode vor dry ponden flems, comt in guildens de somme van 18"¹ (a canvas favored [?] with a Conversatie à la Mode for three Flemish pounds in the sum of 18 guilders). Next, "een Conversatie à la Mode op paneel voor de somme van 120"² (a Conversatie à la Mode on panel for the sum of 120 florins) was sold to Helena Fourment in 1645. Burchard supposes this painting to be synonymous with the Waddesdon Manor variant since it was executed on panel as opposed to the Prado painting which was executed on canvas.³ However, Glang-Suberkrub and Gustav Glück identify it with one of the small copies made after Rubens' original because of the low sum paid for it.⁴
It seems to me impossible to say which version of the painting the latter notice alludes to. It may be one of the numerous copies made after the Waddesdon Manor panel; the panel remained in Rubens' possession for a number of years, having engendered at least ten copies by artists at work in Rubens' studio. It could be that one of these was sold to Helena since she was depicted in the work and wished to retain a copy for herself. If the painting was a studio copy, the relatively small sum is appropriate. However, it is also reasonable to speculate that this "Conversatie à la Mode op Paneel" was the original Waddesdon Manor painting, which Rubens labored on for a number of years and which his widow preferred to own. If indeed she wished to purchase it, as Rubens' widow, she may not have paid the full price. The question of the painting's identification must remain unsettled since Rothschild inventories trace it back only to the later eighteenth century, when it was housed in the collection of the Dukes of Infantado-Pastrana of Madrid.

In 1652 in Antwerp "een conversatie na Rubens, op paneel, in lystken" (a conversatie after Rubens on panel in a frame) was recorded in the will of Victor Wolfets. Susanna Willemsens seems to have been an admirer of Rubens' conversation paintings, whether they were the Conversatie à la Mode or the Château in a Park, since "een Conversatie van Rubens op paneel" (a conversation of Rubens on panel) and "een Copy van de Conversatie van Rubens op doeck" (a copy of the
Conversatie of Rubens on canvas) were recorded in her inventory of 1657. In the same year Rubens' son, Albert, and his wife, Clara del Monte, died. The inventory listing their inheritance came into the possession of their youngest daughter, Clara Petronilla, who later married the Spaniard, Don Alvaredo y Bracamonte. Through this liaison the inventory passed to the Visconti family in Italy and was published by them. An item in the account reads as follows: "Staet ende inventaris van den Sterffhuyse van Mynheer Albert Rubens ende Vrouwe Clara del Monte . . . op de groote Caemer boven de salette . . . Item eene andere [schilderey] representeerende eene conversatie van Joffrs" (A bill of sale from the death house of . . . in the great chamber above the small room another [painting] representing a conversation of women).

Glang-Süberkrüb argues that this painting, representing a conversation of young ladies, may have been among others in the dowry of Clara Petronilla shipped to the home of her husband in Spain; she identifies it with the Waddesdon Manor version, which was formerly in the possession of the Dukes of Infantado-Pastrana.

As to the provenance of the painting now in the Prado, the documentation is insufficient. The picture cannot be located before 1666; the early sources say nothing about its presence in the Rubens household or in Antwerp. Sanchez Canton stated that Philip IV acquired the painting from Rubens' widow in 1666 to adorn his bedroom. Unfortunately there is no verification of the presence of the painting in the
Royal Collections until the middle of the eighteenth century, when it is recorded in the Royal Inventories.¹¹

Max Rooses published a letter by Rubens' nephew, Philip to Roger de Piles, the champion of Rubenism in France, between March 5 and June 5, 1676. Philip mentions Rubens' "La Conversation," which apparently de Piles had seen in France. Also mentioned in the letter are a number of Rubens' paintings purchased in 1672 by the Duc de Richelieu, an avid collector of the master's works, to replace paintings by Poussin in his art gallery. Apparently between 1676 and 1677 the Duke acquired other paintings by Rubens. Süberkrüb thinks that de Piles saw "La Conversation" in the collection of the Duke, since he seems to have been conversant with it.¹² A "Conversatie naer [after] Rubens" is again mentioned in the seventeenth century, recorded in the will of Erasmus Quellen in 1678.¹³

The reference most informative for establishing "conversation" as the designation of Rubens' painting appears in a description of a variant of the Waddesdon Manor painting formerly in the collection of the Comtesse de Verrue and now in Dresden. It was described, together with other variants then located in France by P. J. Mariette (1694-1774) on the occasion of the sale of the collection of the Prince de Carignan (Fig. 154).

Des dames, la pluspart accompagnées de leurs amants, rassemblées dans un jardin auprès d'une fontaine. Ce beau tableau de Rubens, que l'on nomme la Conversation, a été en
France dans le cabinet de M. le Duc d'Orléans. L'estampe en a été exécutée au burin par Pierre Clouwet.—Rumoldus Vande Velde exc. et D. D. Assez mal exécuté et rare à trouver de bonne qualité d'impression.—Aux secondes épreuves: A Paris, chez Van Merle.—Aux premières épreuves, les vers qui sont au bas doivent être en flamand. Les meilleures épreuves ordinairement sur un papier au verso duquel il y a de l'impression.—Présentement dans le cabinet de mad. de Verrue, ensuite à M. le prince de Carignan, et après sa mort il a été acheté, à ce qu'on m'assure, pour la galerie du roy de Pologne.—Avant que le tableau fut à madame de Verrue, il appartenait à M. de Nocé.—On m'avait mal informé; le tableau n'est point à Dresde; mais n'est-il pas au Palais Royal?

Ce mesme sujet traité différemment, quoique la pensée générale en soit la mesme. Gravé en bois par Christophe Jegher. Ce graveur mettoit parfaitement bien dans le goût de Rubens.—J'ai le dessin original de Rubens de la moitié de cette composition.—J'ai trouvé depuis l'autre partie chez M. de Thiers, et il m'en a fait present. Il y a dans le dessin plusieurs changemens qui ont été faits par Rubens depuis la planche gravée et qui sont très judicieusement faits.

Une estampe ou tableau de Rubens appelé la Conversation, nouvellement gravé par L. Lempereur et mis au jour par lui en janvier 1769. Il l'a exécuté d'après au tableau qui est à Paris dans le cabinet d'un curieux et qui ne passera jamais pour un original. Il n'est pas cependant tout à fait conforme à celui que Lauwers a gravé. C'est bien la meme composition, mais avec quelques differences et quelques figures de plus. La planche est tres proprement gravé, mais je trouve que Rubens y est bien défiguré. On n'y reconnait point du tout sa maniéré. Il y en a eu une vingtaine d'épreuve d'imprimées avant qu'il y eût un point sur l'i du mot premier et un accent circonflexe sur le mot 'chateau' dans la dédicace. La mienne est de cette qualité.\textsuperscript{14}

Mariette's description indicates that he was familiar with the variant now in Dresden, and with the copper engraving by Clouwet as well as the woodcut of Jegher. Mariette owned one half of the original designs for the woodcut, which he received from Pierre Crozat as a gift; he later acquired the other half from M. de Thiers in 1741.
It is thus clear from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century documents that Rubens' painting was considered a conversation piece; the title, "Conversatie" or "La Conversation," defines it as such. Numerous pictures in the seventeenth century were referred to as "conversations;" Rubens' Conversatie belonged to a significant genre of the period. This may come as a surprise to modern art historians since conversation painting is considered an eighteenth-century phenomenon. The genre has been too narrowly defined as portraying portraits of people in their homes or in their gardens. In the baroque period, it was a good deal broader than in the following century.

A long list of seventeenth-century conversation paintings could be drawn up. J. Denuce's Art Export in the Seventeenth Century In Antwerp: The Firm Forchoudt (1931) reveals several accounts of conversation pieces. Christoffe van der Lamen is mentioned in at least five inventories (1644, 1671, 1674, 1675, 1678) as a painter of "conversatie" (sometimes noted as konversasie, conversasie). In 1671 he painted two conversatien, which were sent to Baron van Brandeck. Also frequently mentioned as painters of conversations are Janssens (presumably Jerôme), who painted "1 Stuck Conversatie" in 1671, and Simon de Vos, who executed "1 Conversasie de 5 Sinnen" on 7 November, 1678. Christoffe van der Lamen is elsewhere described as "a conversatie schilder," by Cornelius de Brie in his verse eulogy Het Gulden Cabinet (Lierre, 1661).
J. B. Descamps (1706-1791), the noted French art critic, mentions several conversation pieces of Northern painters in his *La Vie des Peintres Flamands, Allemands, et Hollandois* (Paris, 1754). David Ryckaert le Fils (b. 1615) painted "une conversation ou assemblée chez Prince Charles à Brussel." Also mentioned is a François du Châtel, a pupil of David Teniers the Younger, who painted "Conversations, Assemblées, Bals, et des Portraits de famille." All of these figures, Descamps adds, are dressed according to the fashion of the times. 

A. J. Dézallier d'Argenville (1680-1765), the noted French theoretician and author of *La Théorie et la Pratique du Jardinage*, wrote the *Abrégé de la Vie de Plus Fameux Peintres* (Paris, 1762) in which there are accounts of conversation painters. He mentions Eglon Van der Neer (b. 1643) of Amsterdam, who came to France in 1663, and painted "Assemblies of persons dressed in fashionable clothes in the mode of Terburg;" he was also known for "des conversations galantes." Van der Neer's small and intimate genre pictures of ladies and gentlemen conversing usually are interior scenes resembling the intimate gatherings of Terborch and Metsu. Not surprisingly, Terborch is classified as a painter of "conversational subjects." In his *Catalogue Raisonné of Dutch, Flemish, and French Painters* of 1833, Smith includes among them Terborch's *Music Lesson*, *Glass of Lemonade*, and the so-called *Paternal Instruction*; the latter is characterized as a painting in which the figures gesticulate, give advice, and drink wine. *The Lovers*
Amsterdam, also a conversational subject, represents young people playing guitars and singing. Pieter de Hooch is also labeled a "conversation painter" in early records; J. B. Descamps asserts that "ceux d'entre ses Ouvrages qui lui ont mérité plus de réputation, représentent des conversations: les habillements et ses personnages sont galants et selon les modes de son temps." Descamps most likely refers here to the later works of de Hooch, affected by French taste, such as the Game of Ninepins at Waddesdon Manor and the Garden Conversation at Windsor; they feature members of the upper bourgeoisie dressed in galant habillements.

Conversations evidently could depict low as well as high life. Adrien Brouwer is recorded as having painted "une conversation à Dusseldorp chez l'Electeur Palatin." In addition, Egbert van Heemskerck, another painter of tavern scenes, is mentioned by Dufresnoy (1611-1665) in his Art of Painting and Lives of the Painters. Dufresnoy states "that in most of his 'Conversations' as he called them, you may see the Picture, and read the Manners of the Man at the same time." In his Notebooks, George Vertue lumps the "conversations done above a hundred years ago by Teniers [and] Brower with some of those flemish masters of the Schoolars of Rubens and Van Dyke."

The category of conversation pictures includes above all, the paintings of Antoine Watteau. Vertue commented in 1724 that in the Collection of Dr. Mead there are "Watteaux Conversations painted in England." Vertue placed Watteau with the conversation painters,
Teniers, Brouwer, and Breugil. Since Watteau never entitled his paintings, I believe that the appellation "conversation painter" is as authentic as "peintre des fêtes galantes."

We must conclude that conversations formed a popular category of painting in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Apparently they were thought of in a very general sense—as tableaux de mode, that is as depicting fashions and manners from all strata of society. The evidence cited in the documents for seventeenth-century genre painting counters the modern-day notions of scholars such as Mario Praz and Ralph Edwards, who have stated that conversation pieces are intimate portraits of well-known personages or families set into their proper milieus, as Jacob Jordaens' Family Group in a Garden at the Prado and Nicholas de Largillière's Self Portrait with his Family in the Louvre (Figs. 155, 156).

This definition valid for eighteenth-century English paintings now known as conversation pieces, excludes Brouwer, de Hooch, and Watteau, the most famous of the conversation painters. The term, I suggest, should be extended to paintings depicting persons engaged in some kind of social communication—whether it be speaking, dancing, smoking, or conversing. Perhaps we should go back to the original definition of conversation by the Académie française: "A circle of acquaintances, society, or company... [or] the manner of conducting oneself in society." The term is more authentic than genre, merry
company, or society painting; at any rate it is more appropriate for understanding the meaning of Rubens' two paintings.
NOTES TO THE APPENDIX

1. J. Denucé, De Antwerpse "Konstkamers" Inventarissen van Kunstverzamelingen Te Antwerpen in De 16e en 17e Eeuwen (Amsterdam: De Spieghel, 1932), p. 77

2. Ibid., p. 78.


8. Ibid., p. 197. Denucé records many more conversations painted by Antwerp artists throughout the seventeenth century.


10. Ibid., p. 83-84.


12. Glang-Süberkrüb, p. 84.


Dézallier d'Argenville, *Abrégé de la Vie*, III, 386.


Vertue, *Notebooks*, III, 28, 82.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Plate I. Rubens, Conversatie à la Mode
Fig. 1. Garden of Love, Vienna

Fig. 2. Garden of Love, New Haven
Fig. 3. *April Page, Très Riches Heures*

Fig. 4. *Large Garden of Love*
Fig. 5. Small Garden of Love

Fig. 6. April Scene, Sala dei Mesi
Fig. 7. Baccio Baldini? *Garden of Love*

Fig. 8. Georg Pencz, *Garden of Love*
Fig. 9. Stefano Cernoto? *Garden of Love*

Fig. 10. Giorgione, *Concert Champêtre*
Fig. 11. Palma Vecchio, *Concert Champêtre*

Fig. 12. Titian, *Venus and the Organist*
Fig. 13. Peter Pourbus, *Allegorical Love Feast*

Fig. 14. Karel van Mander, *Prodigal Son Among the Courtesans*
Fig. 15. Barendsz, Mankind Awaiting the Last Judgement
Fig. 16. Sweelinck, Prodigal Son?

Fig. 17. Cornelius Galle, Dolce Vita
Fig. 18. David Vinckboons, Spring

Fig. 19. Crispin de Passe, Earth
Fig. 20. J. van Valckenborch, *Spring Landscape*
Fig. 21. Le Pautre, Garden
Fig. 22. Bosse, Frontispiece to Le Jardin de la Noblesse Française
Fig. 23. Abraham Bosse, L'Olorat
Fig. 24. Frontispiece to *La Fausse Clelie*

Fig. 25. Frontispiece to Conclusion of *L'Astrée*, 1628
Fig. 26. Frontispiece to Conclusion to L'Astrée, 1633

Fig. 27. Ayres, My Eye Towards My Sun
Fig. 28. Callot, Palace Gardens at Nancy

Fig. 29. Cats, Turpe Senilis Amor
Fig. 30. Bosse, Adolescence
Fig. 31. Bosse, Le Printemps
Fig. 32. Isle of Cythera from *Le Songe de Poliphile*
Fig. 33. Abbé d'Aubignac, *Le Royaume de Coquetterie*
Fig. 34. Le Carte de Tendre
Fig. 35. Dirk Hals, *Promeneurs*
Dirk Hals, Promeneurs
Fig. 35. Dirk Hals, *Promeneurs*
Fig. 36. Frontispiece to Molière's Melicerte
Fig. 37. Stefano della Bella, *Designs for Mirame*

Fig. 38. Stefano della Bella. *Le Nozze degli Dei*
Fig. 39. Rubens, Conversatie à la Mode, Waddesdon Manor
Fig. 40. Design for Woodcut by Jegher

Fig. 41. Design for Woodcut by Jegher
Fig. 42. Detail, Rubens' *Conversatie à la Mode*

Fig. 43. Detail, Rubens' *Conversatie à la Mode*
Fig. 44. Detail, Rubens’ Conversatie à la Mode

Fig. 45. Harrewyn, Engraving of Rubens’ Garden
Fig. 46. Jegher's woodcut of the Conversatie

Fig. 47. Gardens at the Villa Pratolino
Fig. 48. Rubens, Helena Fourment and Nicholas

Fig. 49. Rubens and Helena Fourment Promenading
Fig. 50. Rubens, Château in a Park

Fig. 51. Rubens and Helena Fourment Promenading
Fig. 52. Clouwet, Engraving after Rubens' Conversatie

Fig. 53. Ripa, Matrimony
Fig. 54. Camerarius, Fida Coniunctio

Fig. 55. Jacob Cats, Nuptial Doves
Fig. 56. Rubens, *Marriage of Marie de Medici*
Fig. 57. Rubens' designs for the Marriage of Maximilian of Burgundy

Fig. 58. Rubens' designs for the Marriage of Philip the Fair
Fig. 59. Arnold Bon, *Fountain of Love*

Fig. 60. *Henry IV Receiving the Portrait of Marie de Medici*
Fig. 61. Ripa, *Conjugal Love*

Fig. 62. *Henry IV Promenading with Marie de Medici*
Fig. 63. Dürer, Promenading Couple

Fig. 64. Frans Hals, Portrait of a Couple
In fidem uxoriam.

EMBLEMA CXC.

Ecce puella, viro qua dextrà inugitor: ecce
Vt sedet, vt castulus insit ante pedes!
Hac fidei cili pietas: Veneri quam si educat ardor,
Malorum in Iena non malè ramus erit,
Pomae temum Veneri sunt: Scapha cida visit
Hippomenes, petiit sit Galatea virum.

Fig. 65. Alciati, In fidem uxoriam
Fig. 66. Teniers, Marriage of the Artist
Fig. 67. Rubens? Château in a Park
Fig. 68. Engraving after Rubens' Château in a Park
Fig. 69. Dirk Hals, Tuinfest
Fig. 70. Dirck Hals, Party Near a Lake
Fig. 71. Watteau, *Assemblée dans un Parc*
Fig. 72. Esaias van de Velde, *Garden Repast*
Fig. 73. Janssens, *Conversation on a Terrace*
Fig. 74. Watteau, *Guitarist and Seven Bystanders*
Fig. 75. Simon de Vos, *Conversation*
Fig. 76. **Frontispiece, Friesche Lusthof**

Fig. 77. **No. 52, Le Centre d'Amour**
Fig. 78. No. 4, *Le Centre d'Amour*

Fig. 79. *Cats, Labyrinth of Puppy Love*
Fig. 80. Dirk Hals, Conversation on a Terrace.
Fig. 81. Wither, *Emblems*

Fig. 82. Otto van Veen, *Love Grows by Favor*
Fig. 83. Esaias van de Velde, *Garden Conversation*
Fig. 84. Esaias van de Velde? *Conversation*
Fig. 85. Cats, Amor, Tela Penelopes
Komt Klant en Mathys Wuytsfig, en aanschouwer. En offerhanden bijgevat voor haat en voor de Moed, die noodknecht voor Vrouwe heilich uiter. Dit is het na zijn hand, en heeft de wereld in.

Fig. 86. Bredero, De Groote Bron der Minnen
Fig. 87. Fountain of Love
Fig. 88. Frans Francken II, *L'Amour Triomphant*
Wanneer Zeven-Venus komt, vreeszacht met haar staat,...
Saeer ze Cupido zelf gemeenlijk begleed saet...
Weest Minnaert, dag verscheept, dat 'e l'equide Gay u trouwcy,
Sat's d'achtegaagh Gay u reuwigd, het teghey Gay u trouwcy.

Fig. 89. Lady Venus
Fig. 90. Louis de Caullery, *Le Jardin d'Amour*
Fig. 91. Louis de Caullery, *Homage à Venus*
Fig. 92. Hooft, *I Nourish a Wound*

Fig. 93. Watteau, *Embarkation from the Isle of Cythera*
Fig. 94. Buytewech, Deftige Vrijage

Fig. 95. Dirk Hals, Visus
Fig. 96. Starter, As One who Measures the Heavens Height

Fig. 97. Starter, Cupid, How Have You Bent my Gaze
Fig. 98. Dirk Hals, Garden Party

Fig. 99. Christoffe van der Lamen, Banquet
Fig. 100. Dirk Hals, Banquet
Fig. 101. No. 19, Le Centre d'Amour

Fig. 102. No. 17, Le Centre d'Amour
Fig. 103. Vinckboons, *Merry Company in the Open Air*

Fig. 104. Hooft, *Lusthof*
Love, a Musician is profess'd.
And, of all Musick, is the best.

Fig. 105. Wither, Love, a Musician

Fig. 106. Hooft, Cupid as Fisherman
Fig. 107. Fishing emblem, Friesche Lusthof

Fig. 108. Crispin de Passe, Fishing Emblem
Fig. 109. Vinckboons, *Fishing Couple*

Fig. 110. No. 38, *Le Centre d'Amour*
Alzijt ghy vert,, noyt uyt het Hert.

Fig. 111. Krul, Minne-beelden
Fig. 112. Dirk Hals, Music Party
Fig. 113. Harmony of Music, *Cupido's Lusthof*

Fig. 114. Heinsius, *Emblemata Aliquot Amatoria*
Fig. 115. van der Lamen, Lutenist on a Terrace
Fig. 116. Cats, *Quid non Sentit Amor*
Fig. 117. Cats, Amor doet Musicam
Fig. 118. Janssens, *Le Bal*

Fig. 119. Watteau, *Les Plaisirs du Bal*
Fig. 120. Janssens, *A Dance*
Fig. 121. Frans Francken I. Gardens of a Palace
22. Dirk Hals, Promenade
Fig. 122. Dirk Hals, Promenade
Fig. 123. Watteau, *Les Comédiens français*

Fig. 124. Hooft, *Songs of Apollo and the Muses*
Fig. 125. *Promenading Couple*

Fig. 126. *The Splendour of One*
Fig. 127. Jerôme Janssens, La Main Chaude
La Main Chaude
Fig. 128. Fragonard, *La Main Chaude*

Figure 129. De Hooch, *Game of Ninepins*, Waddesdon Manor
Fig. 130. De Hooch, *Game of Ninepins*, Cincinnati

Fig. 131. De Hooch, *Game of Ninepins*, St. Louis
Figure 132. Game of Ninepins, Le Centre d'Amour

Fig. 133. Game of Billiards
Fig. 134. *Game of Ball, Le Centre d'Amour*

Fig. 135. *Game of Chess or Backgammon*
Fig. 136. Gerrit van Honthorst, *Game of Chess*

Fig. 137. De Hooch, *Formal Garden*
Fig. 138. Bredero, Love Garden

Fig. 139. Watteau, Les Amusements Champêtres
Fig. 140. Watteau, *La Conversation*

Fig. 141. Watteau, *La Surprise*
Fig. 142. Watteau, *La Gamme d'Amour*

Fig. 143. Watteau, *Fêtes Vénitiennes*
Fig. 144. Watteau, *La Cascade*

Fig. 145. Watteau, *Young Couples Near a Statue of Venus*
Fig. 146. Lingée, La Promenade du Matin

Fig. 147. Lingée, La Promenade du Soir
Fig. 148. Jan Fouceel, *Terrace in a Park*

Fig. 149. Watteau, *La Perspective*
Fig. 150. L'Arbre au Beau Fruit

Fig. 151. L'Isle de Cythère
Fig. 152. Picart, *L'Entretien Galant*

Fig. 153. Watteau, *Les Charmes de la Vie*
Fig. 154. After Rubens, Conversatie à la Mode
Fig. 155. Jacob Jordaens, *Family Group*

Fig. 156. Largillière, *Self Portrait with his Family*