Three Generations
Prize for First-Year Writing
Fall 2020

with essays by
Adeline Van Buskirk ‘24, First Place
and Victoria Ho ‘24, Honorable Mention

Writing Program
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Three Generations Prizes for First-Year Writing

The Three Generations Prizes are supported by three generations of Wellesley alumnae: Judith Stern Randal; her daughter, Judith Randal Hines; and her mother, Sybil Cohen Stern. By providing a means of publicly recognizing excellence in writing across the disciplines, they demonstrate the enduring value that Wellesley College and its students place on the ability to write clearly and effectively. Their gift has contributed much to foster rich, engaging writing at Wellesley.

Each semester, a prize is awarded to a first-year Wellesley student for outstanding written course work. Students are nominated by their First-Year Writing course instructors based on work completed for those courses. These prizes recognize Wellesley College's commitment to fine writing in all areas of study. Each prize is judged by faculty members who teach First-Year Writing.

The winning papers show the development of a full and complex argument that is clearly stated and well-supported by evidence, argumentation and analysis that is accurate and appropriate to the discipline, a level of diction that is sophisticated yet comprehensible to an intelligent reader, and excellent presentation of source material, data, and other evidence.

Comments from the Judges on the Winning Papers

The judges awarded the first place prize to Adeline Van Buskirk, for her essay “'Virtually Nobody': Protecting Older Adults in the COVID Era,” written for Jeannine Johnson’s course, WRIT 144: What’s in A Name? Investigating What We Call People, Places, and Things. They awarded an honorable mention to Victoria Ho, for her essay “The Political and Social Implications of François Boucher's Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson, Marquise de Pompadour (1750),” written for Barbara Lynn-Davis’s course, WRIT 107: Introduction to the Histories of Art.

Adeline Van Buskirk’s paper identifies a doubly urgent issue—ageism in the era of COVID-19—and builds a well-informed, compelling case for why and how it should be addressed. The piece is a sophisticated blend of a research paper, analytical lens essay, and call to action. While Adeline makes strong use of varied, relevant sources, integrating them into a cohesive whole, her own voice is notably authoritative and clear.

The prize committee was struck by the way Victoria Ho’s paper so thoughtfully attends to the easily-overlooked details of Boucher’s portrait—from the brushstrokes of the Marquise’s lace robe to the likeness of the king she wears around her wrist. By drawing her reader’s eye to these details, she helps even readers familiar with this portrait see what they might otherwise have missed. Victoria is equally as thoughtful when she explains why, exactly, these subtle details matter—and she uses sparkling prose throughout her analysis. Likewise, Victoria expertly uses her sources to illuminate what Boucher’s portrait has to say about beauty, age, and power in the French court.
WRIT 144: What’s in a Name?
Fall 2020 / Term 2

Essay #3 Assignment

Assignment
Explore one of the social issues addressed by the FrameWorks Institute. In an essay of about 6-8pp. (1800-2000 words), present a well-researched history of the issue, explain why the conversation around it needs to change, and provide a critical analysis of how it has been or could be strategically re-framed using FWI’s strategies. Pay special attention to names and labels that can be part of the re-framing efforts.

Due dates

Thursday, November 19:
Research worksheet due by 4:00 PM.

Tuesday, November 24
Draft of Essay #3 due by 4:00 PM. These drafts will be workshopped in class.

Monday, November 30:
FBE of Essay #3 due by 11:00 PM.

Monday, December 7:
Final revision of Essay #3 due by 11:00 PM.
“Virtually Nobody”: Protecting Older Adults in the COVID Era

I. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing injustices in the United States, sparking an increase in support for social justice movements across the nation. Movements to protect minorities, such as Black Lives Matter, and the poor, such as the Poor People’s Campaign, came to the forefront of the American public consciousness over the summer of 2020. However, one substantial demographic of the United States faces the most danger from COVID-19, but seems to be receiving little coverage or public sympathy: older adults.

Ageism, discrimination of older adults because of their age, is pervasive in the United States, manifesting as workplace discrimination, micro-aggressions, elder abuse, and a general perception that older adults are incapable and weak. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened this discrimination, because older adults are at higher risk for severe illness from the virus and lawmakers have deemed them expendable in the name of reopening the economy (“Older Adults”). However, ageism is an issue that affects everyone, as someday we will all grow older. To stop this discrimination, the way we think about ageing needs to be reframed, so lawmakers and the public will more willingly lend support to policy that protects older adults. The FrameWorks Institute, a nonprofit think tank, has identified parts of the language we use to discuss older adults that contribute to the problem, such as othering older adults by using terms
like “the elderly” or “seniors.” Their recommendations for shifting language could aid in the effort of getting justice for older adults in the COVID era.

II. Culture of Ageism in the United States

Ageism was an American problem long before the COVID-19 pandemic began, creating a culture that othered older adults and treated them as less than human. The term ageism was coined in 1969 by a psychiatrist who noted a “widespread contempt” for the older adults in the history and culture of the United States and across the world (Achenbaum). Even cultures that seem to revere old people, like Japan, have a history of mocking older adults as impotent and disfigured in their literature. The widespread understanding of ageing, especially in the United States, is that it makes a person weak, slow-witted, and devoid of purpose.

The deep-seated belief in the United States that older adults are inferior contributes to a culture that mocks and rejects these people. A 2009 study examined the differences between young people’s perception of ageing versus those who have actually aged (Kendall-Taylor). The study revealed that younger people predicted that they would have more negative experiences in old age than older people truly experience, demonstrating that the general perception of older adults is not in line with reality. People strongly associated ageing with “the attributes and capacities of the body and mind—those seen as making someone a full person—fading rapidly and inevitably” (Kendall-Taylor). However, the older people interviewed explained that, even in advanced age, they have been able to find a sense of love, happiness, and purpose. Older people have varying degrees of functionality, but regardless of their abilities, these adults deserve respect and justice.
The belief that those who are older are less human has created a culture that makes blatant ageism socially acceptable. All one needs to do to see examples of this is look for the “funny birthday” cards in a drugstore: jokes about losing eyesight, fading memory, and fewer positive sexual experiences in old age stand uncriticized. One such card reads: “at your age, ‘getting lucky’ means walking into a room and remembering why!” (Baker), mocking and othering older people for supposedly not understanding modern lingo, not enjoying sexual experiences, and losing their memory.

There is also an impression in the media that ageing is something undesirable that one would want to reverse, as demonstrated by the number of skin creams on the market meant to “turn back the clock” (“Skincare Products”). Lotions offered by Olay, NeoStrata, and Dr. Loretta are literally named “Anti-Ageing Moisturizers.” Ageism, unlike other forms of discrimination, is still socially acceptable to joke about, through comments about “senior moments,” stereotypes about older adults as technologically inept and forgetful, or generalizations about “Boomers” (McNiff). The culture against older adults in the United States hurts them through microaggressions and other forms of subtle hate. But, these beliefs have seeped their way into American institutions and practices, and have become huge roadblocks to living life as a successful older adult.

III. Consequences of Ageism

Today, ageism manifests in many different ways across the US, ranging from emotionally hurtful to physically harmful, even deadly. Workplace discrimination, the hiring or firing of a person based on age, is one of the most commonly known examples of institutional ageism. This kind of discrimination made it difficult for older people to get or keep their jobs, resulting in
poverty, before the passage of The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) in 1967 (Graham). The ADEA protects employees and applicants 40 years old and older from hiring discrimination, hostile harassment, and unfair workplace policy (such as a mandatory retirement age) (Graham). This law, while monumental in protecting older working adults, is the only major federal law providing protections for older people. Other issues, such as elder abuse, have not been directly addressed by the government. The abuse of older adults by those who take advantage of their vulnerability is very common: in fact, 1 in every 10 Americans over the age of sixty have experienced some kind elder abuse (“Elder Abuse Facts”). Social isolation and stigma around the capabilities of older adults makes it difficult for them to report this abuse, and the National Council on Ageing Estimates that only 7% of cases are reported (“Elder Abuse Facts”). Ageism is not a victimless prejudice: about 5 million older adults will experience abuse this year. The stereotypes perpetuated by the media and in institutions lead to the discrimination and suffering of older adults across America.

IV. COVID-19 and Ageism in Healthcare

These judgements became even deadlier with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the US in late February of 2020. The CDC estimates that adults over the age of 65 make up 8 out of every 10 COVID-19 deaths (“Older Adults”), as older adults are more at risk for developing a severe illness from the virus. Not only are older adults more likely to develop these life-threatening symptoms, but they are also more likely to develop obscure symptoms, such as confusion, apathy, or dizziness (Graham). These symptoms can soon spiral into deadlier consequences, but without the cough and fever associated with COVID-19, they often pass under the radar. This is reflective of the broader issue of ageism in medical research and education.
While there is extensive public information on the research done for COVID-19 symptoms and treatment in adults and children, there is little for older adults (Fitzpatrick). Doctors cite their experience in medical school, spending months on disease in children, but a week on disease in older adults, though both require specialized care. Often, older adults are understood as one uniform group, when truly they are diverse in demographics, health, and functional ability (Kendall-Taylor). Ageism in the medical field has certainly contributed to the more than 200,000 deaths of older adults in the United States alone.

Another contributing factor to the high death rate in older adults is the prioritization of younger patients. There is no better example of this in practice than the allocation of ventilators. The ventilator is a life-saving breathing device that is used to treat COVID-19 cases that attack the lungs (Kliff). When cases rose sharply in April 2020, United States hospitals had more patients in need than ventilators available and had to make the grim decision of who got priority. Unsurprisingly, many states (and countries, such as Italy), prioritized the young. Younger people were granted ventilators first and some hospitals even denied anyone over a certain age a chance to use one at all, to leave them open for younger users (Fink). Public health officials justify this decision by citing a higher success rate in younger adults (Kliff). However, this move makes the dangerous presumption that all young people are healthier than all older people and have a higher likelihood to survive COVID-19. In general, older adults are at higher risk, but generalizing about health and not giving older people a chance at survival is inequitable.

V. COVID-19 and Ageism in Politics and Society

Because older adults are more at-risk to die or develop severe symptoms from COVID-19, they have the most to lose from the irresponsibility of politicians’ handling of the virus.
Politicians have been challenged with balancing the pandemic deaths and the need to keep the economy running, trying to find a solution that keeps money flowing with limited spread of the virus (Thrush). However, for many politicians, their propositions are completely out of balance. President Trump, when announcing his plans to keep the economy open in September 2020 despite the United States hitting 200,000 deaths, stated that the virus “affects elderly people, elderly people with heart problems, nobody young, below the age of 18, like nobody — they have a strong immune system — It affects virtually nobody, it’s an amazing thing — by the way, open your schools!” (Thrush). This statement is problematic for a number of reasons (not the least of which is falsely assuming only old people suffer from the virus). In this statement, Trump expresses the cultural belief that older adults are not fully human by explaining that the virus does affect older adults, and then declaring that it affects “virtually nobody” at all. He also expresses his willingness to sacrifice older adults in the name of reopening the economy and schools. At 74 years old, well within the margin for being “at-risk” (Wexler), it seems ironic that Trump is so supportive of opening the economy. However, in this statement, Trump employs an “us versus them” mentality, completely alienating the elderly demographic from himself and his supporters (Kendall-Taylor). The Trump Administration was able to open the economy, putting the elderly in danger, because they convinced their supporters that older adults are less human, and therefore less deserving of life.

This hateful rhetoric found its way into the mainstream, such as in the hashtag #BoomerRemover, which is the sarcastic name teenagers have come to call the virus on Twitter, joking that it will kill off all the “Baby Boomer” Generation (Wexler). The media addresses younger deaths and job losses as personal and tragic, while the coverage of older deaths is impersonal, using general statistics or morbid body bag photos (Kendall-Taylor). The way
politicians, especially those in the Trump administration, have prioritized the economy over older adult’s lives has normalized brutal ageism in the media.

Ageism in the time of COVID-19 is a problem that puts everyone at risk. The widespread notion that COVID-19 only affects older adults (or: “virtually nobody”) makes younger people more comfortable putting themselves in risky situations and disregarding restrictions. Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, however, disagrees, stating that people of any age (especially those with underlying conditions, which younger people can have) can be seriously affected by COVID-19 (Thrush). He warns the American public that “it can be serious in young people.” If people do not come to understand that not only older people are more susceptible to the virus, then many young people will risk exposure.

VI. Reframing Ageism

The ageism problem in the COVID-19 era is in desperate need of reframing. The FrameWorks Institute created tools to identify how we can alter our language to change the way people think about ageing and about our older population, which can be applied to the rhetoric of older adults during COVID-19. One of the most important first steps to reframing age is to explain ageism and redefine what ageing actually means. The FrameWorks institute recommends emphasizing the idea that “older age, like any other time in life, involves both challenges and opportunities” (“Framing Strategies”). The Institute recommends comparing ageing to “gaining momentum.” This is far more productive than “fighting” ageing or trying to “stay young,” and emphasizes that there are benefits to ageing too. When viewed like this, people are less likely to
distance themselves from the idea of ageing, and see its challenges as a problem to be solved rather than an unfortunate reality.

Another important way to avoid this distancing is being conscious of the language used to describe older people. Words like “the elderly” or “senior citizens” alienate older adults from the rest of the population (Kendall-Taylor). By using phrases like “older adults” or “older people,” speakers and writers don’t reduce these people to their age or generalize their characteristics. To take it even further, the Institute recommends using inclusive phrasing; instead of writing “this is what the elderly want,” write “this is what we want when we are older,” to solve the problem of alienation. This problem-solving mindset is an important part of the next step, which highlights the role of public policy in solving ageist issues. The problems we face with old age aren’t always a result of personal fault: sometimes, they are issues in public policy and social structure, such as healthcare or the way public transportation functions (“Framing Strategies”). These problems can be solved with the legislature. It is important that those in power reframe the way they speak and write about older adults, because these words are the catalyst for legal and social change.

In the time of COVID-19, the tensions between age populations and the need to protect the elderly have intensified. However, the FrameWorks guidelines for discussing older people are still applicable. By using inclusive language and not alienating the older population, people speaking on the topic of COVID-19 acknowledge that older adults are people, too. Instead of saying “senior citizens deserve ventilators,” say “everyone deserves an equal chance at access to a ventilator,” to express that older adults deserve the same opportunities as everyone else (“Framing Strategies”). This opens the door to appeal to the value of justice, an especially valuable tool during the COVID-19 crisis (Kendall-Taylor). Mention that “every person deserves
equal treatment,” and clarify that “easing restrictions and prioritizing healthcare for the young is not equal and not just.” Inclusivity also fosters solidarity, which gives a sense of “shared stake, public purpose, and potential for improvement” (“Framing Strategies”). For example, instead of saying, “social distance to protect the elderly,” say “social distance so we limit the spread of the virus,” emphasizing that the action we take affects us all, not just the older population.

Oppressing older adults affects everyone during the time of COVID-19: it makes people feel overconfident about their ability to survive the virus and allows it to spread further. Everyone has something to lose from ageism, and if everyone works together, we all have something to gain from taking legislative action towards the solution.

VII. Conclusion

Ageism is a problem that often goes unnoticed in the United States, as older people can be socially ostracized and legally forgotten. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed that the American government prioritizes the economy over the health and wellbeing of its older population, by easing restrictions too early and prioritizing healthcare for the young. These discriminatory choices need to be changed, and this change begins with rethinking the way speakers, writers, activists, and politicians describe the older population of the United States. According to the FrameWorks Institute, explaining ageism, emphasizing that everyone is affected by it, and using inclusive language are crucial parts of effective anti-ageist rhetoric. If people alter the way they speak to support the older adults of the population, politicians will pass measures that will save lives, old and young. And, perhaps, by calling attention to this issue of ageism in the United States, something more will be done about the rampant elder abuse and the overall societal disapproval of ageing. Every day 10,000 people reach retirement age (McNiff),
10,000 more people that society viewed as full adept citizens the day prior. The time to act is now, before more lives become lost to prejudice, before a doctor is removing the breathing tube from our own throats.

Works Cited


So far, we’ve been deeply exploring formal analysis. With this paper, you will begin to build richer context around a work of art using scholarly sources.

Context building begins with a question or set of questions you pose about the art. We’ve already started asking such questions about our case studies, and we will continue:

**Art and creativity:** What particular place did this work of art hold in an artist’s career?

**Art and religion:** What are the different ways in which works of art and architecture facilitate spiritual experience?

**Art and politics:** What role does art play in legitimating power?

**Art and the body:** What are the distinctive ways in which artists of different cultures and eras represent the human form?

**Art and nature:** How do works of art relate to the natural world?

With these kinds of questions in mind, you will virtually visit the Harvard Art Museums [https://www.harvardartmuseums.org/collections](https://www.harvardartmuseums.org/collections) and choose any work of art that seems to connect in some way with one, or conceivably more, of these themes, or with another question you come up with yourself.

You may already have a favorite artist, or another good way to approach the search is to look by Gallery. It is essential you choose a work of art that offers a large-scale photo you can study from: assess this by pressing the download button. If you’re offered only a thumbnail, then reproduction is limited by copyright and that’s not a workable choice.

HAM offers a bibliography on its website, and this will be an important jump-start.

Another option is to choose a work of art featured in the MFA’s current exhibition, *Writing the Future: Basquiat and the Hip-Hop Generation*. The exhibition catalogue has been scanned and is available on Sakai>Resources>Resources for paper #2.

If you have a favorite artist whose work is not in the HAM, I will likely approve, as long as we discuss it beforehand to be sure there will be enough sources you can access.

* * *
Once you’ve chosen a work of art, take detailed notes for about a half-hour on its formal qualities. This paper will still include foundational formal analysis.
Next, you are ready to look for answers to your question or questions, through research. This assignment is intended as an exercise in judicious, meaningful research on a very modest scale.

You should anticipate making use of only a small number of closely relevant sources, about three. One of these sources should be an article in a scholarly journal.
When possible, go for the most recent scholarly sources you can find, so that you are working with up-to-date information. However, newer isn’t always better!

Your sources should be more substantial than typical Google-search ones. In fact, you should not use online sources other than the museum website or scholarly journals or any of the sources Brooke Henderson, the Art Librarian shows you.

The paper should be approximately 4 pages in length and include correct citations (with page numbers) in Chicago Style. I recommend you use Zotero.
The Political and Social Implications of François Boucher’s
Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson, Marquise de Pompadour (1750)

From cheerful pastel hues to themes of love, folly and youth, Rococo style is characterized by fantasies that transport viewers into vibrant and often playful scenes. One artist who exemplifies these qualities is François Boucher. Although he created many artworks over his lifetime, one of his most well-known works is Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson, Marquise de Pompadour (Fig. 1), an oval portrait of Madame de Pompadour which now resides in the Harvard Art Museums.\(^1\) Dominated by shades of white, rose and cobalt, the colour palette of this artwork is the perfect embodiment of the rich tones used in Rococo style.\(^2\) Painted in 1750 and measuring 81.2 cm by 64.9 cm, this oil on canvas offers an intimate glimpse into Madame de Pompadour’s cosmetics routine, showing her in the midst of applying make-up at her toilette.\(^3\) The painting’s origins are murky, but she may have commissioned it as a gift for her brother when she was thirty-seven years old.\(^4\) Given that her physical beauty was quickly fading due to several illnesses, the painting served two purposes: to immortalize Madame de Pompadour’s alluring appearance, and to express the political clout she commanded in the court of Louis XV.\(^5\)

Looking at this painting, Madame de Pompadour hardly appears as though she is ailing; she gives every impression that she is in perfect health. Her face is flawlessly made-up, with rouge highlighting the apples of her cheeks and contrasting with her delicate, ivory complexion.

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\(^1\) Melissa Hyde, *Making Up the Rococo: François Boucher and His Critics* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2006), 108.
\(^2\) Hyde, 107.
\(^3\) Hyde, 107–8.
\(^5\) Lajer-Burcharth, 70.
Her piercing blue eyes are luminescent, revealing a quiet, knowing confidence. With calm composure, she directly faces the viewer, a slight smile curving her lips. Her steady and collected gaze enhances the intimacy of the scene, as her eyes draw the viewer towards her. To portray her face, Boucher used soft, nearly-invisible brushstrokes, which emphasize her graceful and elegant beauty. The hazy brushwork softens her facial features and represents her in an ethereal manner, while contrasting with the short and distinct brushstrokes used for her hair. These precise strokes allow its curly texture to be visible, while making her locks feel touchable. Similar brushwork is used to render the bright azure flowers that are tucked into her perfectly coiffed hair.

Garments and accessories are also carefully painted using varied brushstrokes, to impressive effect. For Madame de Pompadour’s gauzy, silvery-white négligé du matin, Boucher utilizes loose, sweeping strokes to reveal the silky texture and lightweight nature of the fabric. It falls open to expose a triangular section of her chest and the tight bodice of her similarly-coloured gown, while cascading over layers of intricate, frilled lace, rendered with tightly controlled brushstrokes. Pink bows adorn her clothes, with one fastening her peignoir at her throat, another embellishing her billowing sleeves and several swathing her bodice. On her right wrist, a cameo bracelet of her lover, King Louis XV, rests conspicuously, proudly announcing their relationship. His profile is carved on a background in the same pink hue as her bows, and is surrounded by shiny teal gemstones. Boucher meticulously depicts this bracelet with numerous minute brushstrokes.

Madame de Pompadour’s gestures show that she is in the midst of her cosmetics routine, as she clasps a rouge brush in one hand and loosely holds a rouge box in the other. The brush is loaded with powder, ready for application. She pinches it between her thumb and forefinger, her pinky jauntily raised. The rouge and brush are reminiscent of how a painter holds a paintbrush
and palette, suggesting that her application of make-up is analogous to how an artist portrays figures through various media, from sketches to paintings.\(^6\) In front of Madame de Pompadour, there are accessories strewn on her dressing table, which is covered in a creased tablecloth. Another voluminous snowy-white powder puff rests atop a bronze box near scattered cerulean ribbons and soft-hued flowers of yellow, purple and blue. To her right, there is a mirror, and to her left, we can see the ornately beaded back of her yellow brocade chair. These luxurious details reveal the subject’s status and wealth at court.

Even more, make-up itself had political and social meaning in the court of Louis XV; painting one’s face represented status and nobility.\(^7\) Madame de Pompadour’s cosmetics routine was not simply a beauty ritual; she could assert her agency and strengthen her political position through her manufactured appearance, as the make-up she wore relayed her position and power to other nobles.\(^8\) While this was reinforced by her extravagant clothing and accessories, her make-up would have played a distinctive, critical role in her carefully constructed semblance. It was the act of transformation itself that held power, as appearing in court with a naked face would imply weakness and even cause a small scandal. By capturing Madame de Pompadour in the act of assembling her appearance, viewers are shown how she crafts a politically powerful image through her careful and immaculate application of make-up, alongside her elaborate accessories and garments. The scene would have resonated throughout the court, as other nobles would have likely seen the painting, despite it having been commissioned for her brother.

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Madame de Pompadour’s toilette was especially known for the business meetings that occurred there. At the time, women would typically entertain guests during their maquillage routines in the late morning. Madame de Pompadour turned this social ritual into an influential space in which she could conduct delicate business deals. Since the toilette created an informal environment, the typical strict rules of formal court etiquette did not apply, which allowed for more casual conversations. Therefore, her toilette became crucial in two ways: not only did she fabricate her appearance there, but it was a vital location for settling business affairs, as many members of the court participated in this practice with her.

There is a second significant presence in the painting: Louis XV himself, which is surprising for a portrait, especially one of the politically important Madame de Pompadour. Although the focus is on her, and Louis XV only appears as a small profile on her cameo bracelet, his existence within the artwork has noteworthy implications. The relationship between the two began when she became his primary mistress; through this relationship, Madame de Pompadour gained his trust and immense political power, which was highly unusual as she had not been born an aristocrat. However, their physical relationship was brief due to her many ailments and advancing age, and at the time of this painting’s creation, the two were merely close friends, causing Madame de Pompadour to struggle to retain her position at court. Upon first glance, the image of Louis XV seems to symbolize his authority over her, as the bracelet can be interpreted as literally shackling and binding her to him. Yet the profile of Louis XV that appears

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10 Lajer-Burcharth, “Pompadour’s Touch: Difference in Representation,” 71.
11 Lajer-Burcharth, 71.
13 Ilichman et al., *Casanova: The Seduction of Europe*, 124.
on the bracelet is a specific one, cut in gemstone by Jacques Guay.\textsuperscript{14} Madame de Pompadour helped to design this cameo, and as such, it was her conception that was painted by Boucher.\textsuperscript{15} It can then be concluded that the bracelet is not a sign of the king’s control; rather, the king’s profile is a reference to the influence Madame de Pompadour held over him.

As a whole, the painting is captivating in its enchanting portrayal of Madame de Pompadour, while demonstrating how she used her complex cosmetics ritual to maintain her political power and aristocratic status. Just as she could fabricate and alter her image with make-up, she was able to influence the depiction of herself in this painting by François Boucher. Even though Madame de Pompadour’s beauty was already quickly fading during the creation of this painting, her mesmerizing power — both personal and political — is clear to this day.

\textsuperscript{14} Lajer-Burcharth, “Pompadour’s Touch: Difference in Representation,” 77.
\textsuperscript{15} Jones, \textit{Madame de Pompadour: Images of a Mistress}, 81.
Fig. 1. François Boucher, *Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson, Marquise de Pompadour*, ca. 1750.

Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge.
Bibliography


