Liminal Butlers: Discussing a Comic Stereotype and the Progression of Class Distinctions in America

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LIMINAL BUTLERS: DISCUSSING A COMIC STEREOTYPE AND THE
PROGRESSION OF CLASS DISTINCTIONS IN AMERICA

by

Katie Smith

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Comparative Studies

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
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of a thesis submitted by

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This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

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As chair of the candidate’s graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Katie Smith in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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This thesis will prove how the male domestic servant shows a conservative evolution of class freedom through early American films. As an individual thrust into a liminal sphere, these characters paradoxically become a character type for both keeping class-consciousness as well as breaking up notions of class, albeit in a slow process. In comedy, domestic male servants have always been on duty to help their masters while also becoming sources of mischief as tricksters. In early American films, these characters embody the anxiety of a classless body of men who become scapegoats, trickster-figures, and mask-wearing sages in order to survive—attracting as many functions as possible in order to help society question notions of class.

Although butlers and valets have existed for several centuries, the Victorian era molded the butler into a marginal existence, trapping this servant into a liminal, and therefore unlikable, sphere. Comedic writers in the Victorian era played the anxiety up—presenting butlers and valets as pompous and unintelligent scapegoats placed in texts to make their masters look good while becoming invisible themselves. Yet, by the time the
stereotype reached America through P. G. Wodehouse, the butler became a trickster figure—ready to use the Victorian code as a way to gain monetary compensation and control of the private domain. Jeeves does in fact receive his desires, but he resorts back to set codes—becoming a character that subverts and maintains class structure simultaneously. Charlie Chaplin’s butler in *City Lights* does the same in film. As the overly serious foil, Chaplin’s butler controls the class hierarchy by keeping Chaplin away from his master; yet, the butler does this by copying his master’s actions, putting himself on the same level as his master. It is only through Sturges films that butlers become relatively free from subordination and even more multivalent as these films delve into class reality versus desire. These butlers and valets continue to play the part of the Victorian butler, but they also become the pivotal characters that move plots in their intended course—becoming fatherly and less anxiety-ridden—creating a freedom unknown to their predecessors.
I would like to thank the members of my graduate Committee, Dr. Soper, Dr. Parry, and Dr. Benfell, who helped me through the process of writing my thesis. Moreover, I would like to thank my parents, Brian and Paula Smith, whose hearty support for my ideas always started with an initial good laugh.
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Chapter One: The Liminal Sphere of the Gentleman’s Gentleman in History and Literature

There is nothing that makes a home more proper as well as distanced from present culture as the presence of a butler. They seem almost anachronistic for there is something very Victorian about a butler in the home—making sure that everything is just so and in the postmodern age nothing is just so. Yet, an anachronism almost implies something rigid and unchanging—a relic and a holdover from another time, and the butlers that grace the films of today are quite different than the butlers of the Victorian period, at least in some critical ways. The domestic male servant has evolved, and my purpose here is to understand the cultural effects of a comedic stereotype whose evolution has gradually progressed from scapegoat to trickster to father figure in a way that has gone relatively unnoticed by scholars. The gentleman’s gentleman—known also as butlers and valets—have quietly and invisibly freed themselves from many of the constraints of the Victorian class system through comedy’s subtle way of altering culture. By charting a course through a few early twentieth-century American films, I will show the ambiguous evolution—meaning a slow, vacillating process of freedom and forced restraint—of this character type, which also shows the vacillating changes concerning class in America. By living in a liminal space, butlers have been able to attract different literary and cultural functions that force viewers to come to grips with their own anxieties about class in America, thereby forcing a slow change on the class system as a whole.

One of my reasons for doing so is because relatively little work has been done on the subject. Only recently have historians worked on ideas of class when it comes to
domestic labor. Theresa McBride in *The Domestic Revolution* states that labor historians never concerned themselves with servants in the past because, “[…] servants did not form a true social class. Although recognized by law as a distinctive social group, servants did not have a class identity” (9). Because of this, historians really did not discuss domestic service to a great degree when it came to class before the 1970s. As proof of this posture, McBride goes on to say that, “Servants and women were the last groups in the society to be enfranchised in both France and England” (15). Because of this connection between servant labor and women, many books on the subject relate mostly to female domestic labor, giving relatively little information on butlers and valets and their own class dilemmas.

Moreover, historians have failed to delve into cultural character types in discussing labor when they do decide to look briefly into male domestic servants. Citing such notable characters as Oscar Wilde’s Phipps and P. G. Wodehouse’s Jeeves, historian E. S. Turner states in his work *What the Butler Saw* that, “No good purpose can be served by trying to find social significance in these stage and literary menservants” (252). Turner is of course, not alone in his opinion. Bridget Hill in her *Servants: English Domestics in the Eighteenth Century* discusses how nothing in fictional entertainment should be an indicator of domestic labor issues. Her conclusion even goes as far as character personalities when she states, “Nor should we take the personality of fictional servants, in so far as they are allowed one, as evidence” (20). The phrase, “in so far as they are allowed one” is interesting. That fictional servants must have permission for a personality is more historically and culturally important than most labor historians realize.
By disregarding character types and their influence on cultural stereotypes, historians may have overlooked the cultural truth telling of comedy. Many scholars, such as Bakhtin, Bergson, Maurice Charney, and Wylie Sypher, have pointed to comedy’s ability to be unusually close to the truth about lifestyle and life in general.1 Characters like Jeeves may not represent what a gentleman’s gentleman may have been exactly like in the Edwardian Era, but he does represent a cultural idea deeply embedded within the psyches of the American people—an idea gleaned from the Victorian World of rigid class hierarchies and still expected by audiences and employers today.

Because of this, it is during the Victorian Era that I must begin. During this era, the butler stereotype evolved from a rigid and solitary social group constructed by forced personality rather than the work itself. Unlike factory workers who had a life outside the factory, butlers had to be mute and invisible as a way of life.2 As Bridget Hill explains, “Often they [the butlers] seem to be present as mere accessories of the household alongside its delicate porcelain and silver dishes. They form part of a carefully contrived background” (3). In short, their job description included the notion that they could only be as talkative as the carpet. Since the Victorian Era, their ability to float in and out of texts with a light footstep and the occasional “yes, sir” make this character almost part of the surrounding furniture rather than an actual character or person. Consequently, this

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1 See Maurice Charney’s *Comedy High and Low: An Introduction to the Experience of Comedy*, Bakhtin’s *Rabelais and His World* and *The Dialogic Imagination*, and Wylie Sypher’s “The Meanings of Comedy” for more information on truth telling and comedic art.
2 Throughout the rest of the thesis, I will use the term butler to include both butlers and valets. In larger households, butlers and valets are entirely two different sorts of servants. In a larger home, a butler essentially oversees the other servants, and a valet oversees—cleans and mends, not controls—the wardrobe of the master. However, in most households (households that will mostly be dealt with in this paper) most masters, then and now, combined the two into one particular job, also known as the gentleman’s gentleman (see Pamela Horn’s discussion of this in *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant* 95). In both instances, butlers and valets have the same rank of importance and adhere to the same code of serving—including how to act as well as how to dress—things definitely important to this chapter. In this particular paper, I will consider the two relatively synonymous, using the term butler mostly, since they have to deal with the same social issues.
sort of stereotypical role has given rise to a number of clichés. In a mystery story, the butler is the obvious villain (for of course the butler did it). In dramatic works, he is the very pompous English butler with his nose in the air and the quizzical look on his face. In comedy, he is the scapegoat. Although these character types do not immediately present themselves as negative, male domestic servants in various texts seem to exist in a liminal sphere that tends to scare off Marxist critics. Unlike their factory counterparts, the butler stands in a space located between the maintaining of class conscious and the breaking down of injurious class structures.

In this position, butlers in popular culture preserve a more liminal stance as workers who maintain their class consciousness through the decades, but also move from the silent and subordinate butt of jokes in the Victorian Era, to the sage-like father figure of the Twentieth Century. They do so by gradually becoming experienced and multivalent tricksters who assert their own voice and right to various literary functions in order to not only maintain the lower and higher spheres of society, but also to break free from slave-like codes that barred them from moving freely within class structures a century before.

Unlike old-school Marxist critics a few decades ago who one-sidedly saw in every text the suppression and denigration of the working man, this study must focus on a more vacillating and unsure approach towards the domestic male servant in regards to negative, class conscious reactions towards texts, because culture itself is vacillating, unsure, and never evolutionarily smooth. Class struggles do not change in a day. It is true that the butlers and valets of the Victorian Age experienced suppression from the upper classes and became forced into a certain class-censored role much like other working people.
However, their character types were able to subvert—albeit in a conservative manner—social norms through comedic tools found in popular entertainment as the twentieth century brought about a renewed sense of optimism towards the working classes in America.

Because this ambivalent freedom is predominantly American, this thesis will focus on early twentieth-century American films and how butlers and class have evolved through film. In order to discuss this conservative move towards a positive working class outlook, this chapter will focus on the beginning understandings of the butler through history and literature. I will first discuss the evolution of the butler and the unusually paradoxical position he had to exist in because of a rigid code all butlers and valets had to live by during the Victorian period. Next, I will chart the literary character type—discussing very briefly the comedic butler before the Victorian era, and then such literary works as *Punch* and Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Ernest* and *An Ideal Husband*. Finally, in order to bridge my study into the American culture, I will conclude with P. G. Wodehouse’s Jeeves and Wooster series. The rest of this thesis will focus only on American films and their role as bringing father figures onto the screen through butlers and valets and how this new step in the stereotype brings a conservative freedom to the Victorian stereotype. Within the various comedies discussed here, lies the ability to change class-restricting codes, but only through a substantial length of time. Only by charting several texts, can a change in this stereotype become noticeable3.

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3 This idea of a slow, gradual process through time stems from Kerry Soper’s article, ““From Swarthy Ape to Sympathetic Everyman and Subversive Trickster: the Development of Irish Caricature in American Comic Strips between 1890 and 1920.”
First, the historical aspects of this job are rather bleak. The beginning emergence of a set, domestic code gave rise to a position heavily respected, yet hated, by all classes. Hardly a subject for humor, butlers and valets held a very low social rank according to both the upper and lower classes because of what they had to do and be in the Victorian household. So disliked by all classes, butlers and valets occasionally were regarded as lower in class than factory workers by the nineteenth century despite the fact that they were paid more (Horn 192).

The paradox of this position—respect as well as loathing—starts with the very foundations of the dominant serving male. From Greek and Roman times, a butler or other head servant had his origin primarily from the upper classes. Dorothy Marshall in *The English Domestic Servant in History* explains that from ancient history to the Tudor reign in England, butlers or stewards “were nearly always persons of breeding, and often of substance too” (5). As a result, their actions and words maintained the social strata since these men would usually take their place later as the head of their own household (6). These waiting gentlemen acted like the noblemen they served—maintaining an elite etiquette solely known to upper class individuals as well as directing the work of the lower servants.

However, the Industrial Revolution changed the household and the class that served in the home. The rise of the middle classes soon demanded a rise in the number of servants needed throughout England. “As a result,” Marshall explains, “the tendency was for the [male domestic servant] to be drawn from a lower social class than had formerly been the case. By the eighteenth century even the upper servants were in the majority of
cases the sons of labourers, artisans, or small farmers rather than recruits from the ranks of […] gentlemen” (7). Since a greater demand for butlers rose, and nobility were far from willing to work in a middle-class home, the butlers, valets, and footmen within the home started coming from a class entirely devoid of the etiquette and manners that set apart the old, upper-class servants centuries before.

Added to this problem, the importance of keeping the distinctions of class became an obsession among the rich during the nineteenth century. Pamela Horn’s *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant* explains: “For [the upper classes] the preservation of petty distinctions of rank was all-important” (14). To have a butler and/or valet, a good one, was the key to establishing yourself among the upper classes; therefore, a dependency on these servants began to arise because they essentially vaulted a family’s rank in society (Horn 28-29, 202).

The entry of the lower classes into this in-demand working field created one major problem: a good head-servant had to have the distinction of rank his predecessors had previously kept up while at the same time understanding his place as a lower class worker. Therefore, a demand for a code, complete with etiquette books for butlers, arose. This code enforced class distinctions between the family and the working staff. However, for the butler and valet, it also clearly delineated their manner of dress and even attitude in the home as below the master but above the other servants.

In terms of the master-servant relationship, the code was clear. Lady Violet Greville, one of the many Victorian writers who wrote extensively on domestic service, explained that the butler “has always the same noiseless step and perfect sleekness and politeness of manner, the same absolute good temper and gentleness of tone […]” (816-
17). Victorian butlers had to serve quietly and efficiently. They also had to work in a manner no one noticed. Unlike the Victorian dictum of “children should be seen and not heard,” butlers had to be unheard as well as unseen, making them even lower than children (Horn 86). Butlers were less in every respect because they could not speak or act without a master’s approval and had to be invisible to everyone in the household. If a butler became in any way visible, he was not doing his job well.

Despite the suppression, butlers and valets did have some necessary distinctions. First, they were encouraged to display a rather arrogant attitude towards lesser servants. As Pamela Horn explains:

Butlers were encouraged to adopt an authoritarian attitude towards their subordinates, or, as one handbook put it, ‘in all establishments it is [the butler’s] duty to rule. In large establishments more particularly, this exercise of judicious power will be greatly required; for under-servants are never even comfortable, much less happy, under lax management.’ (85-6)

Second, butlers and valets did not have to dress in livery. Instead, they wore gentlemen’s clothing. So attired, they became a symbol of authority for the servants under them and quite literally became the masters over most of the people in the household—having total authority to act in behalf of the master whenever he was not available.

Yet the upper class still reigned. Throughout the history of England to the Victorian Period, the upper classes tended to see themselves as the paternal hand over those lower than themselves. “Paternalism,” as Theresa McBride explains, “was the dominant aspect of the master-servant relationship in the nineteenth century” (23). Since gentlemen had to exist as father figures, it was necessary to set their clothing apart from

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4 See also Lady Violet Greville’s *Men Servants in England*, page 817.
the servants they were supposed to regard as their children. In this respect, the butler and valet wore gentlemen's clothing, but the master forced them to deliberately wear their clothing awry or even wear “the wrong tie or the wrong trousers” in order to keep the family class clearly delineated (Horn 85). This delineation may seem extreme, yet as McBride explains, “The paternal role, however benevolent, provided the employer with extensive authority over [the butler] for his own good. This authority could sometimes be suffocating to the domestic, but it was justified […]” (23). Accordingly, a butler’s clothing symbolized his liminal position. These servants had to act in a higher-class way towards the other servants (usually from their same class), but they also had to maintain a lower class status by how they acted and dressed in relation to their employers. Nor could they escape this. “This authoritarian paternalism left little room for the servant’s freedom of action, but this was precisely the object” (McBride 24). With no loophole, butlers stood with one elegant shoe in the etiquette and snobbery of the higher classes and one miss-matched sock in their own lower-class origins. They were both high and low at the same time, never speaking too much while always ordering others around, never confessing their lower class origins by their clothing while also confessing their origins by a subtle mismanagement of apparel, never truly being able to be either/or.

Instead, they became liminal, tortured figures on both sides. Never reaching upper class status, butlers and valets also did not have admittance into the class they came from. Added to this, they could not speak up about it. Elaine Scarry in The Body in Pain discusses physical torture as a means towards breaking the language and mental understanding of an individual (4). Butlers and valets were not physically tortured, but they had to give up their own voice and mental understanding because of their
employment—not torturous, but potentially akin to it. They could not speak, they could
not wear clothing that defined them concerning class, they could not see themselves
paralleled with their masters or the other servants, and yet they had to act like both. They
stood alone, understanding that they had to be both master and servant while knowing
they could not be either.

With this isolated position, loathing from all the classes ensued. Lower class
associates constantly fought the authoritative stance butlers and valets lorded over the
under servants while upper class elites berated these servants for not understanding their
place beneath them during the Victorian Period (Horn 80). The problem was that there
was no place for these men to be. In a society defined by class, male head-servants had
no class, therefore no identity, and no support from others. To add an ironic twist, the
upper classes were not defined as upper class because of themselves, but because of their
butler—a lower class individual. A butler had the power that defined others as proper,
himself as improper.

What was even more difficult about the position was that it demanded the whole
person, rather than just the labor. Political debates about factory work focused mostly
around John Locke’s idea of work, namely the idea that:

Every man has a property in his own person. This nobody has any right to but
himself. The labour of his body, and the work of his hands, we may say, are
properly his. (274)

Factory workers had lives outside their employment and received employment not by
acting a certain way, but doing a particular job; therefore, they could safely say that the
labor and their bodies were solely their own. Unlike the system in the factories and in the
political arena, employers did not hire butlers solely for the odd jobs they were to attend to, but rather how they looked and acted.\textsuperscript{5} Violet Firth explains that, “A mistress does not demand of her servant work only, she also demands a certain manner, a manner which shall clearly indicate her superiority” (190). Bridget Anderson in her work \textit{Doing the Dirty Work?} Discusses this idea in relation to women in domestic labor, explaining that, “[…] the domestic worker is not just doing a set of tasks but is fulfilling a role. This already suggests that it is not simply her labour power that is being commodified” (Anderson 108). However, it seems more viable in relation to the role of being a butler since in paying for the whole person, the employer also had the power to strip even the domestic class out of the butler—something that female servants never experienced. Female servants were always a part of the domestic working class butlers and valets did not even exist on a level class relationship among the other domestic servants. It is this reason that Marx labeled all servants as “unproductive labor” (401); however, it was the butler who was most debilitated by the realities of employer possession, being hired solely for status rather than labor.

Every rule a butler followed created a negative consequence as well. So negative, that they even, in many cases, lost their own identity. With a set code of behavior, butlers became a body of men that acted exactly the same. Automatons of the Victorian Era, these workers now seem “[…] unsettling to the extent that it seems to deny such (bourgeois?) notions as individuality and human uniqueness” (Glasgow 40). Even the few freedoms they received through their profession made them distrusted. Because of these liminal positions, the Victorian Age was not a time of ease concerning servant relations. A butler or valet may have had the highest paying job among the servant ranks,

\textsuperscript{5} See Appendix A for an example of specific criteria regarding the duties of a butler.
but it came with a price on his part. “The sense of inferiority both towards their employer and to the outside world was greater” (Marshall 28). In short, they were an easy target.

This target was, of course, all important to comedic interpretations of culture. Being liminal, butlers were a perfect venue for social commentary in the literary world—easy targets as explained before, but also subtle by their very position between classes. Andrew Stott in his book *Comedy*, makes this point when he states, “Liminoid activities, then, contain the elements of genuine social commentary and conflict […]”, a conflict perfect for social satire and comedy (37). Yet unlike the historical basis of butlers as noblemen, the stereotype that became that of the butler by the Victorian Era, ironically, was that of a Roman slave, a profession that also had no freedom and no sense of choice.

From the very origins of our literature, servants—then slaves—showed up in literature only as an adjunct of their employers. Bruce Robbins in *The Servants Hand: English Fiction from Below*, says that,

> Instead of full representations of the life of the people, literary tradition has typically offered only servants, mere appendages of their masters. Moreover, all that has been represented of these prefabricated tropes is their effects, their momentary performance of useful functions. (Introduction, x)

Much like their historical counterparts, literary butlers were the visual appendage of their masters and like history, literature also delved into the domestic servant anxiety only from the nobleman’s point of view. The Roman plays of Plautus and Terence had lively slaves that would help their masters. Yet these slaves were of the lowest class—not the higher class. These slaves were tricky and helped with impersonations and other comic elements so they possibly are one stock character the multivalent butler pulled from later.
However, it is important to note that these slaves did not deal with the same class issues as the butlers did in later fiction. Whatever did come out of Roman plays was the emphasis on the noble character being the main character, and the slave is on stage to help his/her master.

Anxieties concerning the butler really started to show up in Shakespearean times. Shakespeare’s own works have the occasional servant who resists or refuses to aid noblemen (punishment occurs for these kinds of servants) or they maintain the status quo of the classes. Any uppity servant who puts himself above his class—Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* for one—is quickly brought down to his own level again. Of course, no one can actually tell how actors played these characters out during the time of Shakespeare. In fact, Mark Burnett in *Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and Culture* states that, “Early sixteenth-century accounts suggest that some actors were employed as male domestic servants in noble households” (110). Granted these men did not hold the office of a butler (that was given to the noblemen of the time), but it certainly does give them some understanding of the historical scapegoat origins of their characters played out on the stage. At best, many other examples remain convoluted; however, it is important to note that almost all representations of male labor—be it in slave or paid form—was never a positive, nor a noble thing.

In saying this, there must be some sort of discussion about Shakespeare’s fools. As someone who earns a living off richer men, fools can hold the position of a male

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6 Some English scholars have pointed to Sancho Panza as possibly being an example of a male domestic servant akin to a butler. This idea is probable in that he serves Don Quixote through most of their adventures. Interestingly enough, scholars of this bent seem to conveniently fail to mention the only butler in *Don Quixote* who is part of all the pranks played on Sancho Panza during the second part of the book, something of greater interest when it comes to the butler as a trickster figure. This butler is, of course, noble and so unfortunately plays these pranks just to play pranks, something that does not show up in the lower class stereotypes discussed in this thesis. However, for further study on Sancho being a butler, see Ann Cameron’s *Sidekicks in American Literature*. 
domestic laborer. These fools remain on the margins observing the characters and helping the audience see what is really going on in the story. Like the playwright, they seem to be more of an observer of the action, than a part of the action. Such observational, even voyeur-like, abilities will show up again in the butler, but this position is once again anxiety-ridden and liminal. Not deeply immersed in the action, nor not entirely settled in the audience, the fool must ride somewhere in the middle—a no-man’s land that easily becomes a visual metaphor of death in *Hamlet*. The fool also has no scruples. Honesty comes out of their mouths only when it warrants a laugh and although some characters acknowledge their wisdom, they still receive more kicks than anything else. Yet, once again, there is no written record of how these characters were played out.

Despite the actors and their possible empathy for their own domestic stations, it is true that most literature before the Victorian times shows butlers as simple, dishonest, and menial. Rather than causing humor, they become the object of the joke—scapegoats possibly meant to deaden the anxiety the audience had concerning their own butlers and valets stuck at home. If anything, they were merely to express other characters’ class and the birthright of their powerful employers.

A Little Punch with my Wilde Please

The beginning Victorian stereotype was similar to that of early ones concerning the butler; namely, they were mostly scapegoats in a culture at best leery of their role within literature. The Victorian magazine *Punch* was no different. “A defender of the oppressed” as *Punch*’s motto heralded, certainly did not defend the classless (*Punch*, Spartacus Educational 1), nor did other types of satirical newspaper or magazine. All
throughout this age, caricaturists, William Hogarth and George Cruikshanks included, drew butlers as marginal characters that stood more as iconic figures of the rich, rather than genuine characters within their different texts, and Punch certainly was not the exception despite its desire to decry unfair treatment of the lower classes.

In fact, the satirical magazine Punch is a good example of how Victorians tended to focus reform issues towards factories and faraway rural areas rather than abuses closer to home. Even though the creators of Punch believed that their magazine was “a defender of the oppressed and a radical scourge of all authority,” these men had male servants—and so did their readers (Punch, Spartacus Educational 1). As Richard Altick writes in Punch: The Lively Youth of a British Institution, “Every household that took in Punch had its complement of servants” (517).

From its very beginning on July 17, 1841, Punch was more interested in taking stabs towards pomposity than towards anything else, being especially good at social commentary over and above political commentary (Spielmann 27). With this in mind, it is easy to see why the illustrators of Punch focused more on mocking the authoritative stance butlers had to take, rather than the more convoluted nature of their strained identity. As an isolated figure, butlers seemed to be the perfect symbol of men who tried to step above their station. Figures 1 and 2 are good examples of this, as they display butlers who become too pompous even
to work for their masters and mistresses. Notice even in Figure 1 how the illustrator plays with mise-en-scène and places the butler on the left of the picture—a place highly authoritative and over-bearing—while Figure 2 parallels the butler with the lazy cat in the bottom left foreground. Both illustrations along with their subtitles, express complete dislike of the butler. For *Punch*, a butler was a pompous butt of a joke, rather than a tortured figure akin to a factory worker.

Even more upsetting, the butlers only show up in *Punch* as mirrors to their employers and not as themselves. Altick mentions this when he writes, “[…]*Punch* was little concerned with life below stairs in and of itself, without reference to the family above” (519). Simply understood, butlers were there to magnify their employers. Their lives were not their own, but “the image of Victorian society” (519).

By contrast, *Punch* was very benevolent towards any other working class group of people—even other domestic servants. Hood’s “Song of the Shirt” pitied seamstresses while debates over the debased position of governesses filled the pages of *Punch* regularly (Altick 520). R. J. Hanerton’s “Capital and Labour” (Figure 3) is a good example of how emotional *Punch* made the sorrows of mining work out to be as opposed to the bad working
conditions of butlers. In this print, the bottom part represents the deplorable conditions of miners while the master Lord Londonberry (the only person who spoke against a bill brought to the House to curtail the (male, female, as well as children) most exploitive abuses in the mining industry) sits at ease on his pile of wealth (Altick 195-6). What is interesting is the serving man next to Lord Londonberry on the far right of the print. Unlike the emotive faces of the people below, this caricature has no personality—and, like the money Lord Londonberry is sitting on, the servant is more a representation of his Lord’s wealth, rather than a further invective against the Lord himself.

*Punch* therefore used the same character type it received of the butler down through the cultural ages. Butlers only counted as part of their masters’ furniture and interests, rather than anything else. Anything more would have potentially turned the readers of *Punch* off, as they had serving men of their own.

Oscar Wilde treated butlers in the same manner. A man obsessed with maintaining his high-class status received through his eccentric clothing style (not his writing capabilities), he understood the rather shallow nature of Victorian high society and the importance placed on visual, iconic figures over and above the inner character of an individual (Callow 9). In view of this, he tended to keep butlers in the same position that *Punch* maintained—holding them up as mirrors to society rather than desiring to express who they are. He did not view the butler negatively, but he did use butlers to express the wholesale immorality of the higher classes, bad clothing and all.

A great example of this is the butler Lane in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. From the first curtain rise, Lane is more of an emblem of his master’s immorality rather than his own self. As Algernon berates his butler for consuming alcohol, the audience
slowly gets the impression that it is really Algy and his guests that have substance abuse problems, not his butler or the other servants. This comes into greater focus later on in the play as Algy consumes a whole bottle of Jack Worthing’s alcohol only a few hours into staying at his country home (Wilde 66). Moreover, even though Algy tends to have the problems, he is the one to hypocritically state about his butler that, “Really, if the lower orders don’t set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them? They seem, as a class, to have absolutely no sense of moral responsibility” (4). Algernon—and even the upper classes in general—have the immorality problems, not Lane the butler. With this projection of immorality in view, it is clear to see that Lane’s real nature never presents itself onstage. The audience sees Algy in Lane, not Lane as himself. If anything, he is a constant scapegoat—willing to take the wise cracks from his master and in the same breath lie for him to Lady Bracknell about the cucumber sandwiches, voraciously eaten by Algernon before Lady Bracknell arrives (13).

Even Lane’s persona of realistic negativity does not seem to be a genuine aspect of his nature, but rather a mask Lane uses in order to enhance his employer. Lane is therefore just as immoral as Algy is, but possibly only because Algy is immoral. Peter Raby explains this by writing,

To Algernon’s vapid “I hope tomorrow will be a fine day,” Lane replies, “It never is, sir,” illustrating the perversely subtle nature of the master-servant relationship. To be negative, or realistic, and so invite and indulge the master’s rebuke, is a much subtler and more elegant way of providing a good service than an obsequious agreement. (46)
Raby makes an astute point: by being negative, Lane is giving exactly what Algy wants—a chance to berate his butler for being everything society has forced him to be, rather than who he really is. Lane is a scapegoat; he is not a fully developed or independent character, but a mere appendage of his master.

Even the butler Phipps in *An Ideal Husband* is a person no one really sees. Oscar Wilde himself stated that, “he is a mask with a manner, of his intellectual or emotional life, history knows nothing” (Wilde 210). Instead of a person, the audience gets just another scapegoat—someone to blame as everything goes awry at Lord Goring’s house in Act III. It is not Phipps’ fault that so many people come to the door, and Lord Goring was not specific enough to tell him who to let into his house and whom to kindly refuse; but it is Phipps who represents the dim-witted figure who does not belong7.

To Oscar Wilde’s credit, these butlers are not bad, pompous characters like those expressed in *Punch*. Phipps may “turn a cold, glassy eye on Harold [the footman], who at once retires” and he may even wittily discuss the fortunate aspect of the lower classes always losing their relations (Wilde 216, 211). Yet, it is only to this extent that these butlers express themselves as authoritative snobs. Mostly, they are invisible, which is the problem. Lane and Phipps do not really have a voice of their own, but rather the voice of their masters.

Despite the lack of voice or even personality, Oscar Wilde is not as biting as *Punch* is in relation to his domestic servants. Wilde’s satiric plays are not satirizing the butler class, but the upper class; and by so doing, he expresses some sympathy that starts the gradual change in a butler’s position. What *Punch* could not adequately express was

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7 Chapter 4 will discuss *An Ideal Husband* in greater detail as an adaptation of this play will be the main focus of attention.
a butler’s one life-saving aspect. Specifically, the butler could see everything. Lane sees all of the conversations going on in Algy’s house, Merriman (Mr. Worthing’s butler) sees all the immorality and confusion going on in the second half of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and Phipps, albeit absentmindedly, sees all of Lord Goring’s visitors come and go before Goring himself does. This sight gives them one position higher than *Punch*’s arrogant images; they have the foresight to see what will happen next. Yet they play marginal, stereotypical characters that do not play vital roles. These butlers are still unusual and iconic aspects of the superficial culture of the Victorian world, always expressing the abusive relations they had to maintain with their employers.

Jeeves and the Code that Binds

Twenty years after the Victorian period, P.G. Wodehouse was able to take the established code for butlers and use it against those who created and perpetuated it. Unlike the scapegoats of the Victorian period, Jeeves is a trickster figure who tends to subvert the code along with maintaining it. Through a long series of stories, Jeeves is able to manipulate his master Bertie, create chaos for his own betterment, and control Bertie’s clothes with an iron hand—reversing the clothing status of the Victorian Period. On the other hand, Jeeves tends to go only so far when it comes to reversing the system. His static language, his inability to overcome his position, and his rather conservative maintenance of Bertie’s clothing typify a man who seems to stick to the older social orders despite the ever-present inequality it preserves. Jeeves therefore, on the outset at least, does exactly what Bridget Anderson accuses most butlers of doing. She believes that “[butlers] are reproducing a status hierarchy which is profoundly antagonistic to their own interests” (Anderson 165). More than Bertie, Jeeves maintains his social standing
beneath his master, giving him the power of control; however, with that power, Jeeves enforces the old order of master and servant.

First, P.G. Wodehouse’s medium causes social leveling. *Punch* used one-panel cartoons and small poems, which is a medium that handicaps the creator since no character development can occur. The comic artists and writers at *Punch* had one quick shot to create a satiric piece. Therefore, the characters they portrayed are images and ideas without being complex or entirely nuanced (Soper 268). Oscar Wilde, on the other hand, had the medium of a play. Decidedly longer than a one-panel cartoon, his plays tended to develop characters a little more. Yet, as mentioned previously, his plays developed the main characters and left the marginal, butler figures as stereotypes that only existed to reflect the various sides of their masters.

P.G. Wodehouse on the other hand, did not have a quick image or several-hour play. He created a whole series of short and full-length stories—a medium that has room to develop all of the characters including the butler. Although his initial story, “Extricating Young Gussie” gives Jeeves two “yes, sir” lines and nothing more, the creation of the series presented an opportunity for Wodehouse to develop his marginal character further. In an enlightening moment, Wodehouse recounts that he asked himself the question: “Why not groom this bit player Jeeves for stardom?” (Wind 62). With this idea, he created a genuine character—Jeeves lives and acts for himself and not his master—and he trumped the master with the servant. While the nine books and the thirty short stories recount the traumas of the rich Bertie, it is Jeeves his servant who always seems to get his name on the title page, sometimes in bigger font than the title of the story itself, as Kristin Thompson notes in *Wooster Proposes, Jeeves Disposes* (253-4).
Notoriety is not the only important thing here of course, yet Jeeves’ name on the front of magazines and books clearly implies that Jeeves is not only a main character, but also a popular one in the American sphere. There is no doubt that Jeeves decidedly influenced American ideas about butlers—especially since he came into his character while the fictional Bertie was living in America.

Second, the placement of the medium is important. Wodehouse’s Jeeves and Wooster stories appeared first in the American magazines The Saturday Evening Post and then later in Cosmopolitan. Unlike the pulp magazines of the time, The Post and Cosmo held fast to the working values of upper-middleclass America (Thompson 95). Moving from the English elite of Wilde’s plays to the middle classes of twentieth-century America, Wodehouse’s stories became popular to those who could relate to the unusual stance Jeeves maintains—the symbol of a worker still under the hand of the new rich in America, but still able to maintain some semblance of autonomy on his own.

Although the Jeeves and Wooster series tends to be formulaic, the amazing trickster quality of Jeeves shines through and gives the series its subversive quality. The stories run much the same way. Bertie buys an article of clothing that Jeeves hates—creating a bit of tension. During their silent confrontation, a friend of Bertie’s has a problem and comes to ask for assistance. Bertie asks Jeeves to solve the dilemma and Jeeves complies. Usually, Jeeves’ first suggestion seems to backfire or get Bertie and his friend into a more difficult dilemma. After repeated suggestions by Jeeves, and when the chaos is at its height, Jeeves finally establishes order. As a reward, Bertie throws away the offensive article of clothing. In many cases, Jeeves has already gotten rid of the clothing, preempting his employer’s gift.
The interesting thing about the formula is the evident stupidity of Jeeves. Many critics, as noted by Kristen Thompson, seem to notice that not only is Bertie completely unintelligent, but Jeeves also seems to lack problem-solving skills since his suggestions primarily backfire (128). However, I believe Jeeves actually tricks Bertie into total chaos, which eventually gives him a larger reward. Using the code of butlers as a mask, Jeeves takes the opportunity to get what he wants through trickery. Whenever his first suggestions fall through and Bertie begins to question his servant’s abilities, Jeeves acknowledges that he knew the various consequences but did not tell them to his master as in “Leave it to Jeeves.” In this short story, when the frustrated Bertie asks why Jeeves did not admit to knowing the suggestion might backfire, Jeeves invariably uses the butler code to hide his real intentions, saying things like, “I hardly liked to take the liberty, sir” (27). Since the code demands the silence of the servant, Jeeves is frequently able to “resort to trickery and blackmail to solve the problems at hand and to get his way” (Thompson 130). The silence forced upon him by society gives him the opportunity to be self-interested without anyone knowing. Jeeves therefore uses the code to act in his own self-interest and not for his employer—manipulating others for a reward, not necessarily to help his master Bertie.

Unusually enough, Jeeves' power over clothing is what he considers his perfect reward. Although valets in the past kept charge over their master’s clothing, they did not have the power Jeeves has over Bertie’s wardrobe. While previous masters controlled the servants’ clothing, now the servant controls the master’s clothing. This kind of action seems to reverse class roles according to the paternal view—and even Jeeves occasionally looks at Bertie, “like a father gazing tenderly at the wayward child”
(Wodehouse, “Jeeves Takes Charge” 75). Yet Jeeves’ reward only seems to cement class issues further since he invariably dresses Bertie perfectly. Bertie does not end up with “the wrong tie,” which expresses lower class leveling, but the right one—the one that distinguishes him as a gentleman (Horn 85). Jeeves reverses the power issue only to cement the differences between his own clothes and that of his master’s. Staying within the classes, Jeeves ultimately concedes that any sort of power for him depends on his master’s appearance.

The pride Jeeves’ takes in his work deepens the bond between master and servant in regards to clothes, but still leaves the butler or valet irresolutely out of the class they work for, no matter how benevolent they are to their masters. Certainly clothing becomes a more important medium in these stories, but only in so far as defining differences in perfection when it comes to class. Bertie becomes the perfect image as his butler becomes perfect in suggesting appropriate clothing. Jeeves acts benevolently towards his master in regards to clothing only after he has malevolently tricked Bertie into a crazy scheme.

Furthermore, Jeeves maintains the idea of how a butler serves by preserving the silent step of a Victorian butler and keeping his speech in check. Bertie mentions this when he explains, “One of the rummy things about Jeeves is that, unless you watch like a hawk, you very seldom see him come into a room” (Wodehouse, “Leave it to Jeeves” 22). Jeeves keeps the quiet walk relegated to a butler’s life. Along with the silent step, Jeeves’ word choice also maintains the code. While Bertie’s language is loose and free—using both English and American slang as much as possible—Jeeves’ language is rather static and confined (Wind 15). It is as if Jeeves’ language expresses the confining nature
of his profession, while Bertie’s light speech openly acknowledges his freedom. Through language itself, “Jeeves provides a force for closure, Bertie one for openness” (Thompson 123). Jeeves’ language, like his liminal position as a valet, is closed; he cannot or will not escape it. On the other hand, Bertie’s language seems to be the democratic factor in the stories. His openness with language reveals Bertie’s ability to be free and open, unlike his servant. On the other hand, Jeeves uses the static language as another self-serving tool—a tool to get what he wants without anyone knowing. By sticking to archaic, stilted language, he manages to confuse people enough to get what he wants. In many stories, Bertie himself has to translate Jeeves’ stylized sentences into understandable garble for his friends.

Along with the freedom to use slang, Bertie also tells the story. Jeeves may have control over the various situations Bertie gets into, but Bertie has complete control over the narrative itself. The reader may have a more developed butler to read about, but the reader only sees Jeeves again through the eyes of the master. Although Wodehouse gives Jeeves narrative control over one short story, “Bertie Changes His Mind,” it is only one out of the many. These aspects of trickster-like silence and static language allow a small equalizing of class according to the whole series, but once again, it is only a conservative leveling. Complete autonomy in relation to language and speech does not occur in comedy until Preston Sturges’ films twenty years later.

And it is film that soon takes the place of magazine stories and plays in the popular sphere, and so must take the place of most of this thesis. Despite the amazing popularity of Wodehouse’s stories, American cinema seemed to play with the comedic character type of the butler in all its stages of development in relation to class and was the
most influential medium of the beginning of the twentieth-century. Interestingly enough, Wodehouse’s characters never fared well on stage or on film in America. Even though, as Robert Sklar aptly discusses in *Movie Made America*, the first quarter century of comedies on film were “intended to reaffirm social values” (187), the social world of Wodehouse’s characters was quickly losing ground in America’s most popular entertainment. Two issues were possibly at fault, and both deal with class.

Charles Maland’s *Chaplin and American Culture* discusses the first. Maland states that historians “have looked upon the first two decades of this century as a time in which the Genteel Tradition gradually lost its dominance” (15). The reason for this loss: the movies. “Proponents of the Genteel Tradition,” Maland explains, “regarded the movies with mixed feelings” (15). Movies were not art, and therefore not important to the upper classes. Despite the fact that all classes saw movies as a potentially powerful medium, according to Maland, the upper classes only used it as a means of educating the masses.

The second reason goes well with the first. Early movies, since considered lower than art, rarely attracted the wealthy or even middle classes at first. Steven Ross explains that early movies “were patronized largely by what reviewers called the ‘working masses’ [...] before World War I” (337). The silent movies were ideal for a mixed working class that America had. People from all over the world and with all different languages could understand the silent pantomimes of the beginning films and flocked to its entertainment. Ross goes on to explain:

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8 See Thompson’s last chapter of *Wooster Proposes, Jeeves Disposes or le mot Juste* for the discussion of Bertie and Jeeves in play and film.
‘The Russian Jew, the German, the Austrian or the Italian who has not been in this country a week and cannot understand English,’ explained one labor daily in 1913, ‘goes to the motion picture theaters because what he sees on the screen is very real to him, and he understands as well as the American.’ (341)

Since 1905, the working class attended the movies and only three decades later did the middle class patrons start to walk into the movie palaces just beginning to blossom (Sklar 14, Ross 337). Wodehouse’s Jeeves never fared well with the working class—who could understand a lower class person with that kind of upper class language? Film gleaned its raw material from play, stories, etc., but had to apply to the working masses, which molded the butler stereotype into more ambiguous ways, something discussed in the next chapter.

For now, it is important to note that past Marxist critics decried solitary, cultural texts as proof of the suppression of workers. Unlike these past readings, this chapter looked at just a few samplings of texts chronologically in order to understand the slow, conservative class leveling that has occurred through the Victorian Era and into the Edwardian Era with Jeeves, specifically concerning the liminal sphere of the butler and valet. From Oscar Wilde to P.G. Wodehouse butlers became trickster figures who manipulated the social classes in order to get what they wanted. This first evolutionary leveling of the social classes came about partly because of the changing politics of the time, but it was also due to popular culture itself. Mark Burnett explains that, “[…] partly through their participation in popular culture and their access to developing cultural networks, subordinated groups could be empowered and even contest existing hierarchical arrangements” (8).
However despite the visible freedom and multivalent magnetism about the character type, loose accouterments of the code still seem to hang on to the working class butler—freeing him only slowly and conservatively from past, social hierarchies. Phipps the scapegoat and Jeeves the trickster still do not completely free the butler from the Victorian constraints it initially started with. Butlers may have some relative freedom; however, there is a conservative quality to this leveling, which continues onto the American cultural sphere that Wodehouse opened with the creation of Jeeves as a main character in America.
Chapter Two: Stepping Backwards in the Blindness to Butlers in *City Lights*

I wish I could say Charles Chaplin’s butler in *City Lights* is like Jeeves—or has even greater autonomy than Wodehouse’s character. Regrettably, he does not. Unlike the Edwardian Jeeves, Chaplin’s butler in this film is Victorian, and treated in the same manner as his Victorian counterparts. Jeeves’ character may come into his own in America around the same time as this film; yet Chaplin’s butler expresses the social issues surrounding the film medium and becomes the perfect example in explaining how no evolution of a stereotype is ever simple or necessarily evolving into something better. Despite some American cultural views that every step is a step forward and progress is always happening, it is simply not the case when it comes to class and this stereotype. In many ways, the treatment of the butler in *City Lights* is a great example of class-based stereotypes in Chaplin’s times. The audience sees the upper and lower classes of this film in all their polarity. With Chaplin striving to show the great difference between the two, it is no wonder he turned a blind eye on the one character who had no class and therefore no place in his America.

The irony here is that Chaplin’s desire was to create a movie about people who choose to be blind, as well as people who cannot escape a blindness they did not choose for themselves. The movie begins with the unveiling of a statue to peace and posterity. Instead of the magnificent unveiling of the statue in all its grandeur, the curtain rises on the statue used as a bed for the lovable Tramp. Quickly, he is chased from his bed by those who choose to see their city as a resting place for the rich and content—the crowd readily strives to shoo the Tramp from their ideal sight—making him not only leave the
statue, but the entire proceedings. Of course, the Tramp on a large scale thumbs his nose
at the American delusion (the national anthem plays half way through the shooing
process).

This establishing shot sets the stage for self-delusional blindness on a large scale
in America, brought closer to home by the Tramp’s meeting with the two polar character
types of blindness. First is the Blind Girl. Poor and sweet, the Blind Girl assumes the
Tramp has walked out of a car on a busy corner to buy flowers from her. Yet, her only
link to life—her hearing—has deluded her. She assumes he is rich and he, of course,
falls for her sweetness and beauty and in order to look great in her metaphorical eyes
does not reveal her wrong delusions. He allows her to be blind to his station in life. He
perpetuates her blindness because it flatters him and gives him the delight of being rich
since he likes to play delusional himself.

Spending the night thinking of her, he falls into step with the drunken Millionaire
attempting suicide and who is the second blind person of this story. Making himself
blind to his own sorrow through alcohol, the Millionaire perpetuates his drunkenness to
forget the wife that has left him—the news of which he receives from his butler. When
the Tramp saves him, the drunkard swears brotherhood to the little Tramp. Just like the
Blind Girl, the Millionaire while drunk has no vision of the Tramp’s poverty and class.
Yet the sober mornings, which follow their on-and-off joyriding, lead him to forget the
lowly brother who has spent nights drinking to his health. This the Tramp does not
understand, volleying him into a supremely confusing relationship, for one minute the
Millionaire loves him like a brother by throwing parties for him and giving him his car. The next minute he is asking his butler to force him out of his house⁹.

In the meantime, the Tramp tries to keep a job in order to help the Blind Girl with her rent and food. Sadly, he miserably fails at picking up the garbage of his society and instead becomes the garbage of society himself by losing in a boxing match and being thrown on a table like a piece of meat. Tormented by the Blind Girl’s imminent expulsion from her home, the Tramp once again falls into step with the drunken Millionaire. The Millionaire graciously gives the Tramp money for the Girl’s rent as well as an operation to cure her blindness. Yet, in the course of the evening burglars break into the Millionaire’s mansion, steal his wallet, and strike the Millionaire on the head, which causes instant soberness. In this moment of sober sight the Millionaire once again, as he has before, forgets the Tramp and the police take the Millionaire’s confused ignorance of the Tramp as a confession of the Tramp’s guilt.

Knowing he has a short time to get the money to the Blind Girl before the police find and arrest him for burglary, the Tramp immediately goes to her, gives her all the money and resigns his fate to prison. By the end of the movie, society has dealt the Tramp a heavy blow. More downcast and poorer than ever, the Tramp, in the worst rags he ever wore in any of his films, has more degradation volleyed at him by two boys, whose scene with the Tramp arouses the laughter of the Blind Girl he once saved. She, restored of her sight and owner of a flower shop, looks for her rich benefactor, yet does not recognize the Tramp. Instead, she laughs at his appearance—that is, until they touch.

⁹ Robert Payne in *The Great God Pan: A Biography of the Tramp Played by Charles Chaplin* writes that, “The story of the manic-depressive millionaire has nothing to do with the story of the blind flower-girl” (223). Certainly, this is not at all true. Both the Millionaire and the Blind Girl are blind to reality and so both have everything to do with each other by how they treat the Tramp.
Her fingers recognize his clothes and when he says through title cards, “You can see me now?” her response is nothing more than a shattering of her dream as blindness and delusion falls from her eyes, and she sees who he is. As a middle class person with a flower shop, she now sees, but the ending is ambiguous—the audience does not know exactly what she will do with her newfound sight and realization that the poor Tramp was her prince who saved her.

Like the Blind Girl and the Millionaire, when it comes to this film’s relation to the butler, scholars and other viewers also seem to be blind. Most, like Kenneth S. Lynn in *Charlie Chaplin and His Times*, do not mention the butler at all in their discussions of *City Lights*. Others look upon him as the film does, with the Victorian mindset that the butler is somehow wrong—treating him therefore with derision and animosity, saying like Uno Asplund in his *Chaplin’s Films* that the butler is the Tramp’s enemy and is therefore the enemy of everyone (151). Al Capp’s discussion of the movie involves the butler the most—and yet it is incredibly negative in relation to the butler. His full discussion is important here and so I will quote everything he writes about the butler:

> Arm in arm, the slobbering millionaire and the little bum wander off in search of food and fun. After a night of wild, expensive revelry, arm in arm they lurch back to the millionaire’s town house. The butler, a man of aristocratic impulses although a servant, wants to beat up the tramp and toss him back into the gutter. But the millionaire still loves him. The bum is his l’il pal. He is to be given everything in the house.

> Chaplin takes on airs and graces. He orders the butler around. He snaps his fingers in his face. The butler grinds his teeth and waits. He knows that his
master will be sober in the morning. He knows that in the morning his master will see the bum as clearly as he does. He knows that the bum will get his, and we know it, but the bum doesn’t.

The millionaire wakes up. He is terribly sober. He sees the bum sleeping next to him. He calls the butler in and asks who it is. Brutally aroused, the bewildered bum pleads with the millionaire to remember their everlasting, to-the-death friendship of only a few short hours before […] (228)

Although Al Capp readily acknowledges the butler knowing things, he is still resolutely negative towards him—saying he has “aristocratic impulses” even though he is just a servant and that the butler brutally arouses the Tramp and expects him to “get his”.

Instead of discussing how the butler receives his share of violent blows from the Millionaire, Capp lumps the butler into a class haughtily positioned almost above the Millionaire’s class. Capp, a cartoon artist who knows his character types, as well as other critics tend to see the butler rather than the Millionaire as the hard, overly rude character that is the main abuser of the Tramp.

Of course, maybe Chaplin meant for this butler to look cruel. The Tramp is certainly annoyed at the intrusion of the butler’s presence as noted by Claudia Clausius in The Gentleman is a Tramp. She states that the Tramp, “[…] gladly takes advantage of the millionaire’s intoxicated generosity and is angry at the butler for his repeated rejection of him” (114). The Tramp is so annoyed at the butler that he literally messes with the butler as much as possible—flicking alcohol in his eye and even throwing shoes at him.
Chaplin’s decision to put Alan Garcia in the role of the butler may also be a way of showing the audience that they should see the butler in a negative light. Tall and stately, Garcia is a great choice for the stoic butler, yet Garcia only plays the butler this once in Chaplin films—earlier films with the butler were played by Albert Austin (Asplund 85). Alan Garcia, on the other hand, played the antagonist in some of Chaplin’s other films. Asplund lists Garcia as the evil manager in *The Circus*, a film made before *City Lights*. Since he plays such an evil role in *The Circus*, it is possible audiences would recognize him as having an evil part in an earlier Chaplin film and associate him with negativity in other films. This was certainly a method used by early filmmakers to help the audience easily distinguish the various stereotypes in silent films and something Chaplin would have picked up working at Keystone years earlier (Asplund 156, Flom 36).

In addition, Garcia plays the role of the president of the Electro Steel Corporation in Chaplin’s next film *Modern Times*, an unsympathetic role when it comes to the life of the Tramp. Certainly, these three films show that Chaplin uses Garcia much like other actors in Chaplin’s films—as a stock character/actor who has a similar role in each successive film. For Garcia, this stock character is a rather hard, unsympathetic one; an image the audience would immediately dislike.

However, as important as it is to see Garcia as a stock character in a list of Chaplin films, it is also important to see what happens in this particular film to the butler. Since this film delves so deeply into societal blindness it is particularly important to pay attention to what the audience sees and does not see within the frame. In addition, it is imperative for the audience to look at what the butler himself sees and does not see.
Although the audience sees everything, the butler does not—he also is blind to things. For an American audience who already has a background in the Victorian/Edwardian butler whose purpose is to see and know all, the blindness of this butler is a great offense. Therefore, he is an emotional foil to the lovable Tramp whose self-delusions are things the audience relates to and loves. Since this is the case, we first must see how the dislike towards the butler is unfounded in this film as well as discuss some of the potential reasons that dislike does permeate this character.

The audience does not actually see the butler for some time. Only after the Tramp saves the Millionaire from killing himself do we get a glimpse of the butler who is ready to open the house to his master. In fact, the only shots of the butler are in the living room, the master’s room, and the front door. Nowhere else does the butler show up in this film. He, much like the Victorian butler, is in the home—a part of the Millionaire’s domain only. In keeping with the Victorian tradition, he is a part of the furniture.

Not only that, but like the Victorian tradition, he cannot play himself. The butler in this film always maintains a posed stance and looks like a butler. The only time he is ever in a comfortable posture is when the Tramp runs after the Blind Girl in the second scene noted in Appendix B. Outside the home and putting his hands on his hips, the butler stares after the Tramp in amazement, yet when the Tramp and the Girl come back into the shade of the Millionaire’s house, the butler instantly regains his butler-like posture—chest out, head up, and hands straight down at his side. In front of the millionaire and his guests, the butler cannot possibly be himself even in posture, but maintain the dignity of the home by his very stance (see Appendix B, second scene, cut
28). While the butler does go out of character for one moment, it seems like a moment that just points out how unreal the butler must act all the time.

Moreover, the butler must walk in very straight lines. In the first scene when the Millionaire and the Tramp come home drunk, they flail about in diagonal, wobbly lines. Moving up, down, and diagonally, they force the camera to follow their movements in a sporadic fashion with tilts and pans as much as possible. The butler on the other hand walks in very straight lines, turning sharply at ninety degrees whenever he must turn (Appendix B, first scene). Like Jeeves’ stilted language, the butler has a stilted walk—never able to traipse about freely like his master and the tramp. The butler must walk statically—abnormally. This may be a way to show the drunkenness of his master and the Tramp more, but it is important to note that even when the Millionaire is not drunk, the butler walks very straight and tall, while the Millionaire seems to barrel about in whichever direction he chooses.

While the audience sees all of this, there is one thing that the audience rarely sees—the butler’s face. The butler never seems to face fully into the camera. Only rarely does the audience get a full view of the butler’s face and even then it is shown either very quickly—like in the first scene, seventeenth edit cut—or from far away, like in the second scene, twenty-eighth cut (Appendix B). In fact, one sees the backside of the butler more than his front side. In a very literal way, the butler is the butt of the jokes the Tramp plays while in the Millionaire’s home. More than just flicking alcohol in face, primping at the mirror to make him irritated, or throwing shoes at him, Chaplin as director and as the Tramp literally shows the audience the most unseemly side of the butler, which of course makes the audience roar.
Yet this showing of the butler’s backside is more than just a joke, especially in this particular film. Chaplin’s last cuts of this film are some of his most famous. Close-ups of both the Blind Girl and the Tramp staring at each other give the audience no indication of what will happen to the Tramp in the end. In fact, it is no ending at all—instead it is an amalgamation of the mixed emotions both the Girl and the Tramp feel at the moment of sight. The ending close-up of the Tramp’s face has given the movie an ambiguous ending, an ending that leaves the audience with knowing what seeing does to a person, yet no knowledge of what is the consequence of sight in the end. It is a moment of great brilliance in film cinema—a rare moment when the audience sees how an image has a meaning, but a meaning that is not absolute or definitive in any way.

Lawrence Shaffer in “Reflections of the Face in Film” discusses the image as a point of ambiguity in film. He states:

Yet the face exerts an almost gravitational pull for filmmakers, for of all surfaces the face seems to promise most (because it is the most expressive) some revelatory truth behind it. But the camera does not necessarily get any closer to states of mind by getting closer to the face. And on the other side of the facial coin lies the notion of face-as-mask, concealing or misleading. But just as the face can reveal only so much, so can it mask only so much. (3)

Shaffer is making a great point: the face is the most important part of film, yet also the most ambiguous—it is both a site of truth as well as a site of deception, found in the mask that easily crosses any face on the screen. Chaplin clearly understood this, for his thoughts about the last cuts of this film lean in the same direction as Shaffer’s. It was a moment for everyone, including Chaplin, which reached “mythic proportions” (Shaffer
Therefore, not showing the butler’s face straight on is interesting. In a film where the face is everything, the butler has none—he receives neither the avenue of revealing his inner truth, nor even an opportunity to show his mask. Since a film, “[…] is limited to what the face can show” (Shaffer 3), this film shows nothing of the butler as to a character all his own. Therefore, this butler is in no way the trickster figure of Jeeves, but a grotesque: a figure without a face and therefore no way to communicate lies or truths.

Yet, as mentioned previously, the butler’s face does front the screen in a few places. Two of the times when the audience does see the butler’s face closer up and facing front are actually very revealing scenes. The first is the second scene with the butler, sixth shot. At the door of the Millionaire’s home after their first jaunt out, the butler opens the door and welcomes his master into his domicile, while at the same time being physically assaulting to the Tramp. This is actually a very shocking scene. The overly harsh treatment of the Tramp mingled with the swell of undiegetic music seems almost uncalled for and I assume that it is at this moment when filmgoers see the butler as public enemy number one.

However, shot fifteen of this same scene reveals the cause. When the Millionaire asks the butler where his friend the Tramp is, the Millionaire becomes just as physically harsh to his butler as the butler was to the Tramp. The physical violence inflicted on the butler is just as vehement and just as instantaneous as the butler’s abuses to the Tramp. In this moment when the Millionaire throws the butler headlong to the door to bring in his friend, a look of utter terror comes across the face of the butler just as it did the Tramp. This shot is too visually parallel to the previous shot of violence to be just a coincidence. This exact treatment of the butler by the Millionaire shows the audience
that the butler has learned how to treat his own inferiors by the actions of his master. Just as the Victorian butler seemed to take paternal advice from his master through the symbolic receiving of clothes, this butler does the same—being in his harshness the very embodiment of his master. Therefore, like the cartoon “Capital and Labour,” the butler in this film is nothing more than an extension of his master’s power and violence—right down to the force he inflicts on the lower class.

This violence learned from the upper class is rare in Chaplin, and so even more apparent in *City Lights*. Harry Grace in “Charlie Chaplin’s Films and American Culture Patterns” writes that, “Almost ninety percent of Chaplin’s films portray the brutality of lower class behavior in contrast with middle class standards” (257-8). The audience, in this case, sees that the violence of this movie comes from an upper class character, not from the butler’s lower class upbringing. The butler is once again a mere effect of his master.

Again, it is important to repeat that what the audience sees is not what the butler sees. Scholars have not only cited the butler’s physical treatment of the Tramp in their accusations against him, but also the butler’s unwillingness to stand up and defend the Tramp when the Millionaire fails to recognize him when the police arrive to arrest the burglars. Instead of a defense, the butler—in his second and last title card of the whole movie—instantly accuses the Tramp of stealing the money and demands that the police search him. It is the butler who makes the police suspect the Tramp in the burglary, a grave error not easily forgiven by the audience. Yet, when looking back on the film, the butler only sees the Tramp stealing. The butler never sees the Millionaire freely giving the car to the Tramp at the beginning of the movie—the butler just sees the Tramp take
off with his master’s car. The butler only sees a beggar who steals fruit out of an arrangement in the living room, he never hears his master exclaim to the Tramp that what is his is now also the little man’s as well. Again, unlike Phipps and Jeeves, this butler does not see all, and while the audience assumes he is like all the other butlers they have seen and read about, he is not. This butler cannot come in at the precise moment, speak a few words of truth, and save the day.

For when it also comes to speech, the butler is incredibly Victorian. This butler speaks little, and pantomimes most of his speech—for it is not important enough to put his words on title cards. Interestingly enough, the words that do get the distinction of title cards inflict pain. The first title card of the butler’s is in his first scene. When the Millionaire asks about his wife the butler’s title card reads, “Only that your wife sent for her baggage, sir” (see Appendix B, first scene, 6). This title card is the only speech explaining the pain and hence willing blindness of the Millionaire, for with them the audience learns of the wife who has left her husband. The audience learns a truth from the butler’s words, for a Victorian butler must always speak the truth, but it is a pain inflicting speech. The butler is the bearer of bad news.

The only other title card of the butler’s also gives pain; yet this time its blow hits the Tramp. Once again, in the last scene with the butler when the Millionaire has been found on the floor the butler exclaims, “He has been robbed, search that man!” (see Appendix B, last scene, 29) and points to the Tramp. It is this accusatory statement and pointing finger that causes the Tramp the worst calamity—the consequence of which is the most destitute Tramp Chaplin’s audiences ever see on film. In quite a literal sense, it is the voice of the butler that describes and gives much of the pain in this movie. As
discussed in the previous chapter, forced silence was the torture and pain of a butler; yet, in this film, the butler gives the Millionaire and the Tramp pain by his brief speeches. This is interesting both in terms of the movie and in terms of Chaplin as well.

This movie, in many ways, is about how people deal with pain. Whether it is the Blind Girl dealing with the pain of poverty, the Millionaire who deals with the pain of a spouse leaving him, or even the Tramp who must deal with the pain that he can never live up to what people demand of him, this movie volleys the audience from one scenario of pain to the next. Constance Kuriyama in “Chaplin’s Impure Comedy: The Art of Survival” seems to really center on this notion of pain and City Lights. She states that, “Chaplin also consistently maintained that comedy was based on conflict and pain, and was therefore a transformation of pain into pleasure, an idea he credited to his friend Max Eastman” (29).

While much of Chaplin’s films have pain interlaced within the stories, City Lights for Kuriyama seems to be the most pain inflicted. She believes that, “City Lights is Chaplin’s most subtle and comprehensive essay in impure comedy, his only film in which pleasure and pain are so constantly and inseparably mingled that neither Charlie nor the viewer is ever free of at least subliminal discomfort” (36). Throughout the film, the Tramp volleys between the harsh realities of what he is and what people assume he is. Even in his happiest moments with the Blind Girl, there is always something to remind him, as well as the audience, that he cannot possibly fulfill the role she gives him and he willingly perpetuates. Instead of being either/or, the Tramp seems to “hang mysteriously suspended in a black, noncommittal void […]” (37), much like the butler who also hangs in a void between the Millionaire and the rest of the world. It is possible to assume that
the title cards of the butler are once again to express that those constantly tossed between two worlds exist in a constant state of pain and cannot but give pain to others.

This odd, vacillation of the Tramp—and even the butler—obviously stems from the wide disparity of class in this film. A movie that moves between the extremely rich and the extremely poor is what brings such pain to *City Lights*. Like other films, *City Lights* sets up two types of worlds; yet unlike many of his earlier films, it is the two different worlds of class that are of interest, and were becoming more and more interesting to Chaplin as an auteur. As Charles Maland notes, the two films before *City Lights* vacillate between the worlds of good people and bad people. “In *City Lights*, however,” he explains, “Charlie moves back and forth between two worlds: the upper-class luxury of the millionaire and the urban, almost folk world of the flower girl and her grandmother” (116).

Chaplin slowly throughout his career added more political and social ideas to his films. Although his social agenda was never entirely clear (as Philip Rosen explains in “The Chaplin World-View”), it is evident that the more Chaplin made films, the more these films dealt with ideas of class and the wide gap between them in America. Although Chaplin films crossed continents, the social constructs of his films were primarily American from the viewpoint of his Victorian upbringing.10

Class conflict and the resulting pain were particularly poignant at this time. The year 1931 marked not only the date of this film but also the time when the Depression was at its peak. Charles Maland readily argues that the social commentary on the times is readily apparent in this film. However, Eric Flom in *Chaplin in the Sound Era* states that

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10 Maland discusses this as well as Pietro Ingrao in “Chaplin: the Antagonism of the Comic Hero.” See Maland’s discussions of this on page 29 of his article and Ingrao’s on page 22.
not only must we look at this film in the Depression context, but also within the film context itself. He states that, “[…] it may be more accurate to consider City Lights as a commentary on the Roaring Twenties in general, when carefree optimism and prosperity ran rampant for many, but not all; a period when the disparity between the world’s millionaires and the world’s tramps grew steadily” (71).

This disparity of class parallels Chaplin’s own life. The startling difference between Chaplin’s boyhood slums in England and his millionaire status in America certainly plays a part in this film. The set to the Girl’s poor neighborhood certainly has a more European air than the slums of America while the Millionaire’s home and social entertainments are certainly American. In fact, Chaplin’s recent divorce and family problems may have directly affected the pain he wished to express in the character of the Millionaire. Kuriyama relates the pain of the movie to the pain of the real Chaplin in the following statement:

Much of the dark, subterranean emotion of City Lights—the mute suffering implicit in Charlie’s shuffling gait or the divorced Millionaire’s recurrent urge to commit suicide, the pervasive sense that the world can always do more damage than one expects—seems to flow directly from Chaplin’s own recent experience. (37)

Flom also sees the similarities between Chaplin and the Millionaire, since “popular rumors of Chaplin” alluded to him being both “moody and suicidal” (64) the defining traits of the Millionaire. This may partly explain why so much frustration and hatred of the movie tends towards the butler rather than the Millionaire. The sympathy of Chaplin as the director towards the Millionaire as a mirror of himself may have certainly played
itself out in the film, making the Millionaire more pathetic than evil no matter how harsh he may be towards his servants or forgetful of the Tramp when he is sober. Moreover, the butler’s posed face never registers pain. Flom even alludes to the Millionaire’s part as some sort of therapy for Chaplin (64).

It is interesting to note here Chaplin’s own relationship with his butler, Kono. All accounts of Chaplin and Kono’s relationship are extremely Victorian. May Reeves’ account of their relationship seems to come out of a handbook for Victorian servants:

Kono used an original tactic in dealing with his master: as soon as he saw the barometer of Chaplin’s humor fall, he disappeared for several days. During these times, an invisible spirit seemed to lay out the linen, the shoes, the day and evening clothes of his master. And since Charlie never rang, never asked to be served, Kono did not reappear until he was sure he would not have to serve as a lightening rod. (62)

The invisibleness of Kono who went about his work so quietly that he remained invisible for weeks is a great indication of how Victorian Chaplin’s ideas were about his servants in real life, let alone in his cinematic world. Even more, Reeves’ continuous reference to Kono being the scapegoat for Charlie’s rage enhances an even greater view of why the butler in City Lights comes across as so negative. Two things are certain: first, the butler in this film, like Chaplin’s butler in real life, was often the bearer of bad news and therefore introduction of pain for Chaplin and second, with a film displaying the great gulf between the poor and the rich, there was no place to show any sympathy for the classless.
Perhaps the real relationship of Chaplin and his butler leaked itself onto the film through these title cards that cause pain—for words in film gave Chaplin pain and Kono was often the scapegoat for Chaplin’s pain in real life. In a time of talkies, Chaplin purposefully chose the silent medium. Chaplin’s dislike for sound in film is common knowledge and both City Lights and his next film Modern Times are proof. Garret Stewart in “Modern Hard Time: Chaplin and the Cinema of Self-Reflection” discusses Chaplin’s argument against sound. He states that, “These movies reflect upon their own refusal to speak, resonate against their own partisan silences” as a means of satire against the popularity of sound (304).

The butler does not speak; yet his title cards, almost speech in the case of silence, certainly affect the Tramp and the Millionaire (Chaplin’s double) just as if he did speak. Unlike the previous chapter that discusses silence and pain, the torture lies in sound, since for Chaplin pain was not silence, because he built his art around silence. For Chaplin, sound not silence was the cause of pain; therefore, sound was the torture and of course, the butler’s tasks included the added job of vocalizing things that would cause pain to the other characters. Interestingly enough, Allen Garcia in Modern Times is the first person to speak in Chaplin films—a negative task rather than an honor in Chaplin’s eyes (see Flom 96).

This outward movement of pain from the butler decries his liminal sphere and classlessness in a way that stems from Victorian England, but also reflects itself onto a completely American viewpoint. Unlike the other classes in the film who are not only blind, but receive pain from their blindness, the butler on the other hand may be blind (not seeing the innocence of the Tramp at least), but he feels no pain or bad consequences
from his blindness towards the Tramp. Words give the Millionaire pain, the Tramp pain, and even the blind girl pain—the words in the letter stating her expulsion from her home if rent is not paid is an example of this. Yet, for the butler, there are no words of pain shouted at him. He cannot speak or show pain; but as already discussed, this is not necessarily bad in Chaplin’s viewpoint. The butler’s silence is entirely Victorian and entirely acceptable to an auteur who had a butler in his service. And if words do cause him pain, this was simply just part of his job as the scapegoat and the employer did not really have to care about his pain.

However, there is also a paradox in the butler’s character that makes him liminal and negative in an American way that directly harks back to Victorian ideals as well. As Pietro Ingrao points out, “Chaplin’s ‘hero’ is an isolated individual. He neither realizes nor participates in the onset of new modes of association” (24). For Chaplin and his American audience, it was always the one individual against the many who was enduring and lovable in America. The paradox of the butler’s position is that others isolate him by his classlessness, yet it is someone else, the master, who defines him as a person. One reason why Chaplin creates such an anti-butler feeling in his blows with the serving class is that the Tramp is the hero because he is the isolated figure who does not mold his character around societal codes or others around him. The butler on the other hand, can never be completely individualized or set apart because his employer and societal codes define him and make him who he is. He is what society demands of him and is therefore a great foil for Chaplin’s Tramp. This American paradox stemming directly from the Victorian world of the serving class pulls the butler once again into a liminal sphere that
is neither either/or: he neither finds a place in social groups nor remains heroically
individualized.

Even when the middle point of the classes does come into play in this film, the
butler remains irrevocably outside of it. In the end of the film, the audience looks at the
now-seeing Girl who owns her own flower shop and has comfortably settled herself into
a middle-class lifestyle. With the advent of a middle class in the film the point of
connection between the upper and lower classes occurs. She first welcomes an evidently
rich man into her shop and looks yearningly at him, still eagerly anticipating her upper
class prince to make a permanent entrance into her life. Her next welcoming is the
poverty class embodied by the Tramp. She willingly welcomes him also into her
sphere—giving him things and even touching his arm. With this welcoming
consciousness comes a scene full of class issues, which alludes to the middle class as the
class that is all welcoming—the point where all classes can almost converge and exist
together.

This is also the point of decision-making in regards to the audience and class. As
the last cut fades on the Tramp’s face, we see a decision about class unsolved yet in
America and an issue yet to be resolved when it comes to how America will deal with its
class-conscious behavior. The ending of this film points to the rising middle-class in
America as the avenue for class freedom—at least a middle ground where all are entirely
welcome. It is true that the girl’s face shows her disillusionment towards her benefactor,
but it also shows her ability to accept the lower classes, at least potentially. Yet the
butler—or any servant for that matter—is entirely absent in this last scene. She does not
see him in the equation at all, nor does the audience. The butler exists outside of the
ideas of class and acceptability even for the middle classes. For the movie audiences of the time, the middle class—sitting side by side the working class and welcoming them more and more into their class sphere—is at the point of acceptance, except for the butler. The middle class of Chaplin’s time had not yet welcomed the gentleman’s gentleman into their freeing society.

When it comes to class, *City Lights* definitely puts a negative spin on modern society. As Clausius concludes, “[…] *City Lights* implicates the social and economic inequality and hierarchy upon which modern urban society thrives” (105). Nevertheless, when it comes to hierarchy, the question remains as to where exactly the butler fits in. For Chaplin and many of the early American comedians, it was an important tool to attack the authority figure in their films—a way of satirizing those who controlled society. Yet in *City Lights*, the Millionaire does not hold the place of previous authority figures, but is rather just as lost as the Blind Girl is. The butler on the other hand, is just as abused as if he was a Keystone Kop, yet he certainly does not control society. He is obviously not Jeeves who controls the master’s clothes thereby preserving societal boundaries.

Yet for Chaplin, the butler was just as guilty as the police were in that he always existed in a compromising situation. As Harry Grace puts it, “The persons who symbolize authority in Chaplin’s films are often portrayed as clearly unethical or immoral, or of doubtful character because of a compromising situation” (358). The Victorian butler in this film is the symbol of the Millionaire’s excessive wealth and power, but even worse in America, he is the embodiment of a man who has compromised his own individuality for a job. He is the perfect negative foil to the Tramp.
Unlike the Millionaire’s pain-filled problem, which is a personal one dealing with his wife, the butler takes on the burden of a cultural problem, which constantly attacks the Tramp. The butler is the foil of the Tramp in that he continually stands as a person who succumbs to the system and gives himself up to social class. Unlike Preston Sturges, the auteur discussed in the next chapter, Chaplin was a political auteur who desired to evoke emotion towards the simple and abused little man constantly fighting the loss of individuality. Chaplin’s next film, *Modern Times*, certainly continues this; yet no abused butler shows up in *Modern Times*. Like the magazine *Punch*, Chaplin focuses on the factory worker, and not the domestic laborer, for his films on class injustice. It is clear that Chaplin is working off an old system of class, the Victorian system, which did not include butlers in the rank of the socially abused.

Moreover, the working class audience of Chaplin films also did not see the butler empathetically since they ultimately conformed to a social class the working class masses distrusted. For the moment, butlers were not part of the freer middle class. Yet in the end, it is this middle class—a relatively new class in the theater chair—that remains to make the decision regarding the serving class and like the now-seeing Blind Girl, it is uncertain in the end of this film just how accepting they will be.
Chapter 3: Preston Sturges and Necessary Fathers

While Chaplin’s butler puts the butler into the social realm of America with all its new positions of class and individuality, Preston Sturges made his butlers more distinctly American and more distinctly free. The butlers and valets in Preston Sturges’ films tend to subvert class distinctions even more than their predecessors in English literature as well as Chaplin’s films do. In the late thirties and early forties when film expressed political tensions, butlers and other working classes tended to gain more freedom in the social world. Set apart from their typical counterparts of the comic past, the butlers and valets depicted in Sturges’ The Lady Eve and Sullivan’s Travels express the chaotic class leveling of the 1930s and early 1940s through their faultless perceptions of those around them, their control of the action, and their freedom to speak in their respective films. Burroughs, Muggsy, and Sullivan’s unnamed valet stand literally in the place of the father figure in these films. They lovingly, as well as authoritatively, watch over and take care of their child-like masters whether their employers like it or not. This authoritative paternity expresses a new freedom in the stereotype and the beginning acceptance of the domestic worker as a member of the middle class in America.

Political minded directors like Chaplin brought about a new political emphasis on the medium of film that expresses itself in 1930s and early 1940s films. The 1930s was a time of political change, something directors was eager to articulate and knew it could after Chaplin and others like him. Robert Sklar explains in his book Movie Made America the parallel relationship of film and politics that emerged at this time. He believes, “The form that movie culture assumed grew out of interrelations with other
social and economic institutions and with the state. Behind the dream world on the screen loomed the very real world of the American economy and society” (Sklar 161).

Moreover, it was a society infused with change. Kathleen Moran and Michael Rogin describe this decade in their article, “What’s the Matter with Capra?,” as a time when class structures broke down due to the Great Depression and the powerful, political left emerged, which headed up the New Deal. “The 1930s,” they write, “[was] also the golden age of the American left, the great exception in American politics that brought the United States to a social democratic potential [more] than any time in its history” (106). Since the Depression brought down the poor and the rich (at least some of the rich) alike, this was a time when classes mixed even more than the decades before. Such mixing provided an excellent opportunity for people to not only view the other classes, but also understand and welcome other classes as co-victims of monetary devastation. The plight of every worker was in everyone’s mind and all sorts of media seemed to be sympathetic towards the sadness while also utilizing the class changes.

One such media was film as directors and actors started more openly to declare their own political leanings. Richard Sklar points out this issue by stating,

For a generation they [American moviemakers] had been rebuked […] as subverters of middle-class values. Then, as if by an act of Providence, came sudden social and economic disaster, confounding and scattering their enemies, the defenders of the American cultural heritage. (161)

Directors like Frank Capra and Ernst Lubitsch began to see the possibilities of tearing down Old World hierarchical class ideals—and the newer class system the bourgeoisie had created in the previous decades—as a way to profess their political
leanings of Depression America, an America where classes sat side by side. More so than during the year of City Lights, people of all classes went to the movie theater. As James Harvey explains in Romantic Comedy, the movies, “[…] drew more people than any other leisure pursuit in America did, […] they drew all kinds of people, all classes and types, ages and backgrounds from the most to the least ‘educated’” (675, emphasis his). Because of this mixing of the classes in one location, political changes and ideas played themselves out in the films watched on screen. The Popular Front, as people called it, became a realm where movies could level the social playing field in not just the mixture of people who saw the films, but what those films portrayed (Moran, Rogin 111).

The birth of screwball comedy was just one of the many consequences of the Popular Front—a genre working through the ideas of class without being overtly political at this point. Richard Sklar points to Ernst Lubitsch’s Design for Living as the first screwball film—made in 1933 (188). He goes on to say that, “There were perhaps two dozen screwball comedies in the late 1930s, and other comedy genres, including musicals and dramas, which contained screwball-comedy elements” (188). In a few words: the genre reached wide. These fast-talking productions where the women could talk faster than the men and where the plot usually ended with the combining of the classes through marriage were hugely popular.

This definition of the genre, which has its origins on Restoration comedy, is a gross over-simplification of screwball of course, but the Capra film It Happened One Night is a good example of the films whose genre is susceptible to being this formulaic. This film does not express a political statement about the government of America at the time; yet, the rich heiress played by Claudette Colbert finds her own wits matched by a
down-and-out journalist who has no money or upper crust background. Not only that, but like her audience, she spends most of her time in a bus filled with all sorts of classes who come together to sing and enjoy each other’s company, something she not only enjoys, but accepts willingly. With the end comes not only her marriage to the journalist, but also a rich father’s blessing as well as the new idea of character, not class, being the defining point of a human.

Some scholars have looked at films like this and said that screwball did nothing to change the issues surrounding the social classes of America. Sklar even goes so far to say,

And yet, though they [screwball comedies] never challenged the social order, the pictures gave audiences a whole new vision of social style, a different image of how to be a person: it was okay to be pleasure-loving, even if it made you look sexy or odd; it was good to puncture stuffed shirts and be lively, gay and carefree; it was good to throw decorum to the wind. There’s no question but they made a contribution to cultural change, just by repeating over and over again how attractive it was to be a person who liked to have fun (188).

Much of screwball is silliness and liveliness. Yet in many ways, this silliness is highly political in how much it strived to change the social order in the Thirties and Forties, since it told audiences that people could enjoy themselves while mixing with other classes. It was not just about style, but who could have a good time around all sorts of people. Like its origin, Restoration comedy, it strived to break social barriers and question societal codes that inhibited the growth of people.
In this genre, even when an upper-class person still married another person from the upper class, it was not without a great deal of influence or discussion concerning the lower classes and the importance of marrying out of love rather than class. While Katherine Hepburn’s character in *The Philadelphia Story* still marries a rich man like herself, it is only after her fiancé realizes her or anyone’s wealth and class have nothing to do with her marriage and happiness. Her discussion with a poor journalist (played by James Stewart) helps the audience see that snobs come in all classes, and she learns how personality and love form good relationships beyond a person’s class and the intense moral compass supposedly inherent in it.

Preston Sturges not only understood this, he was a master at it on the screen. As James Harvey so adeptly puts it, “In a Sturges film […] there are no common men, not even among the supporting players” (510). Sturges’ amalgamation of uncommon characters must have certainly been a result of his far from common life. Growing up with a mother who traveled the world with Isadora Duncan, Sturges experienced the world of the upper crust as a young child. Despite this link to the world of high culture, Sturges always preferred the world he lived in with his stepfather—a more American, working class world. Alan Dale in *Comedy is a Man in Trouble* says that although Sturges was, “[…] one of the few slapstick entertainers with any experience as a child of that upper world” he was, “[…] suspicious of his mother’s beloved world of high-art bohemianism” (163). No one knows for sure why Sturges preferred the working-class way—his mother forcing him to wear togas to school while living in America could have been one of many various reasons for his guilt and perhaps even embarrassment of his
origins—but Sturges’ business sense led him to enjoy the risks of the American working-class world. And he took major monetary risks in order to be a director in Hollywood.

At first a writer, Sturges took up the screwball form Lubitsch created and as a part of the comedy world, he became a master of slapstick and verbal wit. For Dale this slapstick, “[…] represented not only his distrust of anything ‘deep-dish’ as he was fond of putting it, but also his desire to roughhouse his way into a usable American identity” (163). Coupled with wit, Sturges became a link of Old and New World ideas in film. Brian Henderson in “Sturges at Work” explains that, “[…] Sturges mixed the verbal humor of the sound era with the slapstick techniques of silent comedy” (22). Sturges took the slapstick Chaplin and others perfected, and added sound to recreate a new American ideal within the class system.

It is this ideal, attached to the sound era, which makes Sturges so important politically as well as so important in regards to the class issues here. Although Sturges himself professed no political agenda or allegiance (Moran, Rogin 110), his films have political potency for two reasons. First, like Chaplin, Sturges managed to have auteur-like status in Hollywood with his films—creating films people not only loved and supported, but films thoroughly expressing his own views about his own strange position in America. Being an upper crust person, he still went about America in a very working-class way—being as liminal as the butlers that exist in his films. His personality coupled with his auteur status gave his films and the character types in them uniqueness unparalleled at the time. Ray Cywinski in Preston Sturges: a guide to references and resources says of Sturges:
As writer, director, and producer (in all but name at Paramount) of his twelve films, he was the first sound filmmaker to achieve nearly complete creative control over his work. His films reflect a single, distinct personality more than any other films of their era. A unique amalgam of satire and slapstick, sophistication and simplicity, they ultimately defy any particular genre or stylistic classification. (17)

The unique personality that affected his twelve popular films certainly affected the way American audiences started looking at film and genre.

With the new addition of sound, Sturges verbally spoke to his audiences about what it meant to be American and what film could be as well. Sturges had an uncanny understanding of how important speech was concerning this. Henderson says that, “[…] the extreme care that Sturges took with his scripts, both in the minuteness of his attention and in the persistence of his revisions through every stage of a film’s making shows a man deeply concerned with how he portrays his ideas on screen” (18). In this case, it is significant that many of Sturges’ ideas about culture come out of the mouths of his male domestic servants Burroughs and Muggsy, rather than his main characters.

There is a second reason why Sturges is important when it comes to class. Sturges’ movies teem with diversity, striving to figure out what class issues do to the hero and heroine. James Harvey points out that the hero and heroine in Sturges films, “[…] play out their destiny in these films against milling backgrounds of people. Never before, it seems, have romantic comedies been so densely populated, or these background figures so heightened and galvanized” (513). Previous screwball and romantic comedies left the hero and heroine individualized and standing out in front of the rest of the cast of
characters. Sturges films are different. “Where a Lubitsch crowd isolates the central figure, a Sturges crowd supports and upholds him” (Harvey 538). The various characters in Sturges films are not just backdrops for the main star to set their mark on; rather, they are characters all unto their own—each one having something the hero/heroine needs to change their lives for the better. Whether upper or lower class characters, they each bring something to the table to help the plot along and so therefore are equal in the film.

Because of these two things, Sturges films exist in a space where characters try out the culture of America and see what works and what does not work. As Alan Dale explains, “Sturges’s movies feature people testing the limits of the codes governing their actions […]” (165). These characters do not overtly strive to revamp the whole social structure of America. Instead, they subtly question how a convergence of class affects life and how a mixing of the classes actually makes life somehow a bit better.

This idea of bringing the classes together is not new. As James Harvey notes, “Sturges ends the era of romantic comedy, Ernst Lubitsch began it” (xii). Sturges obviously comes from a long line of directors, Capra being the most outspoken, who questioned the separation of class. Yet Sturges was different in that he also questioned how people were replacing notions of class (Dale 165). By so doing, he created films bent on professing change, but a conservative change—a change dealing with perceptions of reality, and not desire. True, he rarely directed and/or wrote scripts heavily embedded with politics; but this aspect of his work only cements his role politically. As Moran and Rogin explain, “Directors and films not caught up in reform meliorism might well offer a more radical perspective on the United States in the 1930s—by being more attuned to its
pleasures and pains—than would self-consciously Popular Front motion pictures” (Moran 110).

In so doing, Sturges films are much “more adult,” as Alan Dale puts it—making his jokes far more serious (Dale 188). So serious, that he even makes laughter itself a matter of serious debate in both *Sullivan’s Travels* and *The Lady Eve*. Both of these films deal with the perception of reality versus desire; and the power of truly perceiving the world lies within the realm of the butlers and valets, not the leading rich characters as Stanley Cavell points out in “Pursuits of Happiness: A Reading of *The Lady Eve*” (583). However, unlike other directors who would just leave the lower classes knowing more than the upper classes, Sturges also questions if their knowledge and position of power is truly a good thing. He questions if the lower classes acceptance into the realm of middle to upper class understanding really helps society as a whole.

**Valet as Conman**

Concerning this issue, *The Lady Eve* will be the first film discussed here not only because it came out first and was one of the biggest hits for Paramount Pictures, but because it is a far more conventional comedy. Unlike later Sturges work, *The Lady Eve* calls upon a more formulaic screwball style gleaned from the work of Lubitsch. Reaching farther back than film, Andrew Dickos in *Intrepid Laughter: Preston Sturges and the Movies* points out that,

*The Lady Eve* uses many of the conventions of classical comedy from Plautus to Shakespeare—particularly the convention of identity, which is handled in every way imaginable, from mistaken identity to dual identity to confused identity—and reveals them through a camera style that illustrates how to show such intricately
designed dramatic play between characters/actors and the situations in which they are placed. (88)

The idea of identity was important here as Sturges takes set stereotypes his American audiences recognized and twisted them to reveal that the perception of someone’s identity is subjective—for what one character perceives is not another person, but rather a stereotype. With Muggsy, the valet, enmeshed in the problems of all the other characters and the most atypical male domestic servant of his time, this film teems with stereotypes and their amorphous even contradictory characteristics. It explains that stereotyping causes considerable amounts of pain, and it is this type of stereotyping Sturges brings to the forefront of this film—making the audience question their own stereotyping of those around them.

For this, *Eve* is a film of two parts—the first part consisting of the stereotyping of characters and the second being the breaking down of these stereotypes. The first part is on a cruise ship, which takes on a rather rich young man—Charles “Hopsi” Pike played by Henry Fonda—who has been up the Amazon for a year studying snakes. As he boards the cruise ship and prepares himself for the onslaught of young women eager for his attention the audience gets a view of Barbara Stanwyck as Jean, her father Colonel Harrington, and their partner in crime Gerald, all of whom are discussing Hopsi as the victim of their next gambling scheme. As professional card sharks, Jean easily wins Hopsi’s attention while her father eagerly waits to take his money. However, as Jean perpetuates her side of the scheme she finds herself falling for Hopsi as badly as he falls for her. After a night of working against her father in his attempts to swindle her new man, she eventually comes off the conqueror and the Colonel freely gives his permission
for Hopsi to marry his daughter—yet only with the proviso that Jean keeps their profession a secret from him while on the cruise.

Unfortunately, Hopsi’s valet Muggsy gets wind of their schemes and shows Hopsi a compromising picture of Jean and her father—revealing their gambling schemes to swindle him. As a result, Hopsi drops Jean not only because he thinks their love is part of a scheme, but also because of who she is. She is not worthy of him and therefore he does not even look once in her direction as the cruise finishes in New York.

The second part of the film starts with Jean meeting up with one of her father’s old cronies who is working the older established New England families as Sir Alfred McGlennan Keith—sporting a fake English accent and a cheesy eyeglass. When Jean realizes that Hopsi’s parents are part of Sir Alfred’s seasonal kill, she immediately walks into the scheme as Sir Alfred’s niece, the Lady Eve Sidwich, in order to finish her business with Hopsi. At her entrance into his parents’ home, Hopsi literally falls all over himself repeatedly, surprised and uncertain if Eve is Jean or not. Being so like each other, Hopsi reasons that Eve cannot possibly be Jean, because they look too much alike. He quickly proposes to her and she willingly accepts. As they take their first step towards a happy Honeymoon, Eve begins to confess her past elopements and indiscretions, which last far into the night with the uptight Hopsi getting more and more upset. By the early morning, her vengeance is complete and Hopsi cannot take her lack of morals, and he leaves their marriage as quickly as he jumped into it.

Suddenly, Jean morally turns again and in the face of her father and Sir Alfred’s greedy propositions concerning her divorce settlement she refuses any money from Hopsi or his family. Instead, she leaves once again for her old life—and ends up meeting Hopsi
again on a cruise ship. Hopsi, who is now overwhelmed with the understanding that Jean is a far better woman than Eve could ever be, instantly takes Jean by the hand and runs to his room. As the door to his cabin closes, Hopsi still does not understand what really has happened or even that Eve is Jean; however, Muggsy is the sharper of the two as he squeezes out of the cabin and says to himself, “Positively the same dame!”

At this point, it is easy to spot the stereotypes played out on the screen. Charles “Hopsi” Pike is the backward asocial scientist who knows everything about books and nothing about girls, while Jean is the wild, independent woman who cares nothing about decorum and everything about money and the next thrill. As a pair, Jean is the one who sees past the stereotypes, but this film is not about Jean; it is about Hopsi, and Hopsi cannot possibly see the depth of individuality in Jean. Despite the fact that Jean tells Hopsi he, “[…] doesn’t know much about girls. The best ones aren’t as good as you think and the bad one’s aren’t as bad. Not nearly as bad […]” Hopsi refuses to understand. Instead he marries a woman who looks exactly like Jean and yet is a woman he thinks comes from a more established family—a family sure to have a daughter who is good, clean, and virtuous. Yet in the second part of the film, this idea of the upper class having better morals falls apart as Jean plays out her stereotypical Eve in all her licentiousness—starting of course with the stable boy. Confused by the stereotypes mixed in his head, Hopsi once again escapes to the sea and there finally understands who the real woman is.

Surprisingly the common stereotypes of the day contradict each other for Hopsi when it comes to Jean. Jean as a moral thief and Eve as a well-positioned adulteress are beyond him until the very end of the film. However, there is one stereotype that is
altogether different in this film and helps Hopsi see the identity of others—the valet. Mr. Murgatroid, called Muggsy, is not the scapegoat of Wilde or Chaplin nor is he the statically proper Jeeves. Instead he is a rough and tumble kind of character who is not only a valet, but also a bodyguard and nanny, and in a literary sense, a conman.

Moreover, when it comes to identifying the identity of individuals Muggsy, played by William Demarest, is the key player. In *The Lady Eve*, Charles’ ever-paranoid valet first perceives Jean and her father as crooked characters. Later on in the film, Muggsy tries to convince the blinded Charles that the Lady Eve is Jean dressed up to catch him again. Muggsy simply sees everything and identifies the characters at the right moment while Hopsi is hopelessly lost.

To anchor Muggsy as the all-seeing eye in relation to identity, Sturges filmed all of the other characters constantly looking through mirrors or unfocused camera lenses to express their failing, backwards eyesight—literally and emotionally. Jean’s comical monologue of Hopsi’s first dining room experience on the cruise ship all comes from what she sees from her compact mirror. By multiplying the planes of view—the audience’s view of Hopsi, the passengers’ view of Hopsi, and Jean’s view of Hopsi through her mirror—Sturges shows the reflexive nature of the characters as well as the camera. Jean looks at herself and projects her own stereotypes on people while at the same time the audience does the same with both of them. The filming of this scene is from an entirely subjective angle (Dickos 71); therefore, it is as untrue in relation to Hopsi as the movie is to the audience. Incidentally, Jean also looks at her father using mirrors and rarely looks at anyone when she is talking. She literally becomes the audience by stereotyping the people around her just as the audience does with each film.
However, Jean is not alone in her subjective viewing of those around her. A few minutes after Jean’s work with the mirror, Charles’ direct point of view shot of Jean is completely out of focus. He is faint around her and therefore cannot see her clearly. Whenever he professes love to her—while she is Jean and again when she is Eve—he does not look directly at her, but purposefully away from her. In fact, both of the main characters never glance directly and truly at each other at the same time ever in this film; and even Jean acknowledges later that the “awful yen,” which held sway over them while on the cruise ship, marred their physical perceptions of each other. Even with their love cut short on the cruise, Charles refuses to look at Jean before leaving the boat while Muggsy makes sure to glare in her direction at least once before they separate—something Brian Henderson noted in “Sturges at Work” (20).

Yet what Henderson and others—Harvey among them—did not see in this glance is one of the main points of the movie: Muggsy looks at Jean and all the other characters. In fact, the whole of his character consists of looking and, from the looking, perceiving character. When Jean first spots Muggsy, he is staring at her and worried about Hopsi. When Muggsy thinks Jean, the Colonel, and Gerald are card sharks, Muggsy gets the compromising photograph of them and begs Hopsi to look at it as he has. Moreover, when Jean shows up as Eve in the second part of the film, the audience’s first look at her is overwhelmed by the close-up of Muggsy looking at her (see Appendix D). The whole sequence of Eve at the Pike Home is one image after another of Muggsy staring at her through windows, at dinner, from other rooms, etc—all the while Hopsi is falling all over himself and so has no time at all to really take a good look at her. Completely different from Chaplin’s butler, who really sees none of the relationship between the Millionaire
and the Tramp, Muggsy sees more of the relationship between the two than they actually do. Jeeves-like Muggsy takes in the entire situation and records it with his eyes.

In a very real sense, Muggsy takes on the role of a benevolent conman. Like Jeeves in that he uses his skills to help his charge, Muggsy is a very careful character in regards to his master. When Hopsi and Muggsy are alone on the cruise ship Muggsy strives to convince Hopsi that Jean, the Colonel, and Gerald are crooked. Yet Hopsi has heard this before and lists the several times that Muggsy has warned him of other crooked—later proved innocent—people they have met in their travels. With this information, the film paints Muggsy as paranoid; yet such paranoia almost reaches out to a projection of himself. Muggsy is the conman. Muggsy as the proper valet is the greatest joke on everyone who allows it. Like Jeeves, he continually pulls the biggest operation under the nose of his master: his position as a domestic worker and the power that actually holds.

However, in one way Muggsy has far surpassed Jeeves, for Muggsy has a vocabulary entirely free and unrestrained. In fact, it is the most unrestrained in regards to all the other characters and the most rich when it comes to slang. To set him up as the paragon of American slang is of import in a Sturges film. Sturges himself said that, “Dialogue consists of the bright things you would like to have said except that you didn’t think of them in time” (Cywinski 4). His emphasis, as noted previously, and his care with his scripts were apparent to all.

Not only did Sturges emphasize language, but his critics also did. As Dickos explains,
The criteria for judging the success of most any Sturges screenplay invariably includes the standard of eloquence found in the twist of a phrase, a phonic rhythm, a defiant quickness, and, often, a speed that characterizes the seeming effortlessness of ‘talk’. (55)

To be a wit was within the grasp of all characters in Sturges films for to speak was open to all people in America. As Manny Farber and W.S. Poster point out in “Preston Sturges: Success in the Movies,” “[…] Everyone down to the cross-eyed bit player gets a chance to try out his oratorical ability” (13). For the valet to be included in this free play of speech is a first for any film; however, what is even more interesting is Muggsy’s speech is more slang-filled, more accented than any other in this movie.

The accent, of course, shows his lower-class origins. As Charles explains, his father did take him off a truck somewhere and just gave him a job. However, the unabashed openness of this origin is unprecedented in film. There is no shame in coming from a poor background in Sturges films, just so long as you can use your accented verbosity to help the hero. Moreover, Muggsy’s caustic behavior implies that he almost resents, even exploits the upper classes in his role as the conman. Add the constant malapropisms coming out of Muggsy’s mouth, and once again the audience sees his class and recognizes that he somehow does not belong in the character. He exploits the power of being connected to rich people and gets what he wants on the ship (the photographs of Jean and her father), but in the same turn uses them against the heart of his employer and gets away with it because of the way he speaks.

However, Muggsy’s delivery in no way sets the audience above him. When he says to a crewman, “I want to ask you a hypothermical question” there is laughter, but it
is then followed by awe as Muggsy’s verbal sparring pulls the crewman down from his fake accent and renders the crewman Muggsy’s inferior (Appendix D, Fourth scene). Muggsy’s accent and mistakes in language define his class, but his verbal sparkle gives him social equality in regards to those around him despite the inherent mistakes. He literally cons the audience and the other characters into respecting him.

Yet the slang and speed of Muggsy is something more. Dickos explains that this freeness of speech in Sturges films helps with the, “[…] distinction between character types and what they are traditionally obliged to say” (56). By freeing Muggsy’s voice, Sturges openly acknowledges that domestic servants could not talk this way normally in front of anyone. But why not, for there is no harm in Muggsy’s speech, and Demarest’s rendition of the rough character is fresh and rhythmically pleasing to hear? It is as close to an American working-man’s poetry as anything in other films at this time.

Not only does Muggsy have the freedom of speech, he also has the freedom to fall. Rendering the pratfall in an entirely good light, Dale explains that the pratfall is freeing. To be able to fall and get back up again meant that man was beautifully human and altogether leading positive lives (176). The butler in early American films never had this luxury. Like the butler in City Lights, butlers were entirely unfunny and altogether too proper. It was their curse—dressed up ridiculously in clothing so unlike the rest of the world and yet striving to ignore the fact and be pompous was an easy target most directors took from early literature. Sturges changed this. Muggsy falls brilliantly at the Pike party while watching Eve from the windows and becomes, along with his speech, entirely human like the rest of the characters. There is the obvious pleasure in seeing the uppity debased, and Muggsy is no different. However, Muggsy’s fall parallels Hopsi’s
falls, and therefore makes employer and employee equal. They both can fall, they both can get back up again, and they both have equal standing in this particular scene.

It is no wonder that when the audience does get a glimpse of Muggsy in livery at Charles’ wedding, he looks out of place in the clothes. There is something wrong with Muggsy in livery because he is too human and individualized at this point. Sporting a cigar in this quick shot of him at the wedding is just another stab at the unreality of what people expected in domestic servants. No one could expect Muggsy to give up his individuality and disappear in clothes like this, and no one would want him to; he is too unique a character. Once again, Muggsy cons the world into excusing the habits that would have concluded with the termination of his employment.

Changing the idea of valets when it comes to speech and clothes is just the tip of the iceberg. Muggsy reverses even the idea of Victorian paternity in this film by standing in as the father figure for Hopsi. While Charles’ real father is clueless as to his son’s interests, Muggsy is the one who takes the time to care for not only Charles, but also his pet snake both on and off the ship. These men seem to have a paternal bond, leaving the butlers and valets in the position of a higher power, and not the other way around—something magnified in a later Sturges film with William Demarest playing the actual father in *The Miracle at Morgan’s Creek*. Like Jeeves, there is a paternal bond; however, Sturges takes this beyond clothes, for Charles even tells Jean about Muggsy saving his life once in a brawl. Charles may say that Muggsy is a very bad valet, but he still literally cannot survive without him. He is his friend, confidant, and father figure.

As radical as all these changes sound, Sturges was once again a conservative in relation to class and he certainly questions Muggsy’s role more than anyone else does.
Despite the freeness of speech, clothing, and paternal bond, Muggsy, like most domestic servants, is the access to the film’s pain through what he gets wrong. Muggsy’s disclosure of the photograph to Charles comes at the wrong time, since Jean has fallen in love and decided to leave her life of thievery for Hopsi. Muggsy cares for Hopsi, but not enough to see past her stereotype either. Worse still is the last line of the whole film. Shockingly the last lines are Muggsy’s, not a main character’s, but even more shocking is that Muggsy still sees Jean as “positively the same dame.” Yet she is not. Not only has Hopsi changed, but Jean has as well. She is not the same woman Muggsy glares at in the beginning of the film, for she too has resisted her background and refused to give in to money and people’s stereotypes.

Muggsy is certainly still a father figure, but the goodness of this father figure is questioned by a stubbornness to still think that people do not change—that once a stereotype, always the same stereotype. Yet why has the comedy not changed him? Why is it that the countless times he has been wrong about others does not change his mind concerning the people around him? Conclusively, he is ever the cynical conman who trusts no one, since he knows very well that he himself cannot be trusted. As a misplaced servant, he cannot change through contact with someone like Jean. Although he obviously has a girl at the beginning of the movie, he cannot learn about people and not stereotypes from her. He has to leave her behind because Hopsi is leaving the island, and he must go wherever Hopsi does. Like all butlers and valets before him, Hopsi is the only relationship he can keep, and therefore Hopsi becomes a son to his father.
The Accepting Father Figure

Ten months later, Sturges makes this father figure type even stronger and perhaps a bit more forgiving in his domestic serving men in the movie *Sullivan’s Travels*. This movie makes Sturges known for being, “[…] as serious about not being serious as it’s probably possible to be” (Harvey 595). As a parody, which reflexively looks upon itself to determine exactly what it is in view of society, this movie is about political movie making. Therefore, it both satirizes political directors as well as honors them, well some of them. This movie concludes by saying comedies are part of the social milieu and therefore inherently political, yet only by distancing its stories from radical excessiveness.

This conservative ideal is apparent right from the start in this film. Even though audiences see only the dedication at the beginning of the movie, Sturges wrote two. Sturges wrote on his personal screenplay that, “This is the story of a man who wanted to wash an elephant. The elephant darn near ruined him”. The dedication at the beginning of the film reads,

To the memory of those who made us laugh: the motley mountebanks, the clowns, the buffoons, in all times and in all nations, whose efforts have lightened our burden a little, this picture is affectionately dedicated.

The two together are of interest. Sturges’ personal inscription implies a great burden, which is metaphorically an elephant in size and fraught with trouble. The dedication the audience sees implies that comedy lightens this burden of trouble, but only “a little”. The result is the film itself. It is a view about movie making and exactly what it is potentially for: to lighten social and political problems, but only conservatively and collectively.
Surprisingly, this light spirit is not what the first image of the screen produces. Paralleling *Gulliver’s Travels* by being in four parts (Harvey 584), the beginning part of this film starts with a deadly fight on top of a train. As the two men grapple and kill each other—falling to a watery death, the audience hears for the first time their hero Sullivan saying, “You see, you see the symbolism of it? Capital and labor destroy each other. It teaches a lesson, a moral lesson of social significance!” As the lights come up the audience realizes they have seen a film within a film—a social drama the comedy director Sullivan wants to make. However, his producers are against his desires to create a drama. Instead, they want him to keep making comedies since, “they don’t stink with messages.” Sullivan is persistent, and yet the producers have one up on him: how can a director make a film about poverty when the director knows nothing about poverty?

Sullivan, stumped yet ever stubborn, decides to go and be a tramp to learn what it is like to be poor. Ironically, he grabs tramp clothes from his wardrobe department and while trying them on, gets an earful from Burroughs, his butler, who tells him flat out that this is an incredibly bad idea. Of course, Sullivan does not listen and takes off—except the first time, it is with a crew, hired by the producers, who have caught on to his idea and realize it will make millions. As Sullivan wanders aimlessly down a road, a bus of cohorts follow taking down his every move. Unable to stand it, he takes them on a whirlwind ride and finally convinces them to take a hike while he experiences poverty on his own.

The second part of his voyages is far from the depressing view of reality he wants to make into a film. Trying to get money as a tramp would, he winds up caught by two widows and made into a man of all labor, which includes an eye-opening trip to a poor
movie house. Flying out of their window to escape them, Sullivan jumps into a vehicle and ends up right back where he started—in Hollywood. Walking into a diner, he meets the Girl. A fast-talking Veronica Lake has decided to give up Hollywood and go back home, but before she leaves, she buys him breakfast. In an effort to be charitable in return, Sullivan takes his own car to help her on her journey; however, decked out like a tramp the police assume he is a thief and throw both of them in jail.

Happily, Burroughs and Sullivan’s valet identify him and get him out of jail—only for the girl to realize that he is in fact a big director. As her anger at his disguise declines, his desire to go out and meet poverty square in the face rages up again. Convincing him to take her with him, Sullivan and his female costar start out on the third leg of his journey. He and the Girl wind up among the dregs of mankind, sleeping in crowded charity houses and listening to itinerant speakers clear on into the evening. However, this is not real poverty either, for they always know where the producer’s crew is and anytime Sullivan gets a cold or the Girl gets hungry, they wind up back in the bus happy and content.

This does not last. In an effort to thank the poor for his experiences, Sullivan wanders around the town on his last day as a tramp and hands out money to those around him. Unfortunately, a beggar hits him across the head and steals the money, only to fall immediately underneath a moving train. Having stolen his shoes in a previous scene, the beggar-thief carries with him Sullivan’s only identification—something his valet put in his shoes—and therefore is identified as Sullivan himself, making everyone assume Sullivan has died. Yet Sullivan has not died. In a blinding delirium, he strikes a railroad worker and, while still in a fog, Sullivan barely hears a judge sentence him to work on a
chain gang. At this point, there is no bus of coworkers to help him, there is no access to good food or the luxuries that even the rich criminals of America get. Here, in the last part of the movie, Sullivan is entirely alone, nameless, and unable to control his fate. This is where he learns that poverty is not the lack of wealth, but exactly what his butler said it would be—the shunning, overpowering disease of being nameless and powerless.

However, it is on the chain gang where Sullivan learns the power of comedy. In an act of charity, a poor church congregation invites the chain gang to sit in on one of their movie nights and watch a Mickey Mouse cartoon. Sullivan laughs uncontrollably along with everyone else. After the film, he confesses to the murder of himself—a ploy to get his picture in the paper—and the Girl spots him, alerting everyone and helping him return home. As the producers question him eagerly about the drama Sullivan will direct, Sullivan refuses. Comedy, he says, is the only thing for some people in this world. The little bit of laughter he enjoyed in a church on a chain gang has made Sullivan realize the unburdening quality of comedy and he goes back to directing it and it only.

It is interesting that throughout the film Sullivan defines poverty as being in trouble and aware of your trouble—aware of others and their ability to do things better than you are doing them. Poverty is an issue of difference by comparison in this film. This is paralleled rather well when it comes to the genres in movie making. As Capra dropped comedy for the more dramatic trouble-filled stories, Sturges jumped on comedy and saw scholars and the upper class pointing to drama and the new Capra films as somehow better, higher, and nobler than the lower art of comedy. Just as Sullivan tries to find trouble, so this movie strives to contend with trouble, and concludes that to search
for trouble is ridiculous (Harvey 587). Finding does nothing to help the social situation, but comedy does.

This idea of comedy and drama vying for a place in social change centers on Sullivan’s unnamed valet of Eric Blore fame and the butler, Burroughs (played by Robert Greig who incidentally plays the butler Burrows in *The Lady Eve*). Through experience only alluded to, Burroughs the butler clearly sees what disasters are in store for his employer who wishes to sport with the trouble of poverty. Like Muggsy, Burroughs knows and sees things, and his perceptions are much clearer than his master’s ideas about society.

All this occurs in the second scene of the film as Sullivan is trying on Tramp costumes for his great escapade. Changing clothes was part of class reconciliation comedies during the Depression and Sullivan as a director knows no other way to go about being poor (Moran, Rogin 117). His butler thoroughly disapproves. Getting the longest frontal close-up shot in the whole film, Burroughs pleads with Sullivan not to go through with this fiasco (Appendix D, First scene with butler, shots 9-11). Defined as the first authoritative speaker of the film by Moran and Rogin (117), Burroughs not only discusses the pain of caricaturing others, but also the danger of losing one’s identity. His statement about poverty is decisive. He goes on to say,

> You see, sir, rich people and theorists who are usually rich people, think of poverty in the negative—as the lack of riches as disease might be called a lack of health; but it isn’t, sir. Poverty is not the lack of anything, but a positive plague—virile and in itself contagious as cholera with filth, criminality, vice, and despair—as only a few of its symptoms. It is to be stayed away from even for
purposes of study. It is to be shunned. (See Appendix D for whole of Burroughs’ script)

Burroughs dazes not only Sullivan, but also the whole audience with such a speech. When Sullivan can only reply that Burroughs must have studied it himself to know all this Burroughs merely replies, “Quite unwillingly, sir.” Burroughs must have some background in poverty and it should be no shock now that a butler would know the pain of caricaturing people and the loss of identity and individuality. Sturges puts the butler where he has always been—as someone who knows what it is like to lose their individuality, to see rich people think of everything beneath them in the negative, and to know what happens to people when they are thought of in this way.

More than just knowledge, this long monologue by the butler is telling in regards to speech and Sturges. Unlike previous butlers, Burroughs speaks and speaks authoritatively. While Hopsi is telling Muggsy constantly to be quiet and forget his paranoid conclusions about those around him, Burroughs speaks freely, and Sullivan never once attempts to stop him. He is dazed to be sure, but is never reprimanding. As the film continues, the words become all the more important. This film has just as many silent montages as moments of speech. It is probably the most silent Sturges film, and for the butler to have the longest monologue says something about the authoritative stance of his character even more.

Moreover, his last words are no different from his first and are almost prophet-like in his clear perceptions: “May I close, sir, by warning you against the entire expedition, which I envision with deep apprehension and gloomy foreboding.” As the fourth part of the film begins, the close-up of Burroughs becomes all the more prophetic
as the beggar-thief also receives the same kind of close-up as the train kills him. In this visual parallelism, the audience sees just how much Burroughs correctly deduced the horrors his master fails to understand (Moran, Rogin 120). Like Muggsy, he tries to prevent his master from making mistakes, and like Jeeves, he stands above his master in regards to knowledge. Yet freer than them both, he can speak his mind without the censure of his master.

Also along with Muggsy and Jeeves, Burroughs and the valet are fathers. Set against the backdrop of child-like protagonists who have no idea how to fix their own problems, the butlers in America take care of everything. Burroughs educates his master like a father educates a son, and then afterwards the valet tells Sullivan he has put identification cards in his shoes. At this information, Sullivan whines out, “You’d think I was a child or something […],” but in fact the audience sees that he is. Instead of calling family, Sullivan calls his two men servants to bail him out of jail, and just like parents taking their child to school, Burroughs and the valet find out where Sullivan and the Girl should start their journey into poverty and pleasantly drop them off in the car (Appendix D, last scene). Sullivan’s valet and butler really worry about his safety at this point—standing at a distance and watching their master’s first steps at unescorted freedom. It is overtly ridiculous, but somehow the stereotype has evolved enough over time for the audience to accept it.

Even more, they are father figures that do not necessarily adhere to the usual formula of Restoration Comedy, thereby freeing themselves of the stereotype common with the genre. Unlike the authoritative figures in Restoration Comedies who strive to maintain social codes by keeping the love interest apart, Burroughs strives to keep
Sullivan and the Girl together. Burroughs readily agrees with the Girl about her going with Sullivan and vocally approves of their partnership. He is therefore not only a father figure, but one who symbolically changes social codes even before the main characters have an opportunity to understand the social codes they are trying to free themselves from.

One other thing helps level social class when it comes to the butler in Sullivan’s Travels. Like Muggsy, Burroughs falls, and not only falls down, but falls into a pool right after he approves of the Girl going with Sullivan. He is a human like everyone else; however, this fall into the pool does shock at least one person—the valet. As a possible joke towards the still pompous English manservant, the valet does not worry about the master or the guest falling into the pool—they can take care of themselves—but runs panic-stricken towards the pool to help the butler. Of course, he falls in as well. There is an instantaneous melding of fool and father figure, which develops throughout the few short scenes with the male servants. Once again, I think Sturges is putting images in front of the audience to make them question how they look at people, and what character types are changing the ideas in relation to society. Sturges is obviously making an apolitical political message with this movie, and part of this message is that comedy is the great leveler for even a butler can fall into a pool and manage to get out again, despite how incongruous it may look.

What is different about this movie from The Lady Eve is the apparent English aura of the butler and valet. Unlike Muggsy who is American and slang-filled, Burroughs and the valet have resorted back to being English in their form of speech. Now, Eric Blore (the valet) was English, but Robert Greig (Burroughs) was not English, he was Australian
and could spout out an American accent if asked to. Therefore, both are still stereotypes. Although pratfalls and monologues define humanity in these films, these characters are still completely unreal. Everyone is a caricature in this picture—even Sullivan is in a little way (Henderson 25). Burroughs, who is upset about the caricaturing of the poor is a cartoon himself, which can lend him automatic access to the poor through empathy, but it cannot access him to reality or to the American social system. It is possible that to know the system one must be outside the social system, but once again, Burroughs states that the position that has given him this knowledge is something he came to, “quite unwillingly.”

Yet the butler’s knowledge and speech also add something else to him. He is the character who defines the poor in this film, and it is this definition that has sparked many scholars to make their own definitions in regards to the poor. They cannot help themselves. Even in the commentary version of the film, Michael McKeen must state, acting almost as a voiceover over Burrough’s speech, “poverty is about history. You can try tennis, but you can’t try starvation because it is a person who is taken out of control. You can’t be poor and in control” (Sullivan’s Travels DVD). Harvey, Moran and Regin, even Henderson all define poverty in some way in their works. Like them, Burroughs as a free-speaking butler winds up caught in this ever-defining persistence to separate people from each other by trying to explain them as a social group. Sturges ultimately questions again the freeing of the stereotypical butler. Despite the liminal sphere, the butler willingly perpetuates the distinction between rich and poor, upper and lower class.

In the end, Sturges frees only himself from this push to define others. My first viewing of the film led me to think that the only real problem in this film was that the
truly poor had no voice at all. The only times Sullivan and the Girl come in contact with poor people the film resorts to a montage/documentary of the impoverishment they see around them followed by dramatic undiegetic music (twice in the film—once before the mugging and once during). However, Sturges is not stupid. He personally did not know what it was like to be destitute in depression America and quite possibly stuck to visual images on purpose—to honestly tell his audience that he could not give the poor a voice or verbally define them because he did not know himself what that voice would or could say. When Sturges allows the butler to speak, he himself drops the one thing critics know him for—both freeing and condemning the stereotype he calls into question.

Interestingly enough, Sturges’ first choice for the film Sullivan views on the chain gang was a Chaplin short—nodding his head to a director who knew the political importance of comedy and how important silence was to a film (Moran, Rogin 124).

Sturges remains possibly the most unexpected of all filmmakers in this regard. As Harvey notes, “The point is that people are always unexpected in some way. That’s what gives the Sturges comedy so much of its excitement” (515). By being unexpected himself and understanding that people are not stereotypes, the character types in his films are purposefully unexpected and stereotype altering. Butler and valet character types may grace his films, but they are not scapegoats, not too pompous, and certainly not silently subordinate. Instead, Muggsy is a lively, American sounding conman who is visually perceptive. Burroughs, on the other hand, is prophetic and socially perceptive—just like the fool in earlier forms of entertainment. Both are father figures who force the plot in the intended direction. Without their being there, these films would never have made it to their second, third, and/or fourth parts, which ultimately teach the hero about
being human and socially accepting. Coupled with their pratfalls, these domestic servants free themselves from class constraints and yet still manage to define the liminal knowledge within class. The change is apparent, but like comedy in general, it only changes the ideas of society subtly. As other directors in the Thirties and Forties worked to make huge impacts on the political sphere, Sturges was redefining and questioning society about American identity. By this questioning, Sturges took the lower class butler and valet and allowed them that place of origin (with Muggsy especially), as well as compared them to the rich theorists Burroughs discusses, making them more their equal than at any previous time in film or literature.
Chapter Four: A Changing Ideal

From the previous chapters, it is obvious that Victorian vestiges attached to the male domestic servant have trickled down into screwball comedies, namely Preston Sturges films. Discussing the changes within this stereotype in early twentieth-century film is difficult since these changes are minute and almost completely unseen. Being fatherly figures in the 1940s is a great step, yet there is still the Wilde-inspired off-hand comment in *The Philadelphia Story* that one of the male servants must have got into the wine again. In addition to this, relatively little has changed of the character type since Preston Sturges when it comes to film. Throughout late twentieth-century film, there is more a feeling of nostalgia for these characters rather than any sort of modern class change. The character type has changed, to be sure, but television, not film, changed the character type more than any other medium—something discussed briefly in the Epilogue.

Despite the lack of change, it is clear that film, the new popular medium of the early Twentieth Century, greatly influenced the way audiences thought about stereotypes. For this reason, I think it is important now to discuss a Victorian adaptation of a play to a film in order to show how film itself changes character types. In previous chapters, I have discussed how the audience is one of the main changers of the characters. Who goes to the movies changes the way people think about the movies themselves. This chapter focuses on the medium itself and its own ability to change a character type; hence, it is a more film-focused chapter.
Film adaptations are difficult at best. No major film auteur has ever achieved auteur status by doing adaptations except Hitchcock. To have complete control of a film means the auteur has to have a completely original idea. Yet an adaptation is, at times, one of the best ways to see the minute changes in a character type, since a Victorian play adapted to a modern audience shows how certain cultural issues have changed over time. Moreover, focusing on an English film director will also show how the American stereotype has affected its origins.

The Verbal Phipps

To look clearly at the changes in character type, an adaptation of Oscar Wilde’s *An Ideal Husband* will be the text for this chapter. Being one of the first texts to define this type, Wilde’s play set to film will put the butler up to the hardest test, since the film will have to maintain a Victorian feel while making sure it is not so foreign to the modern viewer. The sense of nostalgia is still acute to be sure, yet Oliver Parker’s 1999 film is an interesting amalgamation of Victorian ideals and postmodern twists.

Parker’s adaptation will comment on domestic service not only in the Victorian world—as discussed in the first chapter of this thesis—but also on the freeing changes taken place since then. From the world of words to the world of postmodern images, the idea of the butler has changed. For Wilde, image was important, but the words were of particular importance for the butler in his play and it is the words in this play that will be the beginning focus of this chapter. However, for the late twentieth-century audience, the butler may get more things to say, but how he conducts himself visually makes all the difference in regards to the butler character type.
In questioning the role of the English male servant in Wilde’s comedy, it is necessary to discuss the role of this particular English male servant during this period more than the first chapter of this thesis. As a result, this chapter will have two parts. First, the many issues tied to the few lines Phipps gets to speak in the play, lines too dated for today’s audience to fully understand, will be of important note here. Then, I will discuss the verbal-to-visual crossover in the film adaptation and how Parker manages to change Phipps’ *bon mots* into visual witticisms, how he uses Phipps as a crossover for the audience, and how he essentially treats Phipps the same way Lord Goring does in the original play. Essentially, the enigmatic butler of Wilde’s play has a little more character in the film but an even greater amount of ambivalence in regards to the various social issues surrounding the Victorian period.

Such issues like love, loyalty, and morality were really the issues of the day. Harold Orel in *The World of Victorian Humor* stated that this century was a century “[…] of Great Issues […] discussions of these issues were humane and dignified, conceived with a social and ethical bias” (3). Oscar Wilde discusses these issues in depth in *An Ideal Husband*, yet not in any way dignified or humane. Rather, Wilde sought to parody all the moral codes of his time and he does this from the very beginning of the play.

This play opens up at a dinner party given by Sir Robert Chiltern and his wife. Among the beginning amoral repartees, the audience finds itself meeting with Mrs. Cheveley. This *femme fatale* instantly tries to bribe Sir Robert in an attempt to support an Argentine canal scheme and get the London government to do the same. Her weapon: a letter Sir Robert wrote once to an old mentor concerning government secrets—an act that gave him his wealth and prominence in the political sphere and the information of
which would now ruin him. The outwardly moral Sir Robert instantly promises his support of the scheme, anything to keep his old letter a secret. Unfortunately, Sir Robert’s wife Gertrude begs him to change his mind again. Lady Chiltern cannot possibly accept a man whose morals are not of the highest standards and Sir Robert ends up having to choose between a public scandal and the wife he adores.

Meanwhile, Lord Goring—the dandy of the play and therefore the hero above all other heroes, has found a diamond brooch at the party. With Miss Mabel (Sir Robert’s sister) he conceals it, telling Mabel he knows who the owner is, but must keep it a secret that he found it for a while. Lord Goring obviously knows Mrs. Cheveley, and the audience gets some slight hint of her involvement with Lord Goring and the diamond brooch.

The second act continues Sir Robert’s problems. In Sir Robert’s morning room the next day, Sir Robert confesses his past to his friend Lord Goring and begs for his advice. It is not what Sir Robert wants to hear. Lord Goring insists he tell his wife everything and that spouses should not keep secrets from each other. At Sir Robert’s fear of doing so, the conversation turns to Lord Goring’s past engagement to Mrs. Cheveley. Despite the personal knowledge of her, Lord Goring can do little to help Sir Robert in figuring out what to do about the old letter she possesses. As Sir Robert leaves, his wife enters and like her husband, wants Lord Goring’s advice about her marriage and Robert’s strange activities. Lady Chiltern is, like her husband, surprised at Lord Goring’s remarks, since he spouts to her notions of charity and forgiveness—both of which she does not understand. At his seriousness, the newly entered Mabel baulks—seriousness is entirely boring. After a brief witty repartee, Lord Goring departs.
Several conversations at this point start. Finally, Mrs. Cheveley herself comes to visit and tells Lady Chiltern everything about Sir Robert’s past. Shocked by her husband’s amoral beginnings, Gertrude spurns Robert and he in turn spurns her fake love and departs. Mrs. Cheveley has done what she wanted: punish Gertrude for being the self-righteous woman that she is.

Act III follows Lord Goring and his consternation concerning his friends. Set within his home, the scene starts with him primping at the mirror with his butler Phipps at his side. Phipps at this point gives Lord Goring a note received early that afternoon by Gertrude. Gertrude does not put Lord Goring’s name on top, but ambiguously alludes to her needing him and wanting to come and visit that night. Lord Goring tells Phipps to let in a woman (whom he does not name), and goes about primping. This is the one moment when Phipps says a witty *bon mot*. While discussing the lower classes and how they always have relatives dying, Phipps responds that this is indeed a blessing. Ironically, the doorbell rings, and Lord Goring’s demanding father walks in, discussing the importance of marriage. While Goring is talking to his father the doorbell rings again and Phipps, assuming the woman at the door is the one Goring expects, welcomes in Mrs. Cheveley instead of Lady Chiltern. The ever-thieving Mrs. Cheveley hides in a room right before Sir Robert enters. Goring’s good intentions come to no good end as Sir Robert finds Mrs. Cheveley listening to their conversation later.

As Sir Robert storms out, Mrs. Cheveley starts her new bribery scheme. She will give Lord Goring Sir Robert’s compromising letter if Goring promises to marry her. Yet Goring has one up on her. Goring takes out the diamond brooch found at the party and slaps it on Mrs. Cheveley’s wrist, explaining that it is really a bracelet with a secret clasp.
that only the owner of the bracelet—Lord Goring’s relative—knows about. Goring knows that Mrs. Cheveley is a thief and threatens her with prison. Mrs. Cheveley’s thieving past comes back to haunt her and she instantly gives Sir Robert’s old letter to Goring in exchange for her freedom from the bracelet and a charge of stealing. While Goring destroys the letter, Mrs. Cheveley grabs Lady Chiltern’s letter and vehemently promises that she will ruin the Chiltern’s marriage as a consequence for her not getting what she wants.

The passionate Act III dissolves into mutual love and understanding in Act IV. Receiving the letter by mail, Sir Robert—who has just denounced the Argentine canal scheme in Parliament—assumes the letter is for him, not for Lord Goring and the two Chilterns reunite. Despite some rocky patches, both Robert and his wife learn forgiveness, and in the process consent to Lord Goring marrying Miss Mabel. In the end, the ideal husband is not wanted. Instead, Mabel gets the man of her dreams rather than her ideal, and the Chilterns realize that forgiveness is essential to any marriage.

The role of Phipps in this play is slight at best. For Wilde he was the ideal butler, yet the audience knows nothing of Phipps. He is too small a character for even the audience to learn exactly what the ideal butler is. Instead, the audience gets one witty remark, several “yes, sir” lines, and a jumbled house of unexpected guests. In film, this slight role probably cannot be greatly enhanced. As discussed previously, the face in film is ambiguous (see the chapter on City Lights). To add to this idea Ian Jarvie in “Citizen Kane and the Essence of a Person” explains that, “People naively suppose there are hidden clues to the whole essence of a person which, when disclosed and deciphered, reveal all. In truth, a person is an enigma […] and things which seem to be clues can
equally well be dead ends” (270). If Jarvie is right and character can never be known, how does anyone go about understanding a person in a text let alone a character who never speaks and never is seen, like a butler, or how do you define a character by who is an enigma and who is not? This chapter does not answer these questions, but utilizes them as a means to discuss not the character, but the position a character is in socially.

At this point, Oscar Wilde’s comedic plays stand out as an unusually different text in relation to the butler, especially his play *An Ideal Husband*. Unlike the other descriptions of the characters, Wilde’s description of Phipps the butler is a non-description—a series of sentences that are as vague as the character itself.

The distinction of Phipps is his impassivity. He has been termed by enthusiasts the Ideal Butler. The Sphinx is not so incommunicable. He is a mask with a manner. Of his intellectual or emotional life, history knows nothing. He represents the dominance of form. (169)

While Wilde physically describes all the other characters, their clothing, and even pairs a painter who would wish to paint them, the reader—for only the reader gets this kind of description in the play—gets no identifiable traits when it comes to Phipps. In fact, what form is Wilde talking about here? Who are the enthusiasts that think Phipps is ideal? Why compare him to a fictional, even mythical creature? Does Wilde even know the personality behind the mask? Could this description be ironic since Phipps lets out a very witty *bon mot* on the next page—a sentence that hardly acknowledges his mask-like

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11 Wilde’s play *An Ideal Husband* is principally a reader’s text rather than an audience’s text. Wilde’s excessive descriptions and emphasis on words over image makes the play more of a play in a book rather than a play suited for the stage. There are a number of dramatic elements in the play that are important while being staged. Yet because of the readable nature of the text, it is essential to note that this paper focuses on the play as a written text rather than as a viewed text.
incommunicability? Would not John Singer Sargent, or even England’s own Charles Samuel Keene be at least mildly interested in him as a model?

Whoever the enthusiasts or the painters unwilling to strike up a brush, this description is at least the Victorian ideal concerning a butler—he is invisible, quiet, and carries no essence of fashion with him—a huge faux pas if you are Wilde. He is a Sphinx, not really a real being, but existing as a position society forces on him. Everyone in this play, as Jarvie says, is an enigma—nothing but paintings instead of real people. Yet Phipps is even lower than this since he is not even real enough to be a painting. There is no representational quality to Phipps. Instead of being an image, Phipps is what the upper classes have molded him to be—a mask without a face to hang itself on. Wilde seems to get the stereotype pretty true to form and by so doing, degrades Phipps and acknowledges him as lower than the rest of the characters.

Yet Wilde’s understanding of high society and anti-Victorian mentality may be the culprit as well as the redeeming quality here. Wilde’s own entrance into high society connects him intricately to the two things that set butlers apart from everyone else: their clothes and their speech. While Wilde’s witty *bon mots* are the things people associate him with now, his image actually made him famous. Wilde’s eccentric clothing style gave Gilbert and Sullivan an opportunity to satirize him in *Patience*, which suddenly vaulted Wilde into the popular sphere, as Simon Callow explains in his book *Oscar Wilde and His Circle* (10). Because of this experience, Wilde understood the importance of clothes and the control people had because of their fashion or the suppression of fashion in others. By suppressing Phipps’ image and never mentioning his clothes, Wilde could be satirizing the upper classes over-emphasis of clothing in general, or he could just be
suppressing Phipps along with the rest of the Victorian upper crust—readers may never know. The only thing we do know is Wilde understood the power of clothing and used it throughout his works.

To further this ambivalence, Wilde gives Phipps an opportunity for reality through his second claim to fame—the witty remark. As Goring acknowledges the extraordinary amount of lower classes that lose family members to death, Phipps kicks out the statement, “Yes, my lord! They are extremely fortunate in that respect” (170). As shocking as this is for Goring, who gives a glance and a “Hum” in the direction of the impassive Phipps afterwards, it is confusing to the viewer since such statements could never come from the butler, not to mention an ideal one like Phipps. This essentially takes us back to one of the questions posed previously: could Phipps’ description be an ironic parody? This is likely since the first description of Phipps—his impassivity—is the mask he wears as he says the witticism.

However, there is probably more to this. Without the above reason, there could be three reasons for having Phipps say such a thing. First, Wilde just wanted to throw another shocking phrase out for the guffawing audience to enjoy. As much as this is possible, it is unlikely since the rest of Wilde’s witticisms maintain thoughtful positions throughout the rest of the text, as Michael Gelven points out in his chapter on Lord Goring in, *Truth and the Comedic Art* (see pages 38-40). Second, this witty remark is a tragic telling of how Phipps does not have his own language. He is essentially using Goring’s language because he cannot use his own. Third, Phipps uses witty remarks as a way to subvert the social order—a type of tricksterism where Phipps uses the upper
classes’ own witty weapon on them as a way to make a social comment without punishing consequences.

A mixture of the second and third reason is the most probable. As Gelven remarks, “The spirit behind these witticisms is a crucial dramatic element in the play, for taken too seriously they undermine morality, taken too lightly they beguile us into winking at their damage” (38, his emphasis). Instead of an absurd joke or just a tragic comment, the witty remark can be a layered social comment that only a few audience members of the time would understand as being both tragic and comic. By doing this, Wilde is giving some social freedom to Phipps by giving him a voice.

Yet, this voice is not Phipps’—it is Lord Goring’s voice. In a strange look at a narcissist, the audience does not see two people on the stage, but one. Lord Goring talks to himself and receives his own ideas from the one person who maintains his position in society, his butler Phipps. In addition, the freedom given to Phipps in this statement is slight; it is just a five-minute break from the Victorian code. It is just one sentence. In a whole four-act play, Phipps is a star for a brief moment in the third Act and then the mask comes on again. He maintains the liminal sphere and the social order. In addition, if he is the trickster I have described him to be above, then as a trickster, he has to maintain the class orders he is tricking in order to stay a trickster. And of course, this is exactly what he does. Phipps maintains an impassive stare at Lord Goring and even turns “a cold, glassy eye on Harold [the footman], who at once retires”—both characteristics of an ideal butler who manages to be readily passive towards the upper classes while still maintaining uppity control over the lower servants (175).
The dramatic happenings of the play also tend to put Phipps in his place. Act III with the entrance of Phipps also is the entrance of absolute mayhem in Goring’s life. During this act’s first scene, letters are stolen, women are put in the wrong rooms, listening at keyholes occurs, and Goring himself loses his honor by lying—something Phipps does nonchalantly for him whenever Goring requires it of him. In fact, Phipps seems to be the typically befuddled butler at this point as he receives a command from his master, follows it through, but by doing so gets his master into loads of trouble. Unlike the butlers in *The Importance of Being Earnest* who are the only characters that see everything that is going on, Phipps does not see anything taking place before his eyes; he only does his job (Raby 48). As ideal as his description is, Phipps is no help to anyone except Wilde who needed a bumbling servant to further the movement of his play.

Therefore, despite the relative freedom in one witty remark, Phipps in *An Ideal Husband* creates more ambivalence on the side of conforming to social constraints than freeing himself from them. He maintains the social code and role of the Victorian butler because he maintains a mask of unimportant, nonexistent clothing and silence in both speech and personality. Although a trickster figure, his one remark does nothing to further the changes of societal constraints on him. Rather his nature and social rules conform him to be unhelpful to Goring and a snob to the other help. While Wilde uses Goring as a means of overcoming puritanical constraints on Victorian morality, Phipps’ questionably moral position satirizes the Victorian domestic world, but stands at the margins of the play, and never resolves the liminal issues surrounding him.

The Visual Phipps
If Phipps’ only link to a possible freedom from his social constraints is one line in Wilde’s play, how do you cross that over to a film produced one century after the play opened at the Haymarket Theater? With the change of time has come the change of language, and Phipps’ snide remark does not pack the punch that it would have in 1894. In order to get around this issue, Oliver Parker has taken one aspect of freedom over the other—Phipps is now visually free in rare moments of his film instead of verbally free for one sentence. However, along with the visual comes a distinct new side to the ambiguity of the social issue—an ambiguity more centered on the audience itself rather than the upper class characters that surround Phipps.

Before delving right into the visible nature of Phipps, the changes in this film are of interest. Such plot devices as stolen brooches and old ladies bemoaning their boring husbands could never have gone over with a modern audience—and the ending all together seems just too perfectly and too quickly laid before the audience. In an effort to make the play accessible and not so foreign, Oliver Parker left out the brooch and old women and completely revamped the ending. The film’s ending is more postmodern and strikingly intense. In place of the brooch is a bet between Goring and Mrs. Cheveley. If Sir Robert claims the Argentine canal scheme as honorable before Parliament, Goring must marry Mrs. Cheveley. If he roundly denounces it, he is off the hook. Of course, Sir Robert denounces it, and Goring can rest—but only for a moment. Mrs. Cheveley has still sent off Gertrude’s letter in the hopes of destroying the Chiltern marriage.

It is in the final act where the film becomes very modern. Instead of a perfect ordering of the characters, there comes a series of unusual coincidences, which although false, alter the attitudes of the characters. Sir Robert does not assume the letter is for him,
yet when Miss Mabel comes up with the most far-fetched coincidences offhand she mollifies her brother, and he only then thinks the letter really is for him. Moreover, the apparent amorality of all the characters comes into play. The deviousness of Mabel, the paranoia of Sir Robert, and the lying tongue of Gertrude all come off stronger than the original play. All the characters seem more tainted. And even when everything raps up, the audience never gets to hear Gertrude explain her lies; it only gets to see Sir Robert’s uncomfortable response that she has lied about her letter to Lord Goring. Of course, everything works out and Goring and Mabel get married, but there is still a shot of poor Tommy Trafford who has lost his one love Mabel. Truly, the film ends with things unresolved and strange twists of fate that put the characters into their ending positions.

Despite the modernity of the conclusion, there is something entirely nostalgic about the film as well. One of the best-researched films I have ever seen, Parker’s amazing sets and hidden Victorian icons are enough to let a good Victorian know that Parker did his homework when it came to the late Victorian period. Whistler and his mother at the Grosvenor Gallery (a Gallery one could only get into by invitation), a green carnation for Lord Goring, large oriental vases, marbles surrounding Baron Arnheim, even *The Importance of Being Earnest* played behind the characters and Wilde coming out to give the speech he gave after the first opening of *Lady Windermere’s Fan* all contribute to a film expressing the paradoxical morality and hedonism of the age. Parker explodes his film with images as gaudy as the Victorian era itself, making the careful observer comfortable with the adaptation in regards to the objects seen on film. At least on the outset, Parker tries to express visually what Wilde expressed verbally concerning his Victorian age and therefore a nostalgic feeling comes off the screen. A time when the
rich were perfectly idle, the language imaginative, and the characters were of course funny and boisterous—it seems as if the screwball comedy came right from Oscar Wilde himself.

For an adaptation, this is extremely important. Joy Gould Boyum in “The Filmmaker as Reader” says that, “The filmmaker must also find strategies through which to transform the purely verbal materials of the written text into the primarily visual matter of the film” (79). If a good adaptation is one who can do this while maintaining the purpose of the text, then Parker has a good start, even if his adaptation is from a play rather than a novel. A play may be visual, but as Bruce Morrissette says, “[...] at the very least, film affects the spectator in a distinct fashion not to be confused with the effects of the witnessing of a stage play” (“Aesthetic Response to Novel and Film” 14). Parker’s understanding of the difference between play and film is easily recognizable throughout the film. In fact, he visually plays with the audience—switching between camera angles and movements that depict a play, as well as a film. For example, he positions the cameras over the shoulder of other characters or off to the side of various tableaux, as one would see a play. Yet, at the same time, he also uses a hand-held camera at particular moments in the film so the audience gets a sense of being in a movie theater or in the film itself, rather than several feet away from a stage.

Despite Parker’s ability to emphasize the visual, Phipps poses a distinct problem. First, as mentioned before, Phipps’ witty words do not imply the social issues at work in the modern age. Second, Phipps’ character is impossible to depict visually since he has no description—he essentially is nobody. Third, the issues of the serving class are not as
potent anymore. Mark Burnett in *Masters and Servants* brings out a good point when he states,

Servants are still in existence but they are rarely in evidence since they generally live independently from their employers and are permanently recruited only by a fraction of the population. Such a state of affairs would have been inconceivable in early modern England where service played a vital part in the economy and constituted one of the main sources of employment. (1)

All of these problems receive answers simultaneously in the very first edit cut of the film. Phipps opens the film out to the audience and stands out as the first character seen in the film—quite close to the camera and on the left side of the frame—a more visually powerful side than the right according to the rule of three (for further positions of Phipps in the frame, see Appendix E). Just as Burroughs’ close-up shot begins the adventures of Sullivan, so does Phipps essentially begin the adventures of this film and thereby become a sort of all-knowing figure introducing the film as he reads off important information to Lord Goring from the newspaper. It is therefore obvious that this is a period piece since Phipps is at home there at Goring’s rather than his own home, and if this is a little odd for the modern audience, at least he stands almost narrator-like to help the audience in understanding the story.

He is essentially there for the audience, not for Goring. Moreover, Parker does not destroy Phipps’ invisible character by the full-on view of Peter Vaughan since the stereotypical mask of an old butler in black, which Vaughan wears so smartly, stands before the audience. Finally, by dropping Phipps’ *bon mot* and giving him visual power, Parker switches freedoms in a way that still maintains the power of the play. Phipps’
verbal control of language, apparent in the play, switches over to a Phipps who stands unabashedly in front of the film (as a mirror) and even prims in the mirror by the fourth sequence—thereby caring for looks and specifically clothes. Parker ingeniously moved the powerful effect of the *bon mot* to Phipps’ clothing habits.

Not only does this technique represent the subverting witticism of the play, it also parallels the play nicely when it comes to Goring’s ambivalent control over Phipps. Throughout the film, Goring is repeatedly standing as a voyeur of himself in front of his hall mirror with Phipps standing by readily willing to hear all of the self-love adages spewing from Goring’s mouth. As Goring leaves the mirror, Phipps walks to the place where Goring is and prims just like his master. Just like the sentence that constituted Goring’s language in Phipps’ mouth, this moment is also a Lord Goring moment. We may get Phipps with his façade down, but what stands in the place of the old butler is nothing more than his master—making the master the man behind the mask just as he was the master behind the *bon mot*. Parker therefore gives the film just as much political force concerning social class as the play does. Although some movie critics may berate Parker by the lack of Phipps’ remark, he integrated the power of the remark very well into the film visually—with the same power it originally had in the nineteenth century.

However, unlike the play, I believe that Parker goes on to give Phipps a little more freedom—a freedom that gives him character and personality, but still ambiguously deals with the issue of social class. First, Phipps is in the film at three different points as opposed to the play’s one moment. As Phipps comes into the frame more and becomes more of an integrated character, he becomes an empathetic character by the third act in the film instead of the unhelpful brute expressed in the play. Phipps seems to be the
reliably good servant, a kind Phipps—who takes verbal licks from his master and adorably prims in the mirror—the audience is more likely to give the extremely old man empathy by the third act instead of marginality.

Second, Phipps controls the beginning of the film—the establishing shot is of Phipps raising the curtain of the frame, not Goring or anyone else. What is more, Phipps is the only person given a voice-over in the film, it is again at the establishing point of the film, the second through the six edit cut where the audience is given a glimpse of the Chilterns (Appendix F goes through these edit cuts step by step in order to view the power Phipps has on the camera). This is a large acquisition for a butler, and it connects him to the more powerful audience—the audience who is there to laugh at all the other characters in the film.

If anything, Phipps is the liminal crossover between the audience and film—the connecting character that gives the audience an inside look into the Victorian world. His gaze begins the film, and his gaze is of the greatest import by Act III when Lord Goring’s home becomes the site of mayhem. Phipps’ reaction shots (about five shots total) controls the emotions and intelligence of the audience during this time. Like the play, his ignorant bumbling produces the movement of the plot, but his visual reactions to the mistakes also move the emotion along in the film—giving his character greater power over the audience up to this point. Like Muggsy, we see him looking at people and being the only one to recognize potential problems before they arise. He essentially becomes the site of looking, which is a very powerful site to be.

The camera movement visually enhances this, since the hand-held camera usually follows or stops with Phipps or Harold the footman during this part of the film. Instead
of stopping with Goring, Caversham, Chiltern, or even Mrs. Cheveley, the movements of
the servants send the camera either spinning around the room or stopping to notice
Phipps’ look of confusion. Their responses control the camera and therefore the audience
in the moment of greatest mayhem.

This is not to say that Phipps is more powerful in the film than Lord Goring is.
Quite the opposite, since Goring is the main character of the film whose reaction shots
also move the emotions of the audience. In fact, as Laura Mulvey notes in her article
“Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” Goring is the screen surrogate for the audience.
To explain what she means, she states that people usually gain pleasure from a film by,

[…] structuring the film around a main controlling figure with whom the spectator
can identify. As the spectator identifies with the main male protagonist, he
projects his look onto that of his like, his screen surrogate, so that the power of the
male protagonist as he controls events coincides with the active power of the
[audience’s] look […] (310)

Mulvey’s point, that the male protagonist is the powerful character in the film, is not
wrong—especially in this case. Goring is just as much a part of the establishing shot as
Phipps and his reactions to the mayhem in Act III are just as dominant if not more so (and
there are about five reaction shots of his as well). Yet Goring’s gaze does not control
Phipps as strongly as in the play, and when Goring is heckling his Dad about marriage,
Phipps’ gaze is the look the audience identifies with. Phipps does not take over the
dominant role, but he does share it. When Goring is not there, Phipps becomes the
pseudo-screen surrogate that the audience can laugh through to the other characters. In a
large sense, they are equal, for not only do they both have five reaction shots, but also the audience finds access into the film through both of their eyes.

Conclusively, Phipps seems to have more power in the film than in the play. He graces the film three times, he has the visual freedom of being front and center in the frame, he shares in the control of the movement and emotion of the film at a crucial juncture, and he has the power to primp just like his master. More importantly, he has a personality and a brain—enough to have reaction shots and merrily fix his bowtie in the mirror while his master is out. Although it took a century for the personality of a butler to show itself in Wilde’s text, it was well worth the wait.

Yet, is there still somewhat of an ambiguous control over Phipps? He may have gained a personality, but he has now gained the awkward position of being the tool of a filmmaker over a writer. As the visual key necessary to look inside Goring’s home, the whole audience now has the power to control Phipps’ gaze. The power of manipulation is no longer just in the hands of Goring or Parker. As Mulvey notes,

There are three different looks associated with cinema: that of the camera as it records the performed filmic event, that of the audience as it watches the final product, and that of the characters at each other within the screen illusion. The conventions of narrative film deny the first two and subordinate them to the third, the conscious aim being always to eliminate intrusive camera presence and prevent a distancing awareness in the audience. 314

In order to eliminate the intrusive nature of a camera, Parker places Phipps in a position to take the full blast of the audience’s voyeur-like power. The hand-held camera always hovering around Phipps is now the audience that moves Phipps to the left or right, brings
Phipps into the foreground, or rack-focuses him in and out of obscurity. Parker may have given Phipps the power to be like the audience and manipulate the audience through emotion and empathy, but since he cannot fully be the audience, the audience can control him as well, more so than at any point in the original play. Without truly knowing it, the audience becomes the upper class snobs that originally denied the butler any sort of entrance into a position in society by relegating once again into a liminal sphere. A change has taken place in the role and position of the butler—especially since he is given more of a personality—but the change is a conservative, ambivalent change that gives freedom, but at the same time binds the butler to other constraints.

Instead of making Phipps a trickster or a father, Oliver Parker in his adaptation gave Phipps a visible personality that packs the same amount of power into his subversive role without the tricky witticism. Parker also gives Phipps a freedom of moment and visual dominance. However, the medium still manages to subvert what Phipps does. By making Phipps the lens through which the audience sees, Parker once again conservatively upholds the social structure since Phipps is still a façade. He becomes a character not meant to be a character enjoyed in the film, but rather a character manipulated by the audience in order to get a glimpse at the major characters surrounding him. He may be more personable in the film, but he is still marginal and unknown to the audience. In fact, all butlers seem to be enigmas. We have no idea where the butler in Chaplin is from, Burroughs never fully explains how he knew about the poor, and Muggsy’s background consists of nothing more than Hopsi's father taking him off a truck. Phipps is certainly no different from them—he has no past.
Nor do any of these butlers really have a future, at least in real life. The idea and dominance of the historical butler has faded—butlers are too rare in modern life. At the beginning of this thesis, I noted that the character type eventually frees the real domestic male servant. In many cases, it did. With the advent of Preston Sturges’ wise, father figures came the welcome of the domestic servants into the middle class. It was then in the 1940s that domestic workers unions actually started to work, and all servants became franchised. Despite the new freedoms, butlers still assumed an iconic image of upper class ease. Butlers may have moved from the scapegoat to the empathetic, all-seeing father figure, but they certainly did not escape their role as a visual symbol of upper class dominance by the beginning of the 1940.
Epilogue: Changing Still

Much has changed since Preston Sturges—and the popularity of film in America. The father figures that took up a sphere of the big screen soon gained an even greater sphere in the realm of the small screen. This thesis is solely meant to focus on early twentieth-century film; yet in conclusion, it is important to see where the stereotype goes as the century wears on. To see how much the film industry helped the butler, it is a good thing to see the final result—and that result goes far beyond empathetic father figures.

While film started to gain more intellectual import, classes became more and more interested in spending their time in front of the television. As Sklar notes, now it was even more ironic that the theatrical medium had achieved respectability and an audience of the educated and affluent, while the home-entertainment medium was on its way to becoming an almost universal possession of Americans of all races, nationalities, and economic classes. (276)

Television’s viewers, from all classes, saw a dramatic change in the butler as it moved from the big screen to the little. Much like the father-butler in Sullivan’s Travels, Mr. Belvedere’s butler explored the father-figure stereotype even more. This 1980s character was the wise, all-knowing sage in this series and took an even greater part in the lives of the other characters. Although irresolutely English, Mr. Belvedere, like Jeeves, faced American troubles squarely on and with a stiff upper lip, carrying his—shall we say family—through sibling rivalries, burglaries, lustful old women, and even tornadoes.
Unlike *Sullivan’s Travels*, the Butler was not just the father figure, but the leading role in a series squarely fixed in middle-class America, stressed by the location of this series—the very middle of America. The Butler now had not only a role in upper class and no-class genres, but also in the middle class genre in a middle-class medium. The icon essentially graduated into middle class mores for good. *Mr. Belvedere* gave the Butler a chance to be therefore middle class. He was, like Phipps in Parker’s adaptation, the medium through which the viewers could view their own lives and say what they wanted to say.

In the middle class world that *Mr. Belvedere* created, the butler evolved again. Early 1990’s shows like *The Nanny* and *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* also staffed butlers. Yet unlike *Mr. Belvedere*, these butlers once again found themselves in upper class homes. Back in this world of the upper class, the stereotype evolved into a character that tended to express middle class opinions and mores. Instead of the wise, quiet sage, these butlers were the cheeky verbal tricksters that grounded the other characters in reality. Much akin to the little man of the middle-class who had no money and therefore relied on those who were rich, these butlers were able, in their position, to say anything—verbally poking fun of upper class superficiality and pomposity while maintaining middle class views of morality. *Mr. Belvedere’s* influence on the character type now gave other butlers the freedom of speech in attacking their own employers, and they used this power frequently—once again culturally looting other character types and adding to their father figure positions in their various families.
However, this change to a more little man character type does not release all of the constraints on a butler. Unlike *The Lady Eve*’s valet, the butler in *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* may poke fun of his employers, but he still must be English. He has the right to speak, but he remains constrained to Western linguistic roots—having an English accent instead of an American one as well as still using a very formal approach in speaking. *The Nanny*’s butler Nigel did the same. Irresolutely English, Nigel remains completely other, different in that his accent is nothing like that of Ms. Fine’s New York inflection.

America at least—Hollywood of course—still cannot accept the butler as its own. He remains an anachronism, an outsider that may have found his way into the American belief of free speech, yet still is irresolutely other by the way he speaks. The middle class may watch him from their small screens, may use him as the mouthpiece of their values and mores, but he still remains something from the past—some character who still strives for Victorian formality and decorum despite American culture he has been looting throughout the decades.

Throughout this thesis, the liminal figure of the butler takes on many shapes—being multivalent by attracting to itself many different functions in order to survive between the classes. In Chaplin’s *City Lights*, he was the human, fallible enemy of the American individual. In Sturges’ films, he evolved into a wise man and father. As time wore on, he became the sight the audience used to see other characters. No matter what image he took to himself, he was still somehow more human and therefore freer as the character type continued to evolve—thereby giving him enough voice for people to hear and allow real butlers a chance to build unions and have a voice not only on film, but also in the real world of class struggle and conflict. In a world where Ask.com has retired Jeeves from their logo, butlers may seem extinct; yet they are not, not yet at least. The moment of extinction for a butler is the moment he has total freedom and this has not happened yet.
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APPENDIX A


Black Heath, April 15 1836.

Butler. Is answerable that all Men Servants perform their duties with alacrity, care & diligence. He is to see that the Great Doors at the Entrance are kept shut, & that the Wicket is off the latch before dusk. That all the Doors & Windows are fast & the fires are safe at night—That all is quiet below stairs & that the Men Servants are in bed before him every night. He has the care of Mr. Newdigate’s clothes and waits on him. He keeps the cellar Slate & the inventories.

He lays the Cloth & takes up the Parlour Breakfast & Waits
-He must hold himself in readiness to answer the House & Door Bells without delay. He attends the first on the ground floor till 2 o’clock p.m. and when the Footman is out on duty
-He sees that the Coal Box in the School Room is filled in the morning to last the day. He attends to the Cisterns & Fountain when the water comes on, & observes that the supply comes in regularly, & that none of the ball cocks are fast. He also attends to the Hot Water Pipes & keeps them supplied with water (about once per Week) when required &c. He observes that the circulation of Hot Water is regular throughout in about ½ hours after the fire is made.

[…] Mr. Newdigate earnestly hopes that all the Servants will pay particular attention to their language and manners it being quite Impossible that a Servant can be agreeable [sic] without a civil & obliging manner particularly where Ladies are concerned.

*When a similar list of duties was prepared in 1833 it was noted:
‘The Butler in all things connected with the Establishment is considered the representative of the Master, and is to be obeyed as such. He is to keep order & Regularity in the Family, & is answerable that all the servants perform the duties allotted to them with care & diligence.’*
First scene with butler: As Millionaire brings Tramp home for first time
1. **Shot:** Long shot of living room of millionaire
**Location and Movement (LM):** Butler farthest from camera, comes in from door left and passes to right to open front door, then exits to open front door. Millionaire and Tramp come in from where he exits (back right).
**Interesting Points (IP):** Butler’s face has yet to turn to camera.
2. **Shot:** Medium-long shot in front of couch.
**LM:** Millionaire on left, Tramp on right. Butler walks in at right to take hat and cane of Tramp—at this point he is polite to the Tramp.
3. **Shot:** Medium-close of Millionaire and Butler.
4. Title card voice of Millionaire: “Any news?”—black screen with white lettering throughout.
5. Same as #3—Butler’s face slightly angled away from the camera.
6. Title card voice of Butler: “Only that your wife sent for her baggage, sir.”
**IP:** Only title card Butler receives—doubly mute the rest of the film, also he is the bearer of bad news.
7. Same as #3
8. Title card voice of Millionaire: “Good”
9. Same as #3
**IP:** First time the face of the Butler faces the camera.
10. **Shot:** Medium-long shot
**LM:** Camera angled slightly so that the Tramp is at right, but is closer to the camera; Butler walks behind Millionaire and Tramp (behind the couch).
11. **Shot:** Medium-close at sideboard
**LM:** Back of Millionaire facing the camera as he throws picture of his wife over his shoulder. Then Millionaire turns around to camera.
12. **Shot:** Medium-close back in front of the couch (as #10 shot).
**LM:** Millionaire comes forward to camera at left with alcohol. Tramp still at right.
13. Title card voice of Millionaire: “Here’s to our friendship”
14. Same as #12
15. **Shot:** Medium-close shot.
**LM:** Millionaire pours alcohol accidentally down Tramp’s pants.
16. **Shot:** Same as #12
**LM:** Millionaire goes back to sideboard for more alcohol while Tramp composes himself—camera moves so Tramp is in center at this time. Millionaire comes back—repositioning of camera to make both center. Once again, Millionaire moves back and camera tilts down as Tramp sits down on couch. Butler comes in right to “buff” up the couch and pantomimes for Tramp not to sit down, turns his back and continues to clean. Millionaire moves to sit down while Butler moves Tramp’s hand off him. Tramp gives Butler the glass and Butler moves out of shot right—turning his back to the camera as he walks out at right. Slight camera tilt as Millionaire sits down on couch.
IP: Audience sees more of the Butler's back than his face as Tramp jokes with the butler—literally the butt of the joke.

17. **Shot:** Long shot of living room  
**LM:** Butler, back turned to audience, stays right and walks back. Tramp half covers sitting Millionaire on left. Butler turns to face audience just once (literally one second) and goes over to sideboard, walking right to left, out of frame while Tramp in foreground does his drunk piano routine.

18. **Shot:** Medium shot of Millionaire  
**LM:** Millionaire gets up off the couch.

19. **Shot:** Same as #17  
**LM:** Millionaire walks to foreground and over to locked desk (at left).

20. **Shot:** Close-up of Millionaire  
**LM:** Millionaire pulls out a gun.

21. **Shot:** Same as #17  
**LM:** Millionaire moves left to right and into the center to kill himself. Tramp pulls gun away. At this moment, Tramp is at left, Millionaire at right. Gun goes off and Tramp goes back to couch in background while Millionaire goes to piano. Tramp gets off couch and walks up to right of Millionaire.

IP: Piano bench moves from location of last shot—one of the many examples of Chaplin not caring about continuity in filming.

22. **Shot:** Medium shot  
**LM:** Tramp at left and standing, Millionaire slightly in front and sitting at right—in front angle of piano.

23. **Title card of Millionaire:** “No, I’ll live!”

24. **Shot:** Same as #22  
**LM:** Surprised, Tramp goes to couch again. Millionaire goes to Tramp—camera following, while the Butler comes in from back left—out of focus and at a medium-long range from the camera.

25. **Title card of Millionaire:** “James—the Rolls-Royce. We’ll burn up the town!”

IP: This is the first mention of the name of the Butler, James.

26. **Shot:** Same as #23  
**LM:** Butler bows, but is only half seen, just the shoulder of the Butler. Butler walks out from left to right, then fade and end of scene.

IP: Butler walks in very straight lines

**Length of Time:** 4 minutes, 27 seconds  
**Time Butler is in shots:** 1 minute, 38 seconds.

**Points of Interest:** Nondiegetic music throughout, there is no particular motif for the Butler. Butler is expressionless and only becomes upset when Tramp tries to sit. Butler also looks at Millionaire and Tramp with an upturned nose as they drink—slight disapproval/annoyance in the face.
Second scene with Butler: Doorstep of Millionaire home

1. **Shot:** Establishing long shot
   **LM:** Doorstep of Millionaire home, Rolls-Royce rolls in from left to right (bounces in precariously).
2. **Shot:** Medium shot of doorstep.
   **LM:** Millionaire walks in left, back to audience. Tramp walks in afterward. Both turn to look left at Rolls-Royce.
3. **Title card of Tramp:** “I like your car.”
   **IP:** One of the few title card the Tramp gets in the movie.
4. **Shot:** Same as #2
5. **Title card of Millionaire:** “Then keep it, it’s yours.”
6. **Shot:** Same as #2
   **LM:** Tramp, back to audience, shakes Millionaire’s hand and Millionaire falls. Tramp falls with him. Camera tilts upward as Tramp stands up on top stair to ring doorbell. Camera then pans left as Butler, stoic-looking, opens the door. Butler is at left of the frame. Camera tilts down as Butler goes down to help Millionaire up. Camera pans left again as Tramp and Butler help Millionaire inside door. Butler is in front and at left. Butler enters door first and as Millionaire enters, Butler again comes to the door and shoves Tramp away. Butler shoves Tramp three consecutive times and closes door. Tramp remains not facing the audience, but the door.
   **IP:** The handling of the Tramp by the Butler is shockingly hard and unexpected. The added harshness comes from not only actions, but a swell in the undiegetic music as well.
7. **Shot:** Medium shot in entranceway.
   **LM:** Butler and Millionaire are in the entranceway. Butler is on the left and Millionaire is on the right. Butler is helping Millionaire towards chair. Butler’s face does not turn towards the camera.
8. **Shot:** Back to the end of #6: medium shot of Tramp at the door.
   **LM:** Tramp is looking at the door. Camera pans back down to right angle of door as Tramp turns to sit.
9. **Shot:** Medium-close shot.
   **LM:** Tramp is sitting and then sees someone walk past (the Blind Girl).
10. **Shot:** Medium shot at right of door.
    **LM:** Blind Girl walks left to right. Camera pans right as she does so—seeing the Tramp in the background on the steps. The camera stops on the Tramp as girl continues to walk by. Tramp stands and walks down, fixes his clothes.
    **IP:** Tramp fixes his clothes while Blind Girl walks by. Again, an issue of sight is important here for she does not see the Tramp, but the audience gets a visual indication that he is going to come up to her.
11. **Shot:** Medium shot back in entranceway.
    **LM:** Butler is standing at left (voice of reason) while Millionaire is sitting at right.
    **IP:** This is a rare time when the Butler stands as the superior of the two.
12. **Title card of Millionaire:** “Where’s my friend?”
13. **Shot:** Same as #11
    **LM:** Butler is pantomiming—audience assumes against the Tramp.
14. **Title card of Millionaire:** “Let him in, he’s my guest!”
15. **Shot:** Same as #11
LM: Millionaire will not listen and forces Butler to the door (Butler leaves at right).

IP: This is one of the few times the audience sees the Butler facing the camera, yet it is at the time when the Millionaire is exceedingly harsh to him (learning from the master). In addition, the Butler when speaking against the Tramp does not have a voice, only pantomime. Against the Tramp, there is no voice.

16. **Shot:** Medium shot of Tramp at right (still outside the door).

LM: Butler opens the door at top left walks down at left of Tramp and stays in side profile. He taps Tramp on the shoulder, Tramp turns around and Butler motions towards the door. Tramp looks at the Blind Girl (at this time out of the frame) and runs into the Millionaire’s house.

17. **Shot:** Medium shot in entranceway

LM: Millionaire is still sitting in entranceway. Tramp runs into frame from right and hugs Millionaire who is sitting.

18. **Title card of Tramp:** “Let’s buy some flowers.”

19. **Shot:** Same as #17

LM: Tramp runs out of frame, right and in the foreground.

20. **Shot:** Medium-long shot at doorstep

LM: Butler is still in profile on left again. Tramp comes out of door, down the steps and to the right. Butler walks down stairs with head turned to right to watch the Tramp.

21. **Shot:** Long shot

LM: Right pan as Tramp runs after Blind Girl.

22. **Shot:** Medium-close shot

LM: Girl turns around and remains at left as Tramp comes up on the right.

23. **Title card of Tramp:** “Here’s ten dollars.”

24. **Shot and LM:** Same as #22

25. **Title card of Blind Girl:** “I haven’t any change, sir.”

26. **Shot:** Same as #22

LM: Camera pans left as Tramp moves behind Blind Girl and is at left of her.

27. **Shot:** Long shot of street (like shot #21).

LM: Tramp, at left, takes Blind Girl’s basket and then takes her arm. Camera pans left as Tramp walks her to the front of the doorstep again.

28. **Shot:** Medium shot of doorstep

LM: Butler stands with hands on hips at open door. Rolls-Royce is in the foreground. Butler takes hands off hips, straightens his coat and stands tall with his eyes down as Tramp walks into frame from the left. Tramp and Blind Girl step in front of Butler and stop.

IP: Butler is, for a brief moment, in a casual stance, he is almost a normal person. However, at the arrival of the Tramp and the Blind Girl he goes back to his Butler-like pose. Once again, it is about sight. Although the Tramp and certainly the Blind Girl pay no attention to him, the audience sees the change in stance and takes note that the Butler is not at ease in the pose, it is not a natural pose for a human being.

29. **Title card for the Tramp:** “James!”

30. **Shot:** Same as #28

LM: Butler walks to left of Tramp

31. **Title card of Tramp:** “Take these inside; I’ll be right back.”

32. **Shot:** Same as #28
**LM:** Butler gives a quizzical look and then turns with the flowers. Butler walks to the door and then turns with flowers again. Camera pans to car door, butler is now at right, still looking on at the Tramp and the Blind Girl. Camera pans even more as girl gets in, Butler’s shoulder and shoe still in the back. Tramp sneaks behind the Blind Girl and into the car as Butler gets more in the frame, as if to help the Tramp get settled in the car, yet does not get so far.

33. **Shot:** Same as #1—establishing shot of the scene.

**LM:** Butler turns and walks into the door as Tramp and Blind Girl drive off at right.

**Length of Time:** 3 minutes, 45 seconds

**Time Butler is in shots:** 1 minute, 32 seconds.

**Third scene with Butler: The morning after going out on the town**

1. **Title card:** “The sober dawn awakens a different man”—circle fade out.
2. **Shot:** Establishing long shot of side of living room

**LM:** Millionaire is sleeping on the couch with the flowers. In background, butler and footman enter through the back door. Butler fixes the drapes at left as other servant walks right and out of frame.

3. **Shot:** Medium shot of couch

**LM:** Millionaire wakes up, confused at the flowers, he puts them down on the couch at right.

4. **Shot:** Long shot of front door

**LM:** Rolls-Royce rolls in from right and Tramp gets out.

**IP:** The Rolls-Royce pulls from right this time—mise-en-scène notes that there is something right now with this, a sign that the Millionaire is now in his right mind and will not accept the deviant character of the Tramp.

5. **Shot:** Medium shot of door

**LM:** Tramp walks up steps and to the door, back is towards the audience while he rings the bell.

6. **Shot:** Medium-long of the couch in living room

**LM:** Millionaire gets up from the couch and walks to the entranceway. His back is also towards the audience. While he is walking, the Butler, back and left, also enters and walks towards the entrance.

7. **Shot:** Medium shot.

**LM:** Butler at left and Millionaire at right, once again Butler is in profile.

8. **Title card of Millionaire:** “I’m out to everybody.”

9. **Shot:** Same as #7

**LM:** Butler walks behind Millionaire, angled back right, and to the door.

10. **Shot:** Medium long shot

**LM:** Butler is at left of door, angled right. Tramp at door, with back turned to audience. Butler opens door very quickly, Tramp tries to enter, gets door slammed in his face. Tramp has foot in the door, which the Butler quickly moves and shuts the door. Tramp rings again.

11. **Shot:** Same as #7

**LM:** Millionaire is at left now, as he is getting his senses back, Butler walks in from right, profile again.
12. Title card of Millionaire: “Whoever he is, get rid of him.”
13. Shot: Same as #7
LM: Millionaire exits backstage and up the stairs, Butler goes to door, exiting left, again.
14. Shot: Same as #10
LM: Butler opens door and pushes Tramp clear down the steps. Tramp goes up steps again; Butler pushes him down again. Tramp fakes and Butler falls down the stairs as Tram runs in the door. Butler runs after him.
15. Shot: Establishing shot of entrance
LM: Tramp enters front right (back facing the audience) and the Butler follows. Tramp fakes again and falls in chair on right side, stopping the Butler, pulls Tramp out of chair and leads him to the door.
16. Shot: Same as #10
LM: Butler pushes Tramp out of door and Tramp goes down the stairs. Butler literally kicks the Tramp out, being very forceful, and points away—pantomiming for the Tramp to leave. Butler closes the door and Charlie stands at the bottom of the steps…

Length of Time: 2 minutes, 48 seconds
Time Butler is in shots: 1 minute, 10 seconds

Fourth Scene with Butler: The morning after the party
2. Shot: Establishing shot of Millionaire’s bedroom.
LM: Millionaire and Tramp in bed: Tramp in foreground and bed is at right. Tramp gets up out of bed and walks front and right out of frame.
3. Shot: Medium shot
LM: Millionaire wakes up, turns over, and shows surprise at seeing the Tramp as Tramp moves front right into the frame and back into the bed. Millionaire gets out of bed. Camera pans up as Millionaire stands up and presses a button. Butler comes from the back right and moves right of the Millionaire. Millionaire pantomimes an explanation. Butler pantomimes back. Millionaire gestures to get rid of the Tramp. Both Millionaire and Butler walk out of frame to left as servant with breakfast cart walks in from back right. Camera slowly tilts down to the bed with the Tramp in it.
IP: The Millionaire’s gestures are rather rough when he pantomimes for the Butler to get rid of the Tramp. They are much like the gestures the Butler will use on the Tramp later—as if the Butler is modeling his behavior on how the Millionaire treats himself the Butler.
4. Shot: Medium-long shot of the bed.
LM: Butler walks back into the frame left to right to wake up the Tramp. Servant in the back moves right to left with the cart—the undiegetic music in the background is the Millionaire’s motif. Butler, in profile, literally moves Chaplin to sit up and then stand up. Camera pans left as Tramp takes things off the breakfast tray—Tramp being between the servants now as they try to save the food. Grapefruit juice is squeezed onto the Butler and then onto the other servant by the Tramp. Camera pans left and then right as Butler takes Tramp around the bed and out the back right exit. Millionaire walks into frame from left at the very end of this edit cut.
**IP:** The undiegetic music is of interest. It is the Millionaire’s not the Butler’s, but when the Butler is there, the music is playing—as if the Butler is just an extension of the Millionaire himself. This is a very Victorian notion.

5. **Shot:** Establishing shot of outer chamber, medium-long.

**LM:** There is a mirror dresser at left as Butler and Tramp walk in at back left—Butler literally dragging the Tramp. They both walk to center. Tramp sneaks out of pajama top to run back into bedroom. Butler runs back to him. The music is very playful—more for the Tramp. Butler brings Chaplin to front again—Tramp at left and Butler at right (Tramp in the position of power). Butler brings the Tramp’s clothes to him and throws them on the ground, hitting the toe of the Tramp. Tramp throws boot onto Butler’s toes to hurt him as well.

6. **Shot:** Medium shot of bedroom

**LM:** Millionaire is at right with breakfast tray and eating, servant remains back left with luggage.

7. **Shot:** Medium-close shot

**LM:** Servant is putting cruise-line stickers on trunks

8. **Shot:** Close-up shot of sticker: “Cunard Line to Europe”

9. **Shot:** Same as #7

**LM:** Servant is finishing up with the sticker.

10. **Shot:** Same as #6

**LM:** Millionaire still eating, he turns to talk to the servant over his shoulder. Camera pans left as Millionaire gets up and walks back to servant (ends up being left of servant).

11. **Title card of Millionaire:** “I’m sailing at noon, so hurry!”

12. **Shot:** Medium close shot

**LM:** Millionaire is at left and servant is kneeling at right. Millionaire’s back is to the audience while he moves out of the frame at left while servant finishes up. Servant then stands and exists at right.

13. **Shot:** Same as #5

**LM:** Tramp is taking a very slow time at dressing in front of the mirror. Butler is at right of Tramp, waiting. Tramp grabs things out of the Tramp’s hands and shoves Tramp’s hat and cane into the Tramp’s hands. Butler motions for the Tramp to exit and Tramp walks back and exits door left with the Butler following.

14. **Shot:** Long shot of living room

**LM:** People from the party are sleeping and just starting to wake up.

15. **Shot:** Long shot of stairs by front door

**LM:** Down the stairs walks the Tramp. Girl on couch motions for Tramp, so instead of going out the door as the Butler motions, Tramp walks to living room (medium-close shot now) to talk to the girl and get fruit. Butler walks behind him, grabs him by the collar, and takes fruit out of his hand. Tramp grabs more fruit and as they walk back to the door (to the right), Tramp tucks the fruit into his pants.

16. **Shot:** Downward angle of the doorstep (medium shot)

**LM:** Butler throws Tramp out and down the steps again, hard, pointing outward. Camera pans left as Tramp walks down the street. Fade out.

**Length of Time:** 2 minutes, 47 seconds

**Time Butler is in shots:** 1 minute, 32 seconds
Final scene with Butler: When the robbers enter the Millionaire’s home

1. Title card: “Still hoping to get money for the girl, he wandered the city.”
2. Shot: Long shot of street corner where there is a sign that says “Theatre” on the top left

LM: Tramp walks in from right, camera pans left as he gets to corner (so Tramp remains in the center of the frame). Tramp turns to walk away from camera as group of people walk towards the camera from the theater. Tramp keeps walking and stops at long shot.
3. Title card: “Back from Europe”
4. Shot: Medium-long shot of group of people.

LM: Millionaire, drunk again, plows through to the front of the group, slightly right of center. Tramp walks into frame at left. Millionaire recognizes him and they embrace. Tramp at left and Millionaire at right. They move left to open car door and get in. The music fades.
5. Shot: Fade in to long shot of Millionaire’s living room—the long shot angled towards the door.

LM: Two burglars walk into living room with flashlight (lights of course low). Camera pans to establishing shot of living room as they get to the couch. Light comes on and door opens left for Butler to go through and get the front door (left to right)—so doing, he turns on light and burglars hide behind couch and then move left to right to hide in the window drapes.
6. Shot: Close shot of burglars as they hide behind the drapes.

LM: Millionaire and Tramp walk in, followed by the Butler, who takes their hats and canes. Millionaire is at left, Butler is in the center, and Tramp is at right. Butler is still slightly rough to the Tramp. Butler exits back to door area (back right). Camera pans left as Millionaire and Tramp go to couch.
7. Shot: Medium-close shot of couch.

LM: Tramp is sitting on the couch while the Millionaire gets up and moves back left to get drinks. Entrance from right of Butler as Tramp lays back (you only see the Tramps face at this point). Butler leans down at left and offers the Tramp something to drink, the Tramp refuses. Butler gets up and exits at back as Millionaire walks in front of Tramp and sits down offering champagne. Tramp is left and Millionaire is on the right.
8. Title card of Millionaire: “Now don’t worry about the girl, I’ll take care of her.”
9. Shot: Same as #7 (sitting position)
10. Title card of Millionaire: “Will a thousand dollars be enough?”
11. Shot: Same as #9

LM: Millionaire gives Tramp the money.

LM: Burglars look out of the drapes towards the left (where the Millionaire and the Tramp are off frame).
13. Shot: Same as #9

LM: Tramp looks down and camera tilts to gun on the floor. As Tramp picks up the gun, the camera tilts back up to the original position.
14. Shot and LM: Same as #12
15. Shot: Same as #9
16. Shot: Same as #12
**LM:** One of the burglars goes out of frame to the left—towards the Millionaire and the Tramp who are off screen.

17. **Shot:** Longer shot of #9

**LM:** See burglar in the background. The horizon line is higher as the burglar hides and the Millionaire and Tramp struggle for the gun (again, the Millionaire is suicidal). Burglar tries to hit Millionaire, but has to keep on hiding behind the couch and table. Tramp walks off screen left with the gun.

18. **Shot:** Long shot (establishing), but a little farther left

**LM:** Tramp puts gun in locked desk at left.

19. **Shot:** Same as #17

**LM:** Burglar is still trying to hit Millionaire on the head. Tramp walks back in front from left to right and sits down on the couch again. Burglar hits Millionaire on the head finally and Millionaire falls while the second burglar runs into frame right to left and the Tramp turns and sees them.

20. **Shot:** Same as #18

**LM:** Tramp runs to get the gun, but it is in the locked desk so camera pans right as Tramp runs right to grab the phone (near the drapes).

21. **Shot:** Long shot of tramp on the phone

22. **Title card of Tramp:** “Police! Help!”

23. **Shot:** Same as #21

**LM:** Tramp kicks burglar behind him as he is still on the phone.

24. **Shot:** Same as #20, long shot

**LM:** Millionaire is left and on the floor. Tramp is back right at phone while burglar takes wallet and camera pans left as Tramp runs around couch from behind and to millionaire. Butler opens the left door and walks in. Tramp runs up to foreground and left as butler runs forward and around couch to Millionaire. Tramp runs left almost out of frame.

25. **Shot:** Long shot of the back entrance to the house

**LM:** Tramp goes out the back entrance (same way the burglars went). Tramp runs right to left and then to foreground, then to background, foreground again and then police walks around corner to the center.

26. **Shot:** Medium-long shot

**LM:** Police at left catches the Tramp at right with his hands.

27. **Shot:** Same as #25

**LM:** Police and Tramp at back left, Butler runs into frame from right and shouts and then goes back out (or into the house) from left to right. Police drags Tramp right into the door and out of the frame.

28. **Shot:** Long shot of living room

**LM:** Millionaire is still on the floor as the Tramp and Policeman enter at left. Tramp on the left, Police in the center, and Butler at right stand as Millionaire stays on the floor.

29. **Title card of Butler:** “He has been robbed, search that man!”

**IP:** This is one of the rare title cards of the butler and it is certainly accusatory. However, we must remember that previously the Tramp had stole fruit and taken the Millionaire’s car. The Butler must certainly have remembered these instances and accused the person he had seen with his master.

30. **Shot:** Same as #28
LM: Policeman moves left of tramp as he searches him for the stolen wallet. Policeman finds the money in Tramps pocket as Millionaire wakes up. At this point from left to right it is the Policeman, Tramp, Millionaire, and the Butler. Tramp moves to give back the gun so it becomes from left to right the Tramp, Policeman, Millionaire, and Butler.

IP: Interesting point is that the Butler is always in the weakest position.

31. Title card of Policeman: “Where did you get this money?”
32. Shot:  Medium shot
LM: Tramp is left and Policeman is right. Camera tilts down and pans right as Tramp kneels, begging Millionaire to tell what happened.
33. Title card of Tramp: “Tell him you gave me that money.”
34. Shot:  Close-up of Tramp
LM: Tramp has his back to the left and turned, Millionaire is facing camera at right.
35. Title card of Millionaire: “Who is this man?”
36. Shot:  Close-up of Millionaire
LM: Millionaire turns up to the Butler to answer this question.
37. Shot:  Same as #34
LM: Arm of the Policeman at left drags Tramp away from the Millionaire.
38. Shot:  Medium-close shot of same, which allows for more reaction from Tramp
LM: Butler still out of frame at right and camera pans up as Tramp reacts to Millionaire’s immediate soberness/forgetfulness.
39. Shot:  Close up of Tramp and Policeman with money.
LM: Tramp grabs the money
40. Shot:  Establishing shot of living room
LM: Slight pan of the camera as Tramp goes for the lights and turns them off.
41. Shot:  Medium shot of Tramp
LM: Tramp goes for his hat and cane while a shadow of a policeman prevents him. Light is shining from the right.
42. Shot:  Same as #27, the police are coming
43. Shot:  Same as #40
LM: Tramp runs for the door and is prevented by a shadow
44. Shot:  Same as #39 (lights still out)
LM: Lights go on briefly to see the Butler at servant door (back left), Tramp at center back and Policeman back right while Millionaire is still in the front of the couch. Lights go out again.
45. Shot:  Same as #41
LM: Charlie enters from right, runs into the police and helps them inside, police exit into the house at right. Camera slightly pans right while he helps them and then pans left as he exits the Millionaire’s property.

Length of Time: 6 minutes, 50 seconds
Time Butler is in shots: 2 minutes, 20 seconds
APPENDIX C

*Sullivan’s Travels:*

First Scene with Butler and Valet (second scene of movie): Sullivan dressing up to be a Tramp

1. **Shot:** Fade in to bedroom of Sullivan, beginning with a medium close shot of Sullivan.

   **Location and Movement (LM):** Medium shot of Sullivan walking left to right in his costume, knapsack hung over his shoulder. He is limping and checking his hat. Camera pans left to right as he walks past. Valet comes into frame as camera pans. Camera stops as mirror comes into view at right (at this point valet is on the left, Sullivan on the right). Valet is helping him with his clothes. Valet walks out of frame and left to answer the phone, Sullivan still at mirror—can see the valet’s reflection in the mirror (left). Valet walks back into frame with phone (valet left, Sullivan right) then valet walks out of frame at left again. The camera remains straight on both characters, there is no angle or sudden movement. There is a rather dumpy, tramp-like horn playing in the background for the undiegetic sound.

   **Interesting Point (IP):** Valet stays predominately on the left of Sullivan—a powerful position; however, he is the one most often seen only by the use of the mirror in the shot.

2. **Shot:** Medium long shot of Sullivan’s wife on the phone.

   **LM:** Wife is slightly high angle on in her bedroom as well—slightly high angle probably is indication of Sullivan’s lower regard for her.

3. **Shot:** Same as #1

   **LM:** Sullivan is faces the camera with his back to the mirror, there is not valet in this shot. Valet is reflected in the mirror behind Sullivan—the audience cannot see the valet, but knows valet is there because things are moving in the mirror.

4. **Shot:** Close up of Sullivan talking on the phone, upset.

5. **Shot:** Medium-long shot of door to bedroom, where the butler walks in.

   **LM:** Door opens and Burroughs the butler walks in from left to right holding a tray. Camera pans left to right as he walks in (same as 1st shot with Sullivan). Camera stops when valet and Sullivan are in the frame and the butler remains outside of it (at right). Audience can still see the butler in the mirror, just not in the frame (butler is left, valet is center, Sullivan is right).

   **IP:** The butler and Sullivan have the same visual importance as both their entrances into the scene are the same. Once again, the butler is seen most clearly in the mirror, not in the frame.

6. **Shot:** Close-up of Burroughs—his monologue on the poor.

   **LM:** Camera tilts down and up again briefly as Burroughs puts tray down, but it mostly stays dead on Burrows as he speaks to Sullivan.

   **IP:** No close-up holds more significance— butler becomes the all-wise and high authority on the poor and the real society that Sullivan knows nothing about.

7. **Shot:** Medium shot of valet and Sullivan looking off camera towards the butler.
LM: Butler is seen in the mirror—his image is between the valet and Sullivan. Camera pans as Sullivan walks towards Burroughs so that Burroughs is left, Sullivan is center, and valet is right. Camera stops and Burroughs and the valet are face front while Sullivan’s back is to the camera.

IP: Again it is interesting that the valet and the butler are in the shot while Sullivan, the main character is outside of it. There is an authority there that is not found in other films.

8. Shot: Medium-close shot of valet (at left) and Sullivan (at right)—reaction shot to what the Burroughs has said.

LM: This is a great reaction shot of the heady words of the butler. The valet and Sullivan look at each other and then look out to the butler—who has just outside the frame.

9. Shot: Close-up of Burroughs

LM: Burroughs is looking right—off screen to Sullivan—he is not directly looking into the camera.

10. Shot: Same as 8.

11. Shot: Same as 9—slightly closer if possible.

12. Shot: Medium shot of all three.

LM: Burroughs is left, facing away from the camera, valet is center, then Sullivan at right. Sullivan actually takes up a whole half of the frame while the butler and valet take up the other half together. Burroughs walks out of the frame at left.

IP: There is an invisible line drawn between the butler and the valet at this point—the exactness of the split between the two is very obvious.

13. Shot: Close-up of valet at left and Sullivan at right.

14. Shot: Medium long shot of the door and people coming into it.

LM: Burroughs is introducing the producer and lawyer into the room. Camera pans left to right as movie people walk into the room. Burrows figure does not follow the pan so he does not stay in the frame long. Camera stops as movie people get to Sullivan and valet—who is at right of Sullivan. Camera pans left as Sullivan walks left, Burroughs is gone from the door and there is a vague blur of the valet walking out at left behind the movie people.

Script:

Sullivan (S): How’s this one?

Valet (V): Isn’t that over-doing it a bit, sir? Why break their hearts?

S: All right, well let’s try that one again.

V: I think this one is sufficiently seedy sir, there’s no use overplaying it is there, sir?

-phone rings-

V: Yes? to Sullivan: Your wife is on one, sir.

S: What does she want?

V: I was talking to Burroughs, sir, but I suspect it has something to do with today’s being the fifteenth. chuckles a bit

S: Pay day—all right, put her on

V: You may connect Mrs. Sullivan.

S: on the phone: Yes.

Mrs. Sullivan: You don’t happen to remember what day this is do you dear?
S: Yes, I happen to remember what day this is... No I haven’t forgotten anything have you? Well perhaps I could be a little bit more polite Mrs. Sullivan, but somehow when I talk to you I don’t feel polite. I regret it but that’s the way it is... I don’t know whether I signed it or not—I always close my eyes when I sign your cheque, maybe I signed the blotter. Pushing another button on the phone and then speaking into it: You made out the panther woman’s cheque yet? Well you better get it down to her before she comes up here with a sheriff. She has a very peculiar sense of humor.

Burroughs (B): Good morning, sir
S: Oh, good morning Burrows, motioning to his outfit, how do you like it?
B: I don’t like it at all, sir. Fancy dress I take it?
S: Well what’s the matter with it?
B: I have never been sympathetic to the caricaturing of the poor and needy, sir.
S: Who’s caricaturing...
V: Burrow’s doesn’t know about the expedition, sir.
S: I’m going out on the road to find out what it’s like to be poor and needy and then I’m going to make a picture about it.
B: If you’ll permit me to say so, sir, the subject is not an interesting one. The poor know all about poverty, and only the morbid rich would find the topic glamorous.
S: But I’m doing it for the poor, don’t you understand...
B: I doubt if they would appreciate it, sir. They rather resent the invasion of their privacy, I believe quite properly, sir. Also, such excursions can be extremely dangerous. I worked for a gentleman once who likewise with two friends accounted himself as you have, sir, and then went out for a lark. They have not been heard from since.
S: That was some time ago?
B: 1912, sir.
S: Uh-huh...
B: You see, sir, rich people and theorists who are usually rich people, think of poverty in the negative—as the lack of riches as disease might be called a lack of health; but it isn’t, sir. Poverty is not the lack of anything, but a positive plague—virile and in itself contagious as cholera with filth, criminality, vice, and despair—as only a few of its symptoms. It is to be stayed away from even for purposes of study. It is to be shunned.
S: Well you’ve seemed to have made quite a study of it.
B: Quite unwillingly, sir. Will that be all, sir?
S: Thanks.
B: Very good, sir.
S: He gets a little bit gruesome every once in a while.
V: Yeah, always reading books, sir.
S: Oh...
V: As a matter of fact, sir, I don’t like the idea of a gentleman of your inexperience leaving with only ten cents in his pockets, so I took the extreme liberty, sir, of having a studio identification card sewed into the sole of each of your boots.
S: You’d think I was a child or something the whole purpose of this expedition... --movie people interrupt at this point--

Length of time: 4 minutes, 14 seconds
Time of butler and/or valet in scene: 2 minutes, 42 seconds.
Second Scene with butler and valet (tenth scene): Jail
1. **Shot**: Medium-long shot of Sullivan and Girl behind bars
   **LM**: Girl is at left while Sullivan is at right—both look to the right.
2. **Shot**: Medium shot of police officer opening bars.
   **LM**: Police officer walks from right to left as camera pans. Camera moves Sullivan into the frame at left. Officer opens their door and Sullivan walks out.
3. **Shot**: Close-up of Girl at the bars.
4. **Shot**: Medium-long shot of Sullivan walking out of door, center in the frame.
5. **Shot**: Medium shot of butler and valet
   **LM**: Butler and valet are at left, another officer is at right.
6. **Shot**: Medium-close of Sullivan
   **LM**: Camera pans left as Sullivan walks left to officer. Officer is at left, Sullivan center, the hat of Burroughs is on the right. There is a fade out here.

**Script:**

**Girl (G):** What did you say?
S: I said there’s absolutely nothing they can do.

**Police Officer 1:** All right you.
S: All right yourself.  **To Girl:** Don’t give it a thought.  **To butler and valet:** Well?
V: Oh good morning, sir. I’m so sorry.
B: Good morning g, sir.

**Police Officer 2 (PO2):** Never seen this man before?
B: That is Mr. Sullivan, sir, the owner of the alleged hot car.
PO2: Then what’s all the hullabaloo?
S: That’s what I’d like to know.
PO2: You John L. Sullivan?
S: What about it?
PO2: What’s your occupation?
S: Motion picture director.
PO2:  **to butler and valet:** That right?
B: Yes, sir.
PO2: Let me see your driver’s license.
S: I haven’t got it.  **To butler:** Did you bring it?
B: No, sir.
PO2: Driving without a license huh?
S: Yes, isn’t that terrible? I suppose that calls for a dollar fine and ten minutes in jail.
PO2:  **to Butler:** You sure this is Sullivan?
B: Oh quite, sir.
PO2: What are you doing in those clothes?
S: I just paid my income tax.
PO2: All right, but you don’t drive that car without a license.
S: Okay, let the girl out too she’s getting bored in there.
PO2: How does the girl fit in this picture?
S: There’s always a girl in the picture, haven’t you ever been to the movies?
Length of time: 1 minute, 2 seconds.
Time of butler and/or valet in scene: 44 seconds.

Third scene with butler and valet (twelfth scene): Sullivan’s home
1. Shot: Dissolve to a close-up of ham and eggs cooking in a frying pan.
2. Shot: Fade in to front living room of Sullivan’s home.
LM: Sullivan and Girl at right are walking towards the camera. This is a high angle shot and more of an establishing shot than #1.
3. Shot: Medium of same as #2
LM: Girl is in front of Sullivan and both walk out at left.
4. Shot: Medium of Sullivan and Girl walking right to left
LM: Both are walking into an adjoining room—Sullivan is in front. Camera pans right to left as they walk outside with their backs to the camera.
5. Shot: Medium shot of Sullivan and Girl facing camera (180 degree shot).
LM: Girl is closer to camera and left of Sullivan. Camera still pans as they walk outside. She then pushes Sullivan into the pool and camera pans right to left fast and tilts downward as Sullivan falls.
7. Shot: High angle of Sullivan, yet this is not a point of view shot.
8. Shot: Same as #6
9. Shot: Same as #7
10. Shot: #6
11. Shot: #7
12. Shot: Same as #6, but at an angle that is farther left.
13. Shot: Medium-long of Girl
LM: Girl’s back is to the camera, Sullivan is in the pool at her feet.
14. Shot: #12, as she screams
15. Shot: #13
16. Shot: Medium, low-angle shot of butler and valet. The only time the butler speaks in this film: “Breakfast is served, sir.”
LM: Reaction shot of the butler first, then the valet. The butler is at left, the valet is at right.
17: Shot: Medium of Sullivan and Girl in water.
LM: Sullivan is at right and girl as at left.
18: Shot: #16

Length of time: 1 minute, 13 seconds.
Time of butler and/or valet in scene: 7 seconds.

Fourth Scene with butler and valet (thirteenth scene): After Breakfast
1. Shot: Medium-long of Girl and Sullivan
LM: Girl is at left, Sullivan is still at right. The girl is closer to the camera and so higher and larger than Sullivan.
2. Shot: Medium shot of Burroughs
LM: Burroughs is looking at Sullivan and Girl off screen to his right. He is listening to their conversation—he is smiling at it.

3. Shot: Medium shot of Girl
4. Shot: Medium shot of Sullivan, slight high angle
5. Shot: #3
6. Shot: #4
7. Shot: Close-up of Girl, slight angle to the right.
8. Shot: #4
9. Shot: #7
10. Shot: #4
LM: Girl stands and camera tilts up and pans right as she walks to Sullivan. Sullivan is left and down, girl is right and standing—behind him. She goes around to hold his shoulders.
12. Shot: Medium-close shot of Sullivan and Girl
LM: Sullivan is still sitting in front of Girl who is standing. Camera tilts down as she moves around and sits on his lap.
13. Shot: same as #2
LM: Girl is still sitting on Sullivan’s lap and left in the frame.
15. Shot: #2
16. Shot: #14, but farther away and not so profile.
LM: In this frame the audience sees more of his face than hers. There is a slight tilt up as Burrows comes into the frame from the left.—He is agreeing with the Girl’s suggestion at this point in time. Slight pan right as the struggle with the girl ensues.
17. Shot: Close-up of girl struggling in the arms of Sullivan
18. Shot: #16
19. Shot: Close-up of girl again.
LM: This is close to #17, but it is at a different angle since the three people—the Girl, Sullivan, and Burroughs—are all standing.
20. Shot: Medium shot of Burroughs holding the Girl, facing left, and over the water.
21. Shot: #19
22. Shot: Medium shot of all three falling into the pool
23. Shot: Medium reaction shot of valet
LM: Valet runs out of frame at right to help the three others.
24. Shot: Burroughs—closest to the camera—and other two on bottom half of frame in the pool at a medium-close range.
25. Shot: Medium shot of valet facing right—calling for the butler.
26. Shot: High angle shot of Burroughs at side of pool
LM: Valet’s feet are at left and camera tilts up as valet tries to help Burroughs out of the pool.
27. Shot: Medium-high angle as valet falls in pool.—fade out.

IP: It is interesting that the valet is helping the butler out of the pool instead of Sullivan. It is as if it is more inappropriate for Burroughs to have fallen in than the master.
Length of time: 2 minutes, 48 seconds
Time of butler and/or valet in scene: 1 minute, 43 seconds.

Fifth scene with butler and valet (fifteenth): Butler and valet on the phone
1. Shot: Fade in and medium shot of Burroughs and valet on phone.
LM: Burrows is at left, valet is right. They are in robes drying off.
2. Shot: Establishing shot of station information center, medium shot.
LM: Man on the phone is facing right.
3. Shot: #1
LM: There is less profile going on, but the man is still angled right.
5. Shot: Dissolve into a long shot of a station office. A man is on the phone at a medium distance to the camera and is facing right.
6. Shot: #1, yet the valet is on the phone, not the butler
IP: The butler and valet are street savvy—smart enough to figure things out that Sullivan would not be able to.

Script:
B: Hello information? Have you any freight trains going east this afternoon or early this evening? 5:48? Thank you very much indeed, sir. Oh, and could you tell me—does that train carry tramps and if so, where do they get on?
Information Man (IM): What?
B: Tramps!
IM: How would you like to take a flyin’…hangs up the phone at says to someone at the desk: Wise Guy! To another person at the desk: Yes, sir?
Office man at Station (OS): What was that again?
V: I said I wondered if you would be kind enough to settle a bet for us…just a few of us here at the club. If a tramp were to board your 5:48 this afternoon where would he board it? I see, I see…but not within the yard limits. I think that gives me the complete picture. Thank you very much for your trouble. Oh, and by the way I win—laughs—good day…hangs up the phone. To Burroughs: A different approach to the same problem.

Length of time: 54 seconds
Time of butler and/or valet in scene: 50 seconds

Sixth scene with butler and valet: at the station
1. Shot: Establishing shot at a slight high angle.
LM: Car is pulling to the right across the train tracks. Dolly shot right as the car moves right.
2. Shot: Shot of tramp area outside the yard limits.
LM: A goat at left and tramp at right both look up at the car as it gets closer
3. Shot: Dolly shot of the car—closer than #1.
4. Shot: Medium shot of car
LM: The passenger front window opens and Burroughs head is inside. Behind him in the other window is Sullivan.
5. **Shot:** Long shot of area where tramps are waiting for the train.
6. **Shot:** Medium shot of Sullivan helping Girl out of car.
**LM:** Girl remains left of Sullivan. Butler gets out of car behind them.
7. **Shot:** Medium shot of all four characters: Burroughs at left, Girl center left, valet center right, Sullivan right.
8. **Shot:** Medium-close shot of #7
**LM:** Camera pans right as Sullivan and Girl leave Burroughs and valet and walk towards the tramps. They are facing right and at complete profile.
Scene continues…

**Script:**

**B:** I think this is it, sir.

**S:** *To Girl:* Why don’t you go back with the car, you look about as much like a boy as Mae West.

**G:** All right they’ll think I’m your frail.

**B:** I believe it’s called a beazle miss if memory serves.

**S:** Goodbye Burroughs, see ya.

**V:** Goodbye

**B:** Goodbye. May I close, sir, by warning you against the entire expedition, which I envision with deep apprehension and gloomy foreboding.

**S:** Thanks same to you.

**Length of time:** 1 minute, 9 seconds.

**Time of butler and/or valet in scene:** 30 seconds.
APPENDIX D

The Lady Eve:

First Scene with Muggsy the valet (first scene of film): In the Jungle

1. **Shot:** Establishing shot. River with a boat is in the background, people in foreground. It is quite a long shot.

2. **Shot:** Medium-long shot of Charles “Hopsi” Pike.

**Location and Movement (LM):** Hopsi walks right to left and camera follows him with pan as he heads for boat. Another person is following him with a box. Two other men walk into frame as well behind them.

3. **Shot:** Medium-close of Hopsi

**LM:** Hopsi is on the left while the man with the box is on the right. They shake hands.

4. **Shot:** Close-up of snake in the box

5. **Shot:** Close-up of snake in the box

6. **Shot:** Close-up of valet (first in the film).

**LM:** Valet walks right to left holding a woman’s hand. He says, “So long Lula, I’ll send you a postcard: and she puts flowers over his neck. He then walks out of frame at left.

**IP:** valet traipsing about the jungle with a woman is unheard of.

7. **Shot:** Medium shot of valet walking towards Hopsi

**LM:** Camera pans right to left and stops with Hopsi. Valet’s back is towards the camera as Professor (man with the snake) acknowledges Muggsy and Muggsy actually gives the professor advice: “Don’t take no wooden money!”

8. **Shot:** Close up of whistle on the boat going off.

9. **Shot:** #7—Muggsy and Hopsi get on the boat.

10. **Shot:** Medium shot of them settling into the boat

**LM:** Muggsy sits, Hopsi stands.

**IP:** Hopsi is often always facing the camera while Muggsy is not.

11. **Shot:** Dissolve into long shot of ocean liner.

12. **Shot:** Close-up of ocean liner’s whistle blowing.

13. **Shot:** Close up of small boat’s (Hopsi’s) whistler blowing.

14. **Shot:** #12

15. **Shot:** #13

**IP:** Unusual that so many close-ups should be this close together with nothing but a whistle going off. Shot 15 show’s the small boat’s whistle bubbling over. It is possible this is a visual parallelism sequence meant to show audience that Hopsi will not be able to take Jean’s charm.

16. **Shot:** Long shot of women at the edge of the ocean liner to see Hopsi.

17. **Shot:** Long shot of ladder coming off the edge of the liner for Hopsi.

18. **Shot:** Medium shot of passengers looking.

**LM:** There is a slow pan right to left of the passengers and then the camera tilts up to Jean and her father. Their friend Gerald a.k.a. butler opens door behind them and comes out to the deck.

19. **Shot:** Close-up of Pike’s Pal advertisement.
20. **Shot:** Bird’s eye view of small boat coming to liner. Camera tilts down with it until it is side by side the liner.

21. **Shot:** #18—the moment when Jean drops apple.

22. **Shot:** #20—the apple drops on Hopsi’s head and Muggsy yells “hey!”—fade out.

**Length of time:** 1 minute, 37 seconds.

**Time of Muggsy in scene:** 13 seconds.

**Second scene with Muggsy (part of scene five):** Muggsy is taking a card beating against Gerald:

1. **Shot:** Medium shot of Muggsy on the left and friend on the right, seated.

   **LM:** slow zoom in on Muggsy.

**Script:**

**Muggsy (M):** Well I’ll be a cock-eyed cookie pusher!

**Gerald (G):** Ha, what’s the bet at now?

**M:** Come on deal them sharks.

**G:** You don’t happen to have some beautiful damsel pining for you do you? That often explains it.

**M:** Come on let’s go…

**Second part of the second scene with Muggsy (fifth):** Hopsi, Jean, and her father Colonel Harrington are playing cards:

1. **Shot:** Medium shot of table with the three (Colonel at left, Jean center, and Hopsi at right)

   **LM:** Muggsy walks into the background.

2. **Shot:** Medium-close shot of Jean and Hopsi.

3. **Shot:** Medium-close shot of Muggsy, standing.

4. **Shot:** 

5. **Shot:** Medium-close shot of Colonel Harrington

6. **Shot:** 

7. **Shot:** #1, which zooms into #2 at a slight high angle.

8. **Shot:** Close up of #2 and continued…

**Script:**

**Jean (J):** Whose that funny lookin’ gink watching us?

**Muggsy (M):** Everything on the up and up?

**Hopsi (H):** Everything’s okay—go to bed I’m way ahead.

**M:** All right.

**J:** Whose that your nurse?

**H:** That’s Muggsy, my father took him off a truck when I was a kid to look out for me, you know kidnappers, stuff like that. He’s been sort of a body guard, governess, and a very bad valet ever since. He saved my life once…

**J:** Oh…

**H:** …in a brawl…
Third scene with Muggsy (seventh): Morning on deck

1. Shot: Fade in to a long shot of liner from the back.
2. Shot: Medium shot of Gerald in the foreground.
LM: Muggsy comes in from right and behind Gerald. Muggsy moves to Gerald’s right. Waiter comes in from the left.
3. Shot: Medium-close of #2
LM: Muggsy walks back to right and out of frame.
4. Shot: Dissolve to Medium shot of Hopsi shaving in mirror.
LM: Pan right as door opens and Muggsy is there with snake food. Muggsy walks to Hopsi and the camera follows with a slight pan to the left.
5. Shot: Dissolve to Jean in bed...

Script:
Gerald (G): Ah, good morning Mr. Murgatroid. I trust I see you full of zip and sparkle.
Muggsy (M): Mornin’
G: Have a dish of tea…
M: I had my breakfast. Where I come from we get up in the mornin’.
G: Ah, yes, but where did it get you may I ask or is that a personal question…
M: Where did it get me? I’ll tell you where it got me…
Waiter: Good morning, sir. Fruit, cereal, bacon and eggs, eggs and sausage, sausage and hotcakes, hotcakes and ham, ham and eggs, eggs and bacon, bacon and…
M: Give me a spoonful milk, a raw pigeon’s egg, and four house flies. If you can’t catch any I’ll settle for a cockroach. I’ll be on deck.

Boat whistle and back in cabin with Hopsi

Hopsi (H): Did you get it?
M: Close enough. To snake: There, dunk your whiskers in that. To Hopsi: How much you say you win last night?
H: About six hundred dollars, I’m gonna try to lose it back to them.
M: I don’t get it, I lose forty bucks to their valet and I figure the guy’s a cutie.
H: Because he took ya? Who do you think you are Houdini?
M: You don’t have to be a who-done-it to tell a cold deck when ya get your mits on one. All ya have to know is the difference between hot and cold. That guy run in a cold deck on me.
H: Baulderdash! Your always suspicious of everybody. Do you remember the clergyman you said was a pickpocket and he turned out to be a bishop?
M: Well I still ain’t so sure.
H: And the guy you poked for trying to slip you a mickey only he was taking aspiring?
M: I ain’t so sure about him neither.
H: I suppose you think this gentleman and his daughter lost six hundred dollars to me just so they could fleece me later.
M: Yeah!
H: Yeah? Well in the first place he happens to be Colonel Harrington a very important oil man. In the second place I’m an expert card player—I’ve been fooling with cards all my life. I do tricks with cards.
M: They might know a couple of tricks you ain’t seen yet.
Fourth Scene with Muggsy (Eleventh): Meeting with the intelligence office on the boat.

1. **Shot:** Medium shot of elevator opening and Muggsy inside.
   **LM:** Muggsy walks right and camera pans with him to desk where someone is sitting behind it.

2. **Shot:** Close-up of man behind desk.
3. **Shot:** end of #1
4. **Shot:** #2
5. **Shot:** #1—Dissolve to Harrington and continue…

**Script:**

M: You d’person?

**Officer #1:** Eh, just a moment, turns from Muggsy- Mr. Clink please.

M: You d’person?

**Mr. Clink (C):** Yes, what is it please?

M: I want to ask you a hypothermical question.

C: Maybe that would be better to ask the doctor.

M: Never mind the wise cracks, what I want to dope on is this: if their happen to be a gang of card sharks on this tub…

C: **Interrupts Muggsy:** Sh…not so loud please. In the first place their isn’t any and in the second…

M: What I want to know is could you prove it if they was.

C: A passenger is a passenger my friend. If he pays for his ticket and doesn’t steal the ship’s towels who are we to go slandering him?

M: You don’t happen to be a mouthpiece do ya—you talk like a law school.

C: I was admitted to the bar if that is what you are talking about.

M: Well the drinks are on you baby I watch out for the kid see, the Pike kid, I watch out for him and you’re gonna watch out for him or you’ll be right on the beach selling popcorn yeh get me? His old man knows your President. A wire from me is all it takes and when old man Pike goes into action you’ll be in the side pocket. All I got to do is…

C: You needn’t, you needn’t try to intimidate me Mr. eh… (crewman drops his accent fake accent here).

M: Murgatroid to you…

C: Turgamoid…If I should discover that Mr. Pike was in any danger of being swindled I might have some photographs, confidential of course, of some of the better known and late professional card players not that I admit there are any on this ship you understand.

M: No, they’re swimming along side, in the water.

**Moment’s of Importance at the Pike House:**

--the Butler is the same, also named Burrows, and gets icing in the face the first thing.
--Muggsy is the valet parking expert at the party and the first to see Jean as Lady Eve. He recognizes her instantly
--Muggsy looks a lot at the party—looking through the windows (moves left to right and falls in a hole), he takes food into the dinner and gets very close to Jean, etc.
Fifth Scene with Muggsy (Nineteenth): In Hopsi’s room helping him get dressed again.

1. Shot: Dissolve on Hopsi at left and Muggsy on the right at a medium distance from the camera.
LM: Camera pans left as Hopsi walks to desk and then Hopsi walks out right.
2. Shot: Medium shot of Hopsi back at the mirror.
LM: Camera pans to door as Hopsi goes out of it at right. Dissolve into dinner scene…

Script:
M: That’s the same dame—she looks the same, she walks the same, and she’s tossing you just like she done the last time.
H: She doesn’t talk the same.
M: Anybody can put on an act. Impression of Hitler: Who am I?
H: Were her eyes closer together?
M: They were not they were right where they are, on each side of her nose!
H: Why should she do it?
M: I don’t know, maybe she wants you to fall for her again.
H: Do I look that dumb?
M: You wouldn’t be the first one. I know a guy married the same dame three times and then turned around and married her aunt.
H: No!
M: Huh?
H: They look too much alike.
M: You said it! They couldn’t be two Janes.
H: You don’t understand me, they look too much alike to be the same.
M: That’s what I’ve been tellin’ ya they…huh?
H: If she came here with her hair dyed yellow and eyebrows different or something…
M: What’s hair to a skirt! I used to go with a little Eskimo dame…
H: But she didn’t dye her hair and she didn’t pretend she’d never seen me before which is the first thing anybody’d do. She says I look familiar.
M: Why shouldn’t you, you was on the boat…
H: Because if I did she wouldn’t admit it. If she did look so exactly like the other girl I might be suspicious; but, you don’t understand psychology. If you wanted to pretend you were somebody else you’d glue a muff on your chin and the dog wouldn’t even bark at ya.
M: You trying to tell me this ain’t the same rib that was on the boat? She even wears the same perfume!
H: I don’t know…
M: Back at the party and to Hopsi- It’s the same dame! (Interesting point here: there is a POV shot of Muggsy’s looking at Jean and unlike Hopsi’s it is not in soft focus).

Last words of the film are Muggsy’s: Positively the same dame! (Close-up).
APPENDIX E

The Play: Act III, Scene i—Script (script underlined is in the film).

**Lord Goring:** Got my second buttonhole for me, Phipps?

**Phipps:** Yes, my Lord.

*Takes his hat, cane, and cape, and presents new buttonhole on salver.*

**LG:** Rather distinguished thing, Phipps. I am the only person of the smallest importance in London at present who wears a buttonhole.

**P:** Yes, my lord. I have observed that.

**LG:** *(taking out old buttonhole)*. You see, Phipps, Fashion is what one wears oneself. What is unfashionable is what other people wear.

**P:** Yes, my lord.

**LG:** *(putting in new buttonhole)*. And falsehoods the truths of other people.

**P:** Yes, my lord.

**LG:** Other people are quite dreadful. The only possible society is oneself.

**P:** Yes, my lord.

**LG:** To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance, Phipps.

**P:** Yes, my lord.

**LG:** *(looking at himself in the glass).* Don’t think I quite like this buttonhole, Phipps. Makes me looks a little too old. Makes me almost in the prime of life, eh, Phipps?

**P:** I don’t observe any alteration in your lordship’s appearance.

**LG:** You don’t Phipps?

**P:** No, my lord.

**LG:** I am not quite sure. For the future a more trivial buttonhole Phipps, on Thursday evenings.

**P:** I will speak to the florist, my lord. She has had a loss in her family lately, which perhaps accounts for the lack of triviality your lordship complains of in the buttonhole.

**LG:** Extraordinary thing about the lower class in England—they are always losing their relations.

**P:** Yes, my lord! They are extremely fortunate in that respect.

**LG:** *(turns round and looks at him. Phipps remains impassive).* Ahem! Phipps remains impassive. Hum! Any letters, Phipps?

**P:** Three, my lord. *(Hands letters on a salver.)*

**LG:** *(takes letters)*. Want my cab round in twenty minutes.

**P:** Yes, my lord. *(Goes towards door.)*

**LG:** *(holds up letter in pink envelope).* Ahem! Phipps, when did this letter arrive?

**P:** It was brought by hand just after your lordship went to the club.

**LG:** That will do. *(Exit Phipps)* [...] (170-1).
**The Film: Act I, Scene i—the Script**

**Phipps:** Your usual, my lord.

*(Lord Goring groans)*

**P:** Good morning, my lord.

*(Lord Goring drinks and groans again)*

**P:** The morning paper, my lord.

**P:** *(voice over)* Ah, Sir Robert Chiltern, a rising star in Parliament, tonight hosts a party that promises to be the highlight of the social calendar, with his wife, Lady Gertrude, who is herself a leading figure in women’s politics. Together, this couple represents what is best in English public life and is a noble contrast to the lax morality so common amongst foreign politicians.

**Lord Goring:** Dear oh dear, they will never say that about me will they Phipps.

**P:** I sincerely hope not, sir.

**LG:** Bit of a busy day today I’m afraid—distressingly little time for sloth or idleness.

**P:** Sorry to hear it, sir.

**LG:** Well, not entirely your fault Phipps—not this time.

**P:** Thank you, my lord.

**LG** *(yawns).*

**Act I, Scene iii**

**LG:** You see Phipps, fashion is what one wears oneself. What is unfashionable is what other people wear.

**P:** Yes, my lord.

**LG:** Other people are quite dreadful. The only possible society is oneself.

**P:** Yes, my lord.

**LG:** To love oneself is the beginning of a life-long romance.

**P:** Yes, my lord.

**Act III, Scene i**

**LG:** Ah, my second buttonhole, much better. You know Phipps; a really well made buttonhole is the only link between art and nature.

**P:** Yes, my lord.

**LG:** I don’t think I quite like this one.

**P:** Mmmm?

**LG:** Makes me look a little old. Makes me almost in the prime of life, eh, Phipps?

**P:** I don’t observe any alteration in your lordships appearance.

**LG:** you don’t?

**P:** No, my lord.

**LG:** Very Well.
Edit Cuts for First Sequence (Act I, Scene i)

1. Edit Cut: Curtain Rise (by Phipps), shallow focus on Phipps, Phipps is medium-close on left side (power side). Woman in background, not in focus, gets out of a bed and moves right out of frame. Hand held shot behind Phipps to left side of bed (Phipps still is on left side). Camera is now at high angle to Lord Goring in bed—Goring drinks with title of film on bottom left. Camera moves down to champagne on floor. 45 seconds

2. Door opens, eight men walk about before Chiltern with Trafford behind him. Come towards camera as camera tracks back. Voice over of Phipps. 12 seconds.

3. Medium-close of Lady Chiltern. 6 seconds.

4. Reaction shot of three women looking at Chilterns—they are looking right at a medium-close shot. 2 seconds.

5. Chilterns together in position of #3.  4 seconds.

6. Close-up of Phipps speaking (the voice over). Slow zoom out, tilt down, and pan right (again hand held) to LG in bed. Phipps at left, standing—can see part of his suit. Goring is on right, sitting. 12 seconds.

7. Close-up shot of Phipps slightly left. 3 seconds.

8. Close-up of LG at his eye level. The side of Phipps seen on left. Goring stays right and does not look at Phipps. 6 seconds.

9. Close up of Phipps (#7) 1 second.

10. Close-up of LG (#8). Phipps clothes are still at left. Goring looks at Phipps. 5 seconds.

11. Close up of Phipps (#7). He reaches towards Goring and closer to the camera. 4 seconds.

12. Side view of Goring (Close-up), Goring on left this time, staying to the 180 degree rule. 5 seconds.

Total time: One minute and forty-seven seconds.

Fourth Sequence (Act I, Scene iii)

1. Focus on buttonhole on a salver. Extreme Close-up of hand picking it up (Goring’s) at right. Camera—hand held—tilts up to Phipps’ face. Goring’s nose and hand on right side while Goring and Phipps’ body is reflected in the mirror. Visual symmetry in the background. Goring in the mirror is slightly out of focus (shallow focus). Continue to tilt up and zoom out so Goring is larger on right than Phipps on left. Surprising amount of balance between the two. 8 seconds.

2. Close-up of Goring’s reflection—voyeur shot. Slightly right of center. 15 seconds.

3. Back to establishing shot at #1 with Phipps on left, Goring on right. Phipps stays left while image of Goring in mirror walks back and to the right—audience seeing him in the mirror the whole time. Goring exists. Phipps moves right to center of mirror and camera and turns towards mirror and fixes his tie while looking in the mirror. 12 seconds.
--Next sequence will be another visual parallel sequence as the butler at the Chilterns begins the next sequence. Movement of the sequences is through the domestic staff. Total time: thirty-five seconds.

**Beginning of Seventh Sequence (Act III, Scene i)**

1. Close up of green carnation buttonhole on top of Grosvenor Gallery Ticket and on a salver. Extreme close-up of hand taking buttonhole from right (same as previous sequence).
2. Close up of Phipps and Goring in mirror again (same as previous sequence). Phipps on left and farther away from camera, Goring at right and a little closer (balance). Goring takes up most of the screen but Phipps does take left third. Phipps does not look in mirror for a long time (fifteen seconds) then looks into it to help LG with his self-esteem. Camera stays in place while Goring looks at Phipps. Phipps looks at Goring, Goring looks back at mirror.
3. Goring and Phipps, both center, at top of staircase (almost 180 degrees opposite). They turn and walk right down off the stairs.
4. Caversham walking down hall towards camera stops at medium-close.
5. Close-up of Goring walking down towards camera to Caversham (180). Phipps is in background, slightly out of focus.
6. Shot with Goring far left, Caversham on right, and Phipps in center—medium close-up shot, crowded.
7. Close up of Goring, Goring on left of screen.
8. #6 again, Phipps and another servant are now in the center. Camera, hand held, pans left as Caversham walks left past Phipps and Goring. By the end of the pan, Goring is left, Caversham in middle, Phipps on right. Camera moves again right as Goring moves right. Hand held continues to move back and forth with the characters until a quick pan left back to front entrance.
9. Robert Chiltern at entrance with Phipps and footman. Medium shot
10. Goring close-up on right. Shallow focus with Caversham out of focus in the background farther right. Goring moves forward and right out of the frame.
11. Chiltern walks towards camera (and Goring), until close-up of Goring at left, Chiltern at right. Shallow focus of servants in the background.
12. Goring and Chiltern walk towards camera and hand held moves back with them (Phipps behind them). Goring shuts door on Chiltern, pan of Goring walking to the right and camera stops with Goring front left and Phipps back right. Quick pan as Goring turns away from camera.
13. Goring close up.
14. Close up of runner—camera tilts down to letter in runner’s hands.
16. Close-up of letter in Goring’s hands. Zoom out and pan up to Goring’s face reading the letter.
17. Dark, a tracking shot outside of a woman walking from left to right behind iron fencing.
18. Shallow focus, Phipps and Goring on left with Caversham in the room at right. Slow zoom into Phipps and Goring as Caversham—severely right and out of focus—stands up. Phipps turns face toward camera as Goring turns into room behind.

19. Shoulder shot behind woman at door—woman is at left. Phipps answers door at right. Reaction shot of Phipps at Medium close-up.

20. 180 degree shot of #19. Camera at Phipps left shoulder to see Mrs. Cheveley at Medium-close.

21. Reaction shot of Phipps (#19)

22. Cheveley as #20. Enters towards camera. Pan right as Cheveley walks in while Phipps faces her.

23. 180 view of #22. Tracking shot back as Phipps and Cheveley walk forward (hand held).

24. Phipps walks from front right into frame and opens door of room at right. Cheveley follows and stands at left. Medium shot.

25. Cheveley at right (shallow focus of table with letter farther from camera).

26. 180 shot of view with table closer to camera now. Cheveley turns towards table and camera.

27. Severe close-up of Caversham. Zoom out and slightly left with a tilt down to see Caversham standing left with Goring sitting at right. Zoom out is very slow. Caversham walks to camera for another severe close-up with shallow focus of Goring at right. Goring also walks towards the camera for a close-up to face Caversham.

28. Back to Cheveley in the main entrance. Hand held moves in front of her as she looks down towards the letter (medium shot).

29. Close-up of letter on the Yellow Book (Cheveley’s hand on right side).

30. Establishing shot of Cheveley (like #28) reading letter. She is on right side of table. Phipps in shallow focus at back in room.

31. Close-up of letter taken off the table.

32. #30—Cheveley at right, slow zoom in while she reads. Phipps comes towards her and camera and she turns. Medium shot.

33. 180 shot with Cheveley coming towards the camera into the room. Hand held moves subtly with her (forward and to center her).

34. View of the main entrance to Goring’s home. Phipps closes the door on Cheveley while doorbell rings. Pan of whole entrance area as Phipps goes to get the door—first to see Cheveley peak outside her room, then camera pans with servant to view Chiltern doing the same thing seconds later. Camera moving constantly at this point.

35. Camera outside again by the side of woman’s clothing. Over the shoulder like #19.

36. Reaction shot of Mrs. Chiltern (left shoulder of Phipps while Mrs. Chiltern is at left).

37. #35 again.

38. #36—Mrs. Chiltern turns away to leave doorstep.

39. #35 as Phipps closes the door.
40. Inside door close. Close-up of Phipps as he turns around and has a reaction shot—one of confusion.
41. Door opens with Goring and Caversham walking towards camera and a slow pan right as Caversham walks out of frame and Goring walks to Phipps. Goring, after talking to Phipps, walks out of frame on right.
42. continue…

Lighting: soft with a lot of fill light (except in outside cuts, but even then there is a little fill light).
Camera angles: Predominantly eye-level, but no point of view shots
Camera movement: Hand held and extremely busy at this moment (point of highest confusion).
Edit cuts: predominantly of the same length until hand held really gets busy. Then the cut times are not consistent.