This electronic thesis or dissertation has been downloaded from the King's Research Portal at https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/

# Une École agréable de moeurs
## Sensibilité, Civic Virtue, and Opéracomique during the French Revolution, 1789-1799

Huff, Jonathan

*Awarding institution:*
King's College London

**The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without proper acknowledgement.**

END USER LICENCE AGREEMENT

**Unless another licence is stated on the immediately following page** this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International licence. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/

You are free to copy, distribute and transmit the work

Under the following conditions:

- Attribution: You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).
- Non Commercial: You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
- No Derivative Works - You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

Any of these conditions can be waived if you receive permission from the author. Your fair dealings and other rights are in no way affected by the above.

**Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact librarypure@kcl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Download date: 08. Jan. 2025

# *Une École agréable de mœurs: Sensibilité,* Civic Virtue, and *Opéra-comique* during the French Revolution, 1789-1799

by

Jonathan Huff

A thesis submitted in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of
Philosophy in Music

King's College London

2018

Supervised by Doctor Michael Fend and Doctor Sanja Perovic

Copyright by Jonathan Huff

2020

All Rights Reserved

*To my family,*

*and particularly to my Papa, of whom I am especially fond.*

*This is for you, with my most heartfelt thanks.*

# Table of Contents


Abstract.......................................................................................................... 6

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................... 7

Translation Policy.............................................................................................. 8

List of Musical Examples.................................................................................... 9

Introduction ...................................................................................................... 10

Chapter I. The Freedom to Feel: *Sensibilité* and Moral Instruction in the Eighteenth Century ............................................................................................................... 42

Chapter II. *Une École agréable de mœurs*: Sensationism and Moral Instruction in Opera and *Opéra-comique* before the Revolution...................................................................... 76

Chapter III. Politicising Theatrical Sensation: Politics, *Sensibilité*, and the Moral Utility of Theatre during the Revolution ......................................................................... 108

Chapter IV. *Quel art plus que la musique influe sur les mœurs?* Conceptions of *Sensibilité* and Social Virtue in *Opéra-comique* during the Revolution ............................................. 143

Chapter V. *L'instruction se trouve à côté du plaisir* : *Opéra-comique* at the Salle Favart during the Revolution ........................................................................................ 183

Chapter VI. *On peut refuser un trône, une couronne, mais non résister à l'amour :* the sentimental basis of moral instruction in *Pierre le Grand* (1790)........................................ 223

Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 258

Bibliography ..................................................................................................... 267

Appendix A:  New Works Premiered at the Opéra Comique, 1789-1799........................... 307

Appendix B: Original French Texts (Quotations) ............................................................ 323

# Abstract

During the French Revolution (1789-1799), *opéra-comique* was taken in intriguing new directions by the political and social necessities of the day. These required composers of *opéra-comique* to not only satisfy aesthetic demands but also to produce morally instructive works according to the political principles of the Revolution.

The aim of the present study is to elucidate these didactic revolutionary developments, and to situate them in a context of continuity (whilst acknowledging the important, localised ruptures which must be held in tension). During the eighteenth century, *opéra-comique* developed in a climate of intense intellectual ferment known as the Enlightenment in which opera was one of the most contentious subjects. As such, it could hardly avoid being affected and even shaped by a culture in which dispute and disagreement significantly influenced the ways opera was thought about, composed, and received. In particular, I argue that sensationism – sometimes referred to by scholars as a 'culture of *sensibilité*' – had a profound impact on the development of *opéra-comique* during this period which fundamentally shaped the ways in which it was applied to didactic ends during the French Revolution.

As such, I argue that revolutionary *opéra-comique* witnessed a remarkable intertwining of aesthetic function with pedagogical purpose; or, to be more specific, a politicisation of the sentimental and a sentimentalisation of the political, given that so often during the Revolution virtue was equated with both one's contribution to the success of the revolutionary project and one's *sensibilité*. However, I also contribute to a scholarly movement in this field which has sought to dispel the idea that revolutionary opera was primarily used as 'propaganda'; an idea which gained traction several decades ago and unfortunately still lingers. Instead of discussing the subservience of *opéra-comique* to the state during the Revolution, I will highlight the significance of a perceived aesthetic function in which *opéra-comique* was regarded as an opportunity to encourage the citizens of France to participate in what was their own Revolution, rather than simply allowing themselves to be subjected to a centralised ideology monopolised by the state.

In presenting these arguments, the present project builds on a rich field of scholarship on *opéra-comique* during the eighteenth century and the Revolution; however, this is the first study to consider the revolutionary conception and didactic application of *opéra-comique* in relation to the sensationist aesthetics of the Enlightenment period. It thus provides a new lens through which to further critique the notion of the Revolution as aesthetic 'rupture', presenting new evidence for both continuity with the past and development of the revolutionaries' cultural heritage.

## Acknowledgements

In the course of researching and writing this thesis I have received a great deal of support, for which I am very thankful.

Thank you, Lydie, for your unwavering love and generosity, which has made the project's completion possible.

I thank both of my supervisors, Dr Michael Fend and Dr Sanja Perovic. Their tireless support and generous advice has shaped this project from the moment it began to the time of its completion.

I am sincerely grateful to The London Arts and Humanities Partnership (LAHP), who have funded me for the duration of my project through the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

I thank the Music Department at King's College London, the Centre for Enlightenment Studies (also at KCL), and the members of the Revolutionary Researchers Network for facilitating my professional and scholarly development. My thanks also to the staff at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the British Library, the Maughan Library, and the Senate House and Institute of Historical Research Libraries.

For the invaluable advice of my examiners, Sarah Hibberd and David Charlton, I am greatly indebted.

For their support during the time spent making revisions, I am sincerely grateful to Ridley Hall, Cambridge, and especially to the Revd Dr Rob McDonald who guided and helped me throughout.

I am deeply touched by all the support offered throughout the course of my project by Annalies Andries, Vincent Battista, Andrew P. Corkhill, Mark Darlow, Julia Doe, Cliff Eisen, Rebecca Geoffroy-Schwinden, Jacob Huff, Fabio Morabito, Clare Siviter, Tom Stammers, Diane Tisdall, and Patrick Zuk.

Above all, I am deeply grateful to my family. Without the Huffs and the Hills this thesis would never have begun, and without the Pettifers it may not have been so joyfully finished.

# Translation Policy

Throughout this study, where I have quoted from French texts only the English translation is provided in the main body of the text. However, all extracts can be found in their original language in Appendix B. All translations (from both primary and secondary sources) are the work of this author unless otherwise noted in the corresponding footnote.

# List of Musical Examples

All musical examples were transcribed from the 1792 edition of the score, as described in the bibliography.

Ex. 1: Pierre le Grand, Act I Scene 2, bb. 29-36.

Ex. 2: Pierre le Grand, Act I Scene 2, bb. 53-62.

Ex. 3: Pierre le Grand, Act I Scene 1, bb. 21-28.

Ex. 4: Pierre le Grand, Act I Scene 7, bb. 26-38.

Ex. 5: Pierre le Grand, Act II Scene 2, bb. 44-56.

Ex. 6: Pierre le Grand, Act II Scene 2, bb. 72-81.

Ex. 7: Pierre le Grand, Act I Scene 7, bb. 64-77.

Ex. 8: Pierre le Grand, Act I Scene 7, bb. 77-85.

# Introduction

*I believed that it would be absurd to treat the history of opéra-comique seriously and to hold a reasoned discussion of a genre which itself is not [serious or well-reasoned]. I therefore only wished to provide here an enjoyable read appropriate for entertaining the most serious, who furnish this century in abundance…* – Jean-Auguste-Julien Desboulmiers (1769)[1]

Desboulmiers' insistence that *opéra-comique* must not be taken too seriously might surprise a modern reader familiar with the genre's rather distinguished history. Then again, it might not: Nathalie Rizzoni has recently cast serious doubt on the assumption that scholarship has managed to fully extricate itself from the traditional prejudice against *opéra-comique* as a diverting but lowbrow form of entertainment.[2] This prejudice is, according to Rizzoni, due to the genre's bastard origins. On the one hand, *opéra-comique* gestated in the Italian *commedia dell'arte* and later French works (featuring spoken comedy, dance scenes, airs, and instrumental interludes) of the rather prestigious Comédie-Italienne, which enjoyed royal patronage during the seventeenth century; on the other, it owed a great deal to the rather more earthy tradition of the popular Parisian fairs.[3] During the early eighteenth century, Paris held these annual fairs (*foires*) at Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent, which offered the public (often illegitimate) performances of works mixing well-known tunes, humour, and social or political critique. The biting satire of these works made them tremendously popular with audiences, but did not necessarily endear them to the authorities or to critics like Desboulmiers.

During a period of exile from Paris for the *Italiens* after upsetting the King (1697-1716), the *foire* theatres were quick to adopt their repertoire, although in large part the survival of these early works – styled as *vaudevilles* or *opéras-comiques en vaudevilles* after c.1709 – was due to the ingenuity of the performing troupes in flouting the many official legal decrees directed against them. Eventually the *foire* troupes institutionalised and merged to begin the Théâtre

[1] Jean-Auguste-Julien Desboulmiers, *Histoire du théâtre de l'opéra comique*, vol. 1 (Paris: Lacombe, 1769), 1.
[2] Nathalie Rizzoni, "Inconnaissance de la Foire," in *L'invention des genres lyriques français et leur redécouverte au XIXe siècle*, eds. Agnès Terrier and Alexandre Dratwicki (Lyon: Symétrie, 2010), 119-270.
[3] *Commedia dell'arte* was an Italian dramatic from which consisted of improvised comedy based on preconceived scenarios. It often featured pantomime and light music.

de l'Opéra Comique in the Théâtre de la Foire Saint-Germain in December 1714.[4] They obtained the right of *privilège* to perform light comedies mixing song, dance and spectacle in 1716.[5] These pieces, often called *opéras-comiques*, became distinctive by their interspersion of spoken dialogue with various musical elements (including ariettes, choruses, and dance scenes), and parody.

The company moved on from their original sites at Saint-Laurent and Saint-Germain in 1762, when they merged with the Comédie-Italienne in February and added their name. The combined troupe took up residence in the Hôtel de Bourgogne for two decades until moving again, this time to the newly-built Salle Favart in 1783, where they remained throughout the Revolution and reverted to the original name of Opéra Comique in 1793. After the merger of 1762, a nucleus of creative artists was formed which helped to consolidate the reputation and identity of the Opéra Comique. These included the librettists Charles-Simon Favart, Jean-François Marmontel, Michel-Jean Sedaine, and Nicolas-Étienne Framery; and the composers François-André Danican Philidor, Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny, and André Ernest Modeste Grétry. As we will see, many of these individuals continued to have their works performed well into or beyond the revolutionary decade, and some remained active during this period.

Thanks to their attention, *opéra-comique* flourished during the second half of the eighteenth century. The Comédie-Italienne remained the primary theatre for its performance, although it did face competition after the Théâtre de Monsieur was formed in 1789 (which became the Théâtre Feydeau in 1791). This competition was not resolved until 1801, when the Opéra Comique and the Théâtre Feydeau merged.

Thus, on the eve of the French Revolution in 1789, *opéra-comique* had already experienced a turbulent history. But we should observe that there were two primary strands in its development: one popular (in the sense that it emerged from amongst the lower and middle classes) and the other institutional (in the sense that it also emerged from a prestigious national theatre). Because of the complex nature of their mixture – and despite the legal requirements of *privilège* – the definition of what constituted an *opéra-comique* in the eighteenth century remained relatively hazy. As Robert Letellier has indicated, "the most basic

[4] *Vaudevilles* were popular tunes which would frequently be repurposed with new words. This proved an excellent vehicle for satire. As Martin Cooper points out, the main characteristics of the vaudeville were "a certain malicious naïveté and a sly, bantering good humour". See *Opéra Comique* (London: Max Parish and Co. Limited, 1949), 13-14.

[5] *Privilège* was a system of theatrical control instituted under the *ancien régime* which afforded the rights of performance for specific genres of drama to particular theatres at the discretion of the King and his ministers. It meant, in essence, that the government could regulate what was performed where and when, and that the large, prestigious French theatres could dominate the market. It was also a source of revenue for these theatres, for they were empowered to lease the rights to other institutions in return for an annual fee.

definition given to this genre is that pieces were named *opéras-comiques* only because they were performed at the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique".[6] The result was a diverse repertoire with many different characteristics, and a broad and descriptive nomenclature which applied to the type or sub-genre of a work.

Strictly speaking, this mixture of spoken dialogue with sung arias and choruses was the only inviolable characteristic of *opéra-comique*, as M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet and Richard Langham Smith point out.[7] Nevertheless *opéra-comique* could also be readily identified by any number of common characteristics which had featured both in the *foires* and at the Hôtel de Bourgogne.[8] For example, it frequently featured popular tunes (*vaudevilles*) alongside original material; although it was not always overtly comic (though it could be), it was often satirical in some fashion; it focused on realistic settings with a proliferation of quotidian locations and themes; and the characters were often realistic or earthy, and usually more complex than their *tragique* counterparts. [9]

As we shall explore in later chapters, during the French Revolution (1789-1799) *opéra-comique* was taken in intriguing new directions by the political and social upheavals of the day. It was necessary for composers of *opéra-comique* to not only satisfy aesthetic demands, but also to produce morally instructive works in keeping with political principles of the Revolution (which will be discussed later in the present study).

The aim of the present study is to elucidate these revolutionary developments in *opéra-comique*, and to situate them firmly in a context of continuity whilst acknowledging smaller-scale, localised ruptures. During the eighteenth century, *opéra-comique* developed in a climate of intense intellectual ferment known as the Enlightenment, in which opera was a contentious subject. As such, it could hardly avoid being affected and even shaped by a culture in which dispute and disagreement significantly influenced the ways opera was thought about, composed, and received; I aim to explore and unpack the significance of this influence for *opéra-comique*.

---

[6] Robert Ignatius Letellier, *Opéra-Comique: a Sourcebook* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), xvii.

[7] M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet and Richard Langham Smith, "Opéra-comique," Oxford Music online, accessed 16/08/17, http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/43715.

[8] It seems germane to observe that *opéra-comique* and *opera buffa* were sister genres, both having derived in part from *commedia dell'arte*. Some *opere buffe* were translated into French and performed in Paris, which produced a genre called *opéra bouffe*. Several appeared at the Opéra Comique both before and during the French Revolution.

[9] Further details on the generic characteristics of *opéra-comique*, including the aesthetic relevance of *comédie* can be found in Chapter II. See pp. 88-105.

Of course, I am not alone in my desire to highlight continuities between the Enlightenment and the Revolution. For example, the general inflence of eighteenth-century *philosophie* on the cultural and political experience of the Revolution is already well established and has its own distinctive historiography. The traditional narrative argues that the daring ideas of the Enlightenment period were profoundly influential (either for good or for ill) on the generation of 1789. This is a narrative which dates back to the Revolution itself. In 1790, the Anglo-Irish statesmen and political theorist Edmund Buke argued that the Revolution would end in disaster because its roots were in the abstract principles of the Enlightenment's *philosophes* (a dangerous "literary cabal" of "demagogues"), who had broadly failed to account for the unpredictability of society and human nature.[10] In the nineteenth century, this argument was popularised by two disciples of Burke: Alexis de Tocqueville and Hippolyte Taine. De Tocqueville perceived that the Enlightenment resulted in philosophers of little practical expertise supplanting true politicians as the leading authority in matters of government, forcing political aspirations into the literary channel and political discourse into philosophic garb.[11] Similarly, Taine argued that these same *philosophes* were responsible for whipping up a militant fanaticism amongst the populace, propagating a political 'poison' through society which ultimately led to the upheavals of 1789 and the violence of the Terror.[12]

In the early twentieth century, Daniel Mornet offered a less subjective account of the Revolution's origins, but reiterated the essentially teleological dimension of this discourse in arguing that the 'popularity' or common currency of philosophical ideas amongst the people of France were its primary catalyst. He perceived the Revolution as the consolidating victory of an intellectual struggle which had been waged between the traditional authorities (grounded particularly in theology and the Church) and the *philosophes* (champions of science and the scientific method) since the turn of the eighteenth century.[13]

In more recent years, several seminal studies have been conducted on the subject. In his 1990 monograph, entitled *Les origines culturelles de la Révolution française*, Roger Chartier sought to overturn the teleological narrative by demonstrating that the revolutionaries 're-invented' the Enlightenment with new reading practices: appropriating, transforming, reformulating and exceeding its values.[14] He preferred to conceive of the Enlightenment and

---

[10] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. Frank M. Turner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 95.

[11] Alexis de Tocqueville, *L'Ancien régime et la révolution*, 7th ed. (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1866), 208-209.

[12] Hippolyte Taine, *Les Origines de la France contemporaine*, vol. 1, *L'Ancien régime* (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1986), 260-280.

[13] Daniel Mornet, *Les origines intellectuelles de la Révolution française, 1715-1787* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1933).

[14] Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, tr. Lydia G. Cochrane (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991), 2, 19.

Revolution as two events connected together in a broader historical process, which was a notion proffered by the French historian, Alphonse Dupront, in 1963. Dupront wrote that:

> The world of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution stand like two manifestations (or epiphenomena) of a greater process– that of the definition of a society of independent men without myths or religions… a "modern society"… The true connections of cause and effect between the one and the other are those of this common dependence on a broader and more whole historical phenomenon than their own.[15]

Most recently, Jonathan Israel has taken something of an intermediary position between these distinct historiographical narratives. However, he seems ultimately to have returned to a more teleological mode of argumentation. He contends that the Revolution was the product of numerous cultural, economic, social, and political influences, but that these were essentially of secondary importance compared to effect of the "Radical Enlightenment". He sees the *philosophes* as having "inspired and equipped the leadership of the authentic Revolution. They could do so because the Radical Enlightenment alone offered a package of values [which were] sufficiently universal, secular, and egalitarian to set in motion the forces of a broad, general emancipation based on reason, freedom of thought, and democracy."[16]

It is more difficult to establish similarly focused conclusions about our understanding of the influence of the Enlightenment on opera. This is, at least in part, because scholars like Israel, Chartier, Taine and de Tocqueville have typically anchored their work in broad but homologising topics like 'culture' or 'intellectualism', whereas the attention of musicologists has understandably been more dispersed according to expertise and interest. Nevertheless, many excellent studies have demonstrated important strands of this influence in the operatic sphere: Thomas Bauman and Marita McClymonds' edited volume *Opera and the Enlightenment* is a good example. Under the same subject heading, scholars have written many compelling chapters on diverse subjects from the dramatic role of the chorus in French opera to the reforms of Gluck's libretti.[17]

This breadth is an important testament to the operatic ferment stimulated by eighteenth-century intellectual culture, even if the same breadth partially inhibits meaningful generalisation on the matter. Nevertheless, whilst caution is appropriate, I do not believe we have to restrain ourselves entirely: musicologists have, after all, seemed to identify certain

---

[15] Alphonse Dupront, *Les lettres, les sciences, la religion et les arts dans la société française de la deuxième moitié du dix-huitième siècle* (Paris: Centre de Documentation Universitaire, 1963), 198. Quoted from Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, 21.

[16] Jonathan Israel, *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French Revolution from the Rights of Man to Robespierre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 695, 708.

[17] Thomas Bauman and Marita Petzoldt McClymonds, eds., *Opera and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

eighteenth-century issues as particularly significant areas for attention. Three in particular are accounted for in the second part of David Charlton's recent study, *Opera in the Age of Rousseau: Music, Confrontation, Realism*, in which he demonstrates that the age of Enlightenment witnessed a new emphasis on "plurality of operatic styles," (stylistic diversity), "a desire for dramatic unity" (dramatic weight) and "in varying degrees, a willingness for change" (reform). These emphases were the result of a Parisian social infrastructure which positively encouraged intellectual and artistic ferment, a fact which Charlton aptly demonstrates with his examination of the *Mercure de France* as "an agent in [the] reform process."[18]

We might add to this a fourth point if we were to return to an earlier collection of Charlton's essays: the increasing dramatic or psychological importance of the orchestra, as audiences learnt to accept "that orchestras and instruments embodied narrative capacity", and developed "an expectation that the interior life of operatic figures would be complexly symbolised by orchestral means… to the extent that their consciousness, inner contradictions and imaginations might be depicted from moment to moment so clearly that we might envision them as separate characters." The aesthetic work of Diderot, Marmontel, Suard, Chabanon and others was vital in developing these listening habits.[19]

I think that a fifth point is also pertinent, though the implications might be less immediately clear. Cynthia Verba poined out that Enlightenment culture created a paradigm in which musical debate became noisy and emotive, as scholars devoted their collective effort to "major themes" addressed through "sustained musical dialogue[s]" in which disagreement was the order of the day.[20] This is important for the present study because it will inform our methodology: we will attend to particular moments, events, and publications of historical significance in order to hear them speak into the bigger picture of operatic thought, culture and praxis during the Enlightenment and Revolutionary periods.

Each of these five emphases will inform the present study at various points. But what distinguishes my particular interest in continuity is the desire to explore the influence of Enlightenment sensibility or 'sensationism' on revolutionary *opéra-comique*. Sensationism was a philosophical and psychological theory which shaped the very culture of the eighteenth century, not least in the sphere of the arts. As John C. O'Neal described, it was:

---

[18] David Charlton, *Opera in the Age of Rousseau: Music, Confrontation, Realism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 161, 216-224.

[19] David Charlton, "Envoicing the Orchestra," in *French Opera 1730-1830: Meaning and Media*, ed. David Charlton, (Aldershot and Brookfield: Ashgate Variorum, 2000), 31.

[20] Cynthia Verba, *Music and the French Enlightenment: Reconstruction of a Dialogue, 1750–1764* (New York: Clarendon Press of Oxford University Press, 1993), 5-7.

> the most widely accepted way of thinking among eighteenth-century French intellectuals… Sensationist theory itself rested on two assumptions: that we cannot know external objects with certainty; all we can know is our relation to them (i.e., our sensations), and that we can achieve progress only after coming to a thorough understanding of human nature, which was seen as universal. Sensationism's chief claim was, of course, that all our ideas come from sensations.[21]

The philosophical and aesthetic implications of sensationism in the eighteenth century will be explored fully in the first chapters of the present study, but the theory was, in brief, founded on the idea of man's perceived *sensibilité*, which indicated an interrelation between the human body – consisting of a multitude of sensory organs which registered external stimuli – and the mind or 'spirit', which was understood to be the seat of reason. Proponents of sensationism thus perceived man as a passionate being shaped and altered by his exposure to sensations, which in turn prompted the interaction of various bodily organs, produced an impression, and ultimately affected behaviour. As Anne C. Vila has pointed out, it theorised man's "innate capacity to react to stimuli, which was held to underlie all the phenomena of life in the human body… [it was] the essential link between the human body and the psychological, intellectual, and ethical faculties of humankind." Indeed, in her monograph on the subject, Vila has aptly demonstrated sensationism's remarkable pervasiveness. It was indeed far more than "a fashionable cult of histrionic emotionalism or the self-image of a society that was peculiarly fond of shedding tears of melancholia, high-minded sympathy, or tender feeling." It was, in fact, "the object of a unique intellectual culture", and, moreover, "fundamental to this period's effort to forge a global, unified, understanding of human nature."[22]

David J. Denby has produced perhaps the most thorough study of how this sensationism shaped eighteenth-century culture in the literary sphere, although he prefers the term 'sentimentalism' which, he argues, is better suited to communicating a textual focus due to its emphasis on formal narrative structure.[23] In this study, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France*, Denby's primary contention is that sentimental narratives, derived from and produced by the dominant sensationist purview, "occupy a central place in the project of the French Enlightenment",[24] which fits with the general consensus that sensationism dominated eighteenth-century culture. Indeed, besides O'Neal, Vila, and Denby, several studies in recent decades have established this very point. For example, William Reddy's influential study, *The Navigation of Feeling*, concludes that the years 1700-1789 witnessed an astonishingly

---

[21] John C. O'Neal, *The Authority of Experience: Sensationist Theory in the French Enlightenment* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 1-2.
[22] Anne C. Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology: Sensibility in the Literature and Medicine of Eighteenth-Century France* (London and Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 2-3.
[23] David J. Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France, 1760-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 4.
[24] Ibid, 240.

pervasive “flowering of sentimentalism” in France, in which the emotions were perceived as the purest form of human expression and the seat of morality.[25] Similarly, Michael Bell points to a dominant “cult of sentiment… [a] celebration of humane feeling which attempted to base the moral life itself on feeling.”[26] And this seems to be the common foundation underscoring a number of studies devoted solely to specific disciplines, ranging from Literary Studies (for example, Jay Caplan’s *Framed Narrative: Diderot’s Genealogy of the Beholder*) to Theatre Studies (Julie Candler Hayes, “The French Theater of Sympathy”), Art History (Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot*), and Musicology (Georgia Cowart, “Musical aesthetics of the *Siècle des Lumières*” and other earlier publications).[27] In sum, Joan DeJean’s assertion that the Enlightenment produced a “radically revised vision” of the emotions and the human heart, one “whose influence became so pervasive that it is evident in every discourse essential to the age of Enlightenment”, thus seems a fitting summary of the contemporary perception of eighteenth century sensationism.[28]

However, where Denby’s study is distinctive and especially pertinent to the present project is in its focus on how, in the eighteenth century, the sentimental narrative became indicative of ongoing endeavours to reform and redefine society according to new standards of “social solidarity and sympathy… in which notions of community and public opinion come to play an increasingly crucial role.” But Denby also demonstrated that the sentimental narrative came to influence these same endeavours, so that the whole process might be regarded as a circular progression of mutual reinforcement. In other words, sentimental narratives were indeed indicative of (and affected by) transformations already happening in eighteenth-century society, but in turn they also came to influence this process, particularly through superimposing themselves on political and social discourse.[29]

Given the present project’s focus on the role and influence of sensationism in the composition, development, and use of *opéra-comique* (particularly to foster a culture of socio-political participation) during the Revolution, Denby’s conception of the place of the ‘sentimental’ in

[25] William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 141-172.
[26] Michael Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics, and the Culture of Feeling* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 2.
[27] See Jay Caplan, *Framed Narrative: Diderot’s Genealogy of the Beholder* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985); Julie Candler Hayes, “The French Theater of Sympathy,” in *Sympathy: A History*, ed. Eric Schliesser, 199-207 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Georgia Cowart, “Musical aesthetics of the *Siècle des Lumières*,” in *The Cambridge Companion to French Music*, ed. Simon Trezise, 346-361 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); see also Cowart’s “Sense and sensibility in eighteenth-century musical thought,” *Acta musicological* 56 (1984), 251-266; and *French Musical Thought* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1989).
[28] Joan DeJean, *Ancients Against Moderns: Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin de Siècle* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 79.
[29] Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France*, 2-3.

shaping society through new bonds of pity, solidarity and sympathy is apt. Moreover, although focusing on the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries very broadly, Denby also drew two important conclusions about sensationism during the Revolution which are relevant here. Firstly, he argued that the French Revolution was the "central historical experience" in which Enlightenment 'sentimentalism' was realised to an unprecedented degree, thus representing a significant point of continuity between "supposedly separate periods and movements… [which allow] us to isolate those elements where change and realignment do indeed take place." Second, this outworking was so complete that for a short period it fills "the social and historical space… [and] the relation between text and history is total and transparent… it is almost as though the historical actors were acting out a text, as though history had become for them a question of saying the right thing, of acting in conformity with a script or a grammar which of necessity must produce the right moral outcome, the ultimate happy ending". Of course, this must be moderated by the fact that there were ongoing complexities and tensions between sentimentalism and the social hierarchy, which meant that the models of social relations held up by sentimental texts only partly conformed to the real social behaviour. Revolutionary culture shared at least this in common with the *ancien régime*.[30]

In the present project, I concur with Denby's assessment of the Revolution as the culmination of Enlightenment sensationist ideals. I will similarly seek to emphasise that these ideals are important evidence for cultural continuity, but also that they underwent significant transformation or realignment during the Revolution through a process of politicisation. This is something that Cecilia Feilla has made more explicit in her recent study on sentimental theatre during the French Revolution. She points out that in the past, scholars have been too quick to distinguish between the political and sentimental, as if the two were mutually exclusive categories. The underlying assumption, then, was that sentimentality and revolutionary politics and culture were separate, even in the arts. According to Feilla, quite the opposite was true, in fact: "sentimentality cannot be neatly separated from the political theater as a mere backdrop to the political mainstage; rather, it was the very cloth from which Revolutionary theatre, and Revolutionary culture more generally, was cut." This is important for the very reason that some of the most popular pieces of revolutionary theatre have been neglected simply because scholars have traditionally perceived them as merely sentimental, and thus of little political and historical merit.[31] Her study draws primarily on spoken theatre and highlights *Paméla, ou la vertu récompensée* (1788/1793) and *La Chaste Suzanne* (1793) as examples,

---

[30] Ibid, 241, 243-244.

[31] Cecilia Feilla, *The Sentimental Theatre of the French Revolution* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 9-10.

but, as the present project will seek to establish, the same must be said for *opéra-comique* (indeed, Chapter VI identifies and examines *Pierre le Grand* as an apposite case).

I agree with Feilla that the popular sentimental theatre of the Revolution provides a unique insight into revolutionary culture in general. As she states:

> the popular sentimental theater served a vital function in revolutionary culture and provides invaluable insight into the ways in which people who lived through the Revolution experienced, expressed, and made sense of the profound transformations taking place in the social and political reality of France. With the immediate press of events demanding new modes for imagining the self and the self's relation to others, the sentimental stage's investment in the affective and psychological experience of spectators helped define in emotional terms the changed relationships of individuals to their compatriots and to the new government and institutions being formed… Sentimental theater offered the public a visible and continuously-performed ideal community… in a world where social, political, and religious attachments were being dissolved. Feeling increasingly became a matter of public as well as private consequence, and thus of political not just psychological interest.[32]

Feilla is by no means alone in investigating the importance of sensationism in the culture of the Revolution. There is a rich historiographical tradition dating back to the late nineteenth century which has explored many of the nuances of the sentimental in this context, which Feilla herself outlines.[33] Some of the earlier contributors to the field were Henri Welschinger (1880), Hippolyte Taine (1885), Daniel Mornet (1933), and Pierre Trahard (1936), who were very clear that the revolutionary generation was eminently a *sensible* one, and that this *sensibilité* was often exhibited and outpoured in patriotism.[34] As Feilla points out, though, these scholars were more concerned with the "psychological sensitivity and expressiveness of the revolutionaries" themselves rather than "the formal and aesthetic modes" through which this was envoiced.[35] More recently, though, scholars have begun to attend to these considerations too. For example, Emmett Kennedy has contended that sensibility (his preferred terminology) transitioned from a "consoling" form under the *ancien régime* to a vehicle for emotional horror during the Terror;[36] Reddy has highlighted the sentimentality of revolutionary discourse, both public and personal;[37] and Katherine Astbury has demonstrated

---

[32] Ibid, 14-15.
[33] Ibid, 11-15.
[34] Henri Welschinger, *Le Théâtre de la Révolution française, 1789-1799 : Avec documents inédits* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1968); Taine, *Les Origines de la France contemporaine*, vol. 1, 208-210; Mornet, *Les origines intellectuelles de la Révolution française*; and Pierre Trahard, *La sensibilité révolutionnaire, `1789-1799* (Paris: Boivin, 1936).
[35] Feilla, *The Sentimental Theatre of the French Revolution*, 12-15.
[36] Emmett Kennedy, *A Cultural History of the French Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 329.
[37] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 173-210.

that sentimentalism provided an important means through which authors engaged with political culture, and was "rejuvenated" under the Terror as a means of coming to terms with trauma.[38] Moreover, since the publication of *The Sentimental Theatre of the French Revolution*, we have also seen in Musicology that sentimentalism shaped late revolutionary melodrama by providing a rich thematic resource which could be paired with "the techniques of early melodrama" to propel the genre into its nineteenth-century developments.[39]

The present study is intended as a contribution to this "returning [scholarly] interest [in] the forms and functions of sensibility and sentimentality in the culture of the French Revolution".[40] However, my unique focus will be the development and application of *opéra-comique* during the Revolution, and specifically how these were inextricably bound up in eighteenth-century sensationism. I have already stated that during the Revolution *opéra-comique* was taken in intriguing new directions by the political and social necessities of the day, which required composers of *opéra-comique* to not only satisfy aesthetic demands but also to produce morally instructive works in keeping with the Revolution's political principles. Most significantly, this meant that *opéra-comique* was compelled to take on a didactic function for which, in order to achieve success, it depended upon both its generic particularities (especially its propensity for satire and *ridicule*) and – very much related – its exceptional capacity for moving the emotions.

As such, I argue that revolutionary *opéra-comique* witnessed a remarkable intertwining of aesthetic function with pedagogical purpose, or, to be more specific, a politicisation of the sentimental and a sentimentalisation of the political, given that so often during the Revolution virtue was equated with both one's contribution to the success of the revolutionary project and one's *sensibilité*. This too will be explored in the coming chapters.

There is therefore a parallel between my argument and Denby's contention that 'sentimentalism' was both evidence of and a contributor to social reform in the decades preceding 1789, only now I hope to move the focus towards exploring this in a revolutionary context in order to highlight important continuities with the age of Enlightenment which have thus far been overlooked in the case of *opéra-comique*. I do not believe that the history of revolutionary *opéra-comique* can be fully grasped without first coming to terms with eighteenth-century sensationism, not least because the way it was conceived during this later period was so heavily contingent upon pre-existing assumptions about audience *sensibilité* and the power of sentimental expression. Nevertheless, until now, scholars have largely

---

[38] Katherine Astbury, *Narrative Responses to the Trauma of the French Revolution* (New York: Legenda, 2012), 102-131.
[39] Ellen Lockhart, "Forms and Themes of Early Melodrama," in *The Melodramatic Moment: Music and Theatrical Culture, 1790-1820*, eds. Katherine Hambridge and Jonathan Hicks, 25-42 (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 41.
[40] Feilla, *The Sentimental Theatre of the French Revolution*, 14.

attempted to tell its story without devoting sufficient attention to this matter. Michael McClellan's PhD dissertation on the Théâtre Feydeau is a notable exception which will be discussed shortly; but as his study focused primarily on revolutionary events rather than aesthetic texts, it remains to explore the exact nature of their intellectual commitment to eighteenth-century sensationism and especially the ways in which they envisioned applying it to their own situation.[41]

No doubt the more general latency of sensationism in scholarship on revolutionary *opéra-comique* is at least in part due to the fact that the influence of sensationism on *opéra-comique* during the eighteenth century as whole has not received a great deal of attention. However, there have been three important contributions over recent decades. In 2010, Janet Kristen Leavens argued that the development of *opéra-comique* during this period hinged on processes of 'sympathy', which were intended to emphasise relationality: "[sympathy forged] connections between self and other, but also between various levels of intrapsychic bodily and cognitive experience, between inner worlds of emotion and imagination and outer worlds of action, and even… between collectively imagined present, past and future."[42] However, her focus is specifically on sympathy: "moral and affective bonds through which the Enlightenment [sensationists] imagined a natural basis for the social order as well as the pleasures and transformative potential of art."[43]

Although Leavens consciously limits her project to the role of sympathy in *opéra-comique* spectatorship and does not consider the broader influence of sensationism on *opéra-comique* during the eighteenth century, some headway has been made into the wider issues by Downing A. Thomas. Through his examination of the contemporary aesthetic understandings of *opéra-comique*, Thomas argues that:

> eighteenth-century writers saw in music a form of "therapy" and a catalyst for sympathy – a trigger for a deep-seated intersubjectivity… opera came to be understood in the eighteenth century as fostering an otherwise elusive capacity for generating sympathy and identification; and, therefore, that it held a distinctive position in the emergent realm of the aesthetic – the aesthetic being invested from the beginning with the mission of reconciling the multiple inflections of individual, subjective feeling with the general traits of a common humanity.[44]

---

[41] See Michael McClellan, "Battling over the Lyric Muse: Expressions of Revolution and Counterrevolution at the Théâtre Feydeau, 1789-1801," (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 1994).
[42] Janet Kristen Leavens, "Figures of Sympathy in Eighteenth-Century Opéra-Comique," (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2010), 225-226.
[43] Ibid, 1.
[44] Downing A. Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 179-180.

He also proposes that *opéra-comique*'s place in this eighteenth-century perspective of opera was somewhat privileged: citing diverse authors including du Rozoi, Chabanon, and Marmontel, he argues that the *philosophes* saw it as "the theatrical genre that spoke most powerfully to the heart", not least because its peculiar mixing of spoken dialogue and song exerted a "particular sentimental effect" through its solicitation of "spectators' desires and identifications".[45]

The crux of Thomas' argument, however, is that opera's affective power over the emotions produced a radically new perspective on audience listening practices in France. He contends that from the middle of the eighteenth century, the dominance of sensationism meant that spectators were believed to experience other individuals through listening, and thus "come into contact with the boundary between singular and shared human experiences." The result was that the spectator was invited to reconcile with the "origins of his or her humanity", identify with the feelings of others, and participate in the communal experience of society. Because of *opéra-comique*'s particular affectivity, argues Thomas, "the Opéra-Comique became a place in which these mechanisms could be encouraged and affirmed through acts of spectatorship and identification, fuelled in part by the desire that is embedded or sublimated in that identification… To attend an *opéra-comique* therefore constituted a social act of participation in cultural values and beliefs that were quite distinct from those that had existed several decades earlier."[46] The same could be said, of course, for a sense of 'participation' existing in the performance of any genre of opera during this period, but in the present study we are primarily concerned with the generic particularities of *opéra-comique* (identified by Thomas and cited above) which intensified the feeling of participation to an unprecedented degree.

These conclusions are profound for our understanding of *opéra-comique* under the *ancien régime*, because not only do they shed new light on how the genre was theorised aesthetically, but also on understandings of listening and performance practices. Thomas study evaluates these sensitively, highlighting important developments in *opéra-comique*. These include, for example, the growing (albeit changing) role of absorption in dramatic theory and, and examples of how audience behaviour seemed to confirm that these developments were not only theoretical.[47]

But there are broader implications, too, which have yet to be fully considered, either by Thomas or by Leavens. For example, given its power to transport the spectator to this liminal space between "singular and shared human experience", what was the perceived utility of

---

[45] Ibid, 203, 225-262.
[46] Ibid, 262-264, 319-320.
[47] Ibid, 313-314.

*opéra-comique* as a moral and social pedagogical tool?[48] How did composers respond to these theoretical developments, or, given that theory usually follows praxis rather than the other way around, did composers share their contemporaries' conceptions of sentimental strategies which could be employed in *opéra-comique*?[49] Most importantly, what consequences did the *philosophes*' conception of *opéra-comique* as a "social act of participation in cultural values and beliefs" bear for its theorisation and application during the Revolution of 1789, in which social participation, cultural values and beliefs were issues of the most immediate importance?[50]

In the present study I intend to bridge these gaps by positing answers to these questions, and, in order to do so, focus my attention specifically on the connection between sensationism and lessons of civic virtue in *opéra-comique* during the Revolution. This will necessitate revisiting territory already covered in part by Thomas, at least in the early chapters in which I intend to establish a foundation for revolutionary *opéra-comique* in the Enlightenment culture of sensationism: like Downing Thomas, I contend that sensationism might be understood in terms of its function as a new "conceptual matrix" by which opera and *opéra-comique* were reconceptualised in the eighteenth century.[51] However, I believe this is only one part of the story which is yet to be outlined in full. As Rousseau and d'Alembert's raging argument over theatre's moral value would suggest, any process of 'reconceptualising' *opéra-comique* could never be merely aesthetic. It would inevitably have to contend with issues of its didactic function also.

Terminology is of course an important consideration here, and it will be evident by now that the terminology employed in studies on this subject is as diverse as the authors writing. Even the term 'sensationism' is interchangeable, depending on both context and preference: for example, O'Neal employs 'sensationism' where Denby prefers 'sentimentalism', Feilla 'sentimentality', and various French authors '*sensibilité*' or '*sentimentalité*'. Consistency is thus an important consideration. In the present study, I will employ 'sensationism' to refer to the theory discussed above, rooted in the belief that all our ideas are derived from sensations. I define sensationsm, with O'Neal (including his ideas discussed previously), as "a philosophical and a psychological theory… [whose] chief claim was, of course, that all our ideas come from

---

48 Ibid, 262-264, 319-320.

49 Charlton, "Envoicing the Orchestra", 2.

50 James Butler Kopp has devoted more attention than Leavens or Thomas to exploring how *opéra-comique's* moral function helped to shape and stimulate its aesthetic development during the eighteenth century; however, he in turn devotes far less to issues of sensationism. As such, the connection remains opaque. See James Butler Kopp, "The Drame Lyrique: A Study in the Esthetics of Opéra-Comique, 1762-1791" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1982).

51 Downing Thomas, *Music and the origins of language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 149.

sensations."[52] Sensations were, in turn, the external objects which made their impressions on the body (specifically, objects of smell, touch, taste, seeing, and hearing). They were sometimes referred to by contemporary French thinkers as 'sentiments', which Henri Fouquet defined as "a power realised in action, *potentia in actum redacta*… the impulsion which draws us towards these [external] objects, or drives us away from them."[53]

Then, taking the lead from Joan deJean (who has arguably problematised terminology most effectively), I will use '*sensibilité*' to refer to an individual's capacity to experience these sensations (with '*sensible*' as the congruent adjective). Eighteenth-century conceptions of what this meant and how *sensibilité* worked will be discussed in detail in the first chapter of the present study, but Henri Fouquet's definition is again appropriate here: "[*sensibilité* is] an attribute by which certain [body] parts have means of perceiving the impressions of external objects, and therefore producing movements relative to the degree of intensity of this perception."[54] I will reserve the adjective 'sentimental' to refer either to works (texts or musical works) and praxes employing devices, processes, or Denby's "formal structures", intended to produce these sensations with the goal of eliciting a profound emotional response from the audience.[55]

I have chosen to focus on *opéra-comique* in relation to sensationism in part because Leavens' and Thomas' studies have demonstrated just how fruitful this approach can be, especially in the light of their conclusions above. However, as I have already suggested, they have also raised important questions which now remain to be addressed, particularly given that there is currently no study on *opéra-comique* during the Revolution which evaluates the influence of Enlightenment intellectual thought and culture in shaping its theorisation, composition and application between 1789-1800. This is in spite of the fact that in Literary Studies and other fields, the Revolution is commonly seen – as per Denby – as the "culmination" of the cult of sensibility.

However, although my focus will be *opéra-comique* specifically, many of the conclusions I make concerning the intertwining of sensationism and moral instruction will also be relevant for other genres of opera during the same period. In this way I hope to contribute to a growing area of opera scholarship which focuses on sensationism during the eighteenth century. In 2005, Jacqueline Waeber pointed to the success of musico-dramatic genres in the eighteenth

---

[52] O'Neal, *The Authority of Experience*, 1.
[53] Henri Fouquet, "Sensibilité, Sentiment," in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc*., eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project [Spring 2013 edition], ed. Robert Morrissey), accessed 19/01/17, http://artflsrv02.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.14:43.encyclopedie0513, 15:38.
[54] Ibid, 15:38.
[55] DeJean, *Ancients Against Moderns*, 78-89; Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order*, 4.

century which nurtured a certain *excès de sens*, such as Rousseau's melodrama *Pygmalion* (1762).[56] This has been corroborated recently by Stefano Castelvecchi, whose cross-generic approach to the lyric theatre during this period contends that 'sentimental opera' was like a genre of its own, or a "family of works conjoining the sentimental powers of literature, the visual arts, corporeal expression and of course music." He argues that their proliferation "managed to give operatic embodiment to the secular religion of sensibility – that is to say, to many of the century's most fervent feelings, ideals and hopes", and questions whether we can really ever hope to understand these works without properly exploring their particular aesthetic nuances and foundation in European sentimental culture.[57]

Indeed, Michael Fend has proposed that this culture was so influential that it must be regarded as having launched a musical revolution as early as the 1740s, predating and outreaching the reforms of Gluck as "the lengths of time apparently shortened in which opera composers, librettists, and managers responded to writers' and audiences' aesthetic expectations."[58] Georgia Cowart argues that the result of these developments was "the emergence of a respect for the arts as the beacon and embodiment of a new society based on the Enlightenment ideals of love, peace and sensuous (and sensual) beauty",[59] whilst Mark Darlow has demonstrated that it produced a "new consensus" that audiences were suitably disposed towards receiving works which were above all intended to act upon and move the emotions.[60]

Since Tili Boon Cuillé's pioneering study on the intertwining of visual and musical devices in French literature, there has also been a growing understanding that the affective impact of opera on the emotions was not solely an aural phenomenon. Cuillé's conclusion was that eighteenth-century authors sought to appeal to their readers' emotions both "via the ear *and* the eye", which is something that both Darlow and Charlton have subsequently explored in an operatic context.[61] Darlow's essay on *chiaroscuro* rightly highlights that opera's power over the emotions was most frequently described by theorists and journalists in visual terms. Operatic performances were described as "tableaux of violent and contrasting passions", with

[56] Jacqueline Waeber, *En musique dans le texte: le mélodrame de Rousseau à Schoenberg* (Paris: Van Dieren Éditeur, 2005), 39-43.
[57] Stefano Castelvecchi, *Sentimental Opera: Questions of Genre in the Age of Bourgeois Drama* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 186-187, 231.
[58] Michael Fend, "Romantic Empowerment at the Paris Opera in the 1770s and 1780s," *Music and Letters* 94 no. 2, 263-294 (2013), 273.
[59] Cowart, "Musical aesthetics of the *Siècle des Lumières*", 355.
[60] Mark Darlow, *Dissonance in the Republic of Letters: The Querelle des Gluckistes et des Piccinistes* (London: Legenda, 2013), 154.
[61] Tili Boon Cuillé, *Narrative Interludes: Musical Tableaux in Eighteenth-Century French Texts* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2006), xv.

genres distinguished in terms of the particular pictorial effects they evoked musically.[62] Similarly, taking Grétry's *Lisbeth* (1797) as a case study, Charlton demonstrates how important the collaboration of composer, dramatist and landscape painter/set designer was seen to be in seeking to "dispose the spirit to a certain kind of feeling and to the reception of certain ideas."[63]

Each of these studies have contributed greatly to our understanding of the importance of sensationism in shaping eighteenth-century opera culture, and this understanding will inform our present approach to *opéra-comique* during the Revolution. We shall find, for instance, Darlow, Charlton and Cuillé's insistence on an intertwining of the visual and the aural an important consideration in evaluating the importance of sentimental compositional procedures in the revolutionary repertoire (not least in *Pierre le Grand*, as will be explored in Chapter VI).

The focus, then, of the present project is bipartite. First, I aim to demonstrate that revolutionary theorists and practitioners of *opéra-comique* were indeed deeply indebted to pre-revolutionary conceptions of sensationism which pervaded the culture of eighteenth-century France. Second, I will show that this sensationist conception was not merely aesthetic, but a foundational premise for the pervasive belief that opera (and *opéra-comique* in particular, for I argue that this genre had an especial appeal to both the *philosophes* and the revolutionaries) should be mobilised for the purpose of civic moral instruction. As we shall explore, the idea of 'moral' instruction in the theatre was quickly politicised during the Revolution, but nevertheless it largely remained contingent on stimulating the emotions of citizens through sentimental procedures which were intended to encourage social participation in the revolutionary project.

Moreover, there are two further debates in scholarship on revolutionary music (and indeed art and culture more generally) for which I believe the matter of *opéra-comique* can provide important evidence with which to establish our conclusions. First, the musical experience of the Revolution has traditionally been perceived by scholars through a lens of rupture, emphasising notions of acute discontinuity with the *ancien régime* and musical 'revolution'. It is notable, for instance, that two of the most influential musicologists of the twentieth century sought to support their theses on the sudden development of Romanticism by portraying the Revolution in exactly this light. In his influential work on Romantic opera (which is still commonly employed in universities as a textbook for undergraduates), Edward J. Dent wrote, "It is the French Revolution which diverts the operatic current from comedy to romance. A new

---

[62] Mark Darlow, "*Nihil per saltum*: *chiaroscuro* in eighteenth-century lyric theatre," in *Art, Theatre, and Opera in Paris, 1750-1850: Exchanges and Tensions*, eds. Sarah Hibberd and Richard Wrigley, (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 44.

[63] David Charlton, "Hearing through the eye in eighteenth-century French opera," in *Art, Theatre, and Opera in Paris: Exchanges and Tensions*, eds. Sarah Hibberd and Richard Wrigley, *1750-1850*, (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 23-24.

public for opera has arisen… The plots appear to become suddenly Romantic in our modern sense of the word… The difference lies in their presentation, and in the music which clothes them."[64] Winton Dean drew many of the same conclusions and described the Revolution as a "cataclysmic event" in music history.[65] It was as if the Revolution suddenly fractured with eighteenth-century culture, ushering in a new era of Romanticism. But although this is indeed a dated contention, it cannot yet be dismissed as an outdated interpretation: much more recently, for example, Bruce Haynes has argued that the birth of Romantic music was the result of a 'paradigm shift' induced by the French Revolution, which "does not seem to have been gradual. It was truly a break in history."[66]

Such absolute notions of rupture are problematic because they leave little room for exploring the important continuities which this study posits were so vital in shaping the revolutionary conception and application of *opéra-comique* to pedagogical ends. I contend that there was in fact no 'break in music history', even though there were striking innovations and developments. As James Webster has pointed out in the context of late eighteenth-century Viennese music, this period witnessed dramatic changes in conceptions of music which were only possible through the development and transformation of much older principles. I would argue that this was the same in Paris as in Vienna. Perhaps music did indeed become "valorized as the highest and most romantic of the arts", but we should not forget that this was through the preservation and adaptation of the "traditional aesthetic function" Webster alludes to.[67]

Dent, Dean and Haynes are the most categorical in their claims for rupture, but as Rebecca Geoffroy-Schwinden has pointed out, the notion of a musical 'revolution' – defined in less extreme terms than outright 'rupture', but still drawing attention to important discontinuities – pervades modern scholarship.[68] She rightly highlights that studies by Laura Mason, James Johnson, M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet, Jean Mongrédien, Sarah Hibberd, and Michael Fend draw out performative, institutional, or stylistic breaks with the past, although it should be added that

---

[64] Edward J. Dent, *The Rise of Romantic Opera*, ed. Winton Dean (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 176.
[65] Winton Dean, "Opera under the French Revolution," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 94, 77-96 (1967-1968), 77-78. It should be noted that Dent's text was originally written around 1936, and its appearance here is actually a version of his manuscript edited by Dean himself (who was Dent's pupil).
[66] Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer's History of Music for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 4-5.
[67] James Webster, "The Eighteenth Century as a Music-Historical Period?," *Eighteenth-Century Music* 1 no.1, 47-60 (2004), 58.
[68] Rebecca Geoffroy-Schwinden, "Politics, the French Revolution, and Performance: Parisian Musicians as an Emergent Professional Class, 1749-1802" (PhD diss., Duke Universty, 2015), 5-10.

those by the last three in particular must be read in the light of their broader arguments for continuity, as we will shortly discuss.[69]

Although each of these arguments are compelling and far more nuanced than the three studies listed above, I am concerned that the longer the broad, traditional picture of 'rupture' is allowed to linger, the longer there will remain a very tangible risk of misinterpreting the true meaning of these localised discontinuities. I believe that their importance can only really be understood against a backdrop of large-scale cultural and aesthetic continuity, rather than rupture, and will explore this in the context of *opéra-comique*.

Of course, I am by no means alone in making the argument for musical continuity during the French Revolution. Geoffroy-Schwinden's own dissertation makes this point very clearly with regard to the development of a "professional class" of musicians during the Revolution, which she argues was only possible because of "pre-revolutionary experiences [which] provided musicians with valuable social ties and economic know-how that would become crucial to their professional survival during the revolutionary decade."[70] She in turn stresses that a scholarly discomfort with the notion of rupture in revolutionary music dates back to the 1980s. Carl Dahlhaus, for example, believed that it was a "hardly justifiable construction, sacrificing empirical reality to methodological principal [through] equation between political and cultural history."[71] This was reiterated in France by Jean Mongrédien, who famously repudiated musical revolution (contending instead for "evolution without revolution") and argued that the term "opéra révolutionnaire" has no real meaning because it produced no new musical forms.[72] Then there is Julia Doe's recent PhD dissertation, in which she argues that archival records from the period point towards broader generic continuities between pre-revolutionary and revolutionary *opéra-comique*.[73]

In the 1990s, Michael McClellan's PhD dissertation on the Théâtre Feydeau made the point that continuity between the *ancien* and revolutionary *régimes* was evident in their shared

---

[69] Laura Mason, *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics, 1787-1799* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1996); James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet, *Etienne-Nicolas Méhul and Opera: Source and Archival Studies of Lyric Theatre during the French Revolution, Consulate, and Empire* (Heilbronn, Germany: Edition Lucie Galland, 1999); Jean Mongrédien, *La musique en France des lumières au romantisme, 1789–1830* (Paris: Flammarion, 1986); Sarah Hibberd, "Cherubini and the Revolutionary Sublime," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 24 no. 3 (November 2012), 293–318; Michael Fend, *Cherubinis Pariser Opern, 1788–1803* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2007). With regard to Bartlet, Julia Doe has also pointed out that she interprets Méhul's music explicitly as a stylistic 'rupture' with the previous generation. See "French Opera at the Italian Theater (1762-93): *Opéra-Comique* and the Development of National Style in France" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2013), 167.

[70] Geoffroy-Schwinden, "Politics, the French Revolution, and Performance", 10.

[71] Carl Dahlhaus, *Die Musik des 18. Jahrhundert*s (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1985), 365.

[72] Mongrédien, *La musique en France*, 343- 346; and "Preface," in *Orphée phrygien: Les musiques de la Révolution*, eds. J.R. Julien and J.C. Klein, 9-26 (Paris, Éditions du May 1989), 9-12.

[73] Doe, "French Opera at the Italian Theater (1762-93)", 167.

determination to exploit the pedagogical potential of the opera house, and also in their aesthetic preference for text-based music which more readily conveyed a comprehensible political message to its audience.[74] Then at the turn of the millennium, Michael Fend, once a student of Dahlhaus, astutely observed that any conception of a 'révolution' in music must be moderated by an understanding of the contemporary semantic significance of the term, which never implied "a total break with the past" but instead indicated a peaceful structural transformation determined by reason.[75] Most recently, Sarah Hibberd has alluded to aesthetic continuities which this study will seek to develop upon. She demonstrates how Cherubini's affective, emotionally absorbing operatic praxis, particularly in works like *Lodoiska* (1791) was rooted in the aesthetic ideas of the 1780s, particularly those advocated by Michel Paul Guy de Chabanon and Bernard Germain de Lacépède.[76]

Beyond these musicological studies, the notion of continuity in the theatre (relevant for our operatic focus) has been the focus of several important publications. For example, Emmett Kennedy and Marie-Laurence Netter's seminal work on revolutionary performance statistics uncovered an inherent "aesthetic conservatism", which they attributed to a "constant theatrical morality" and the powerful constancy of audience tastes.[77] But arguably the most wide-ranging approach is to be found in Mark Darlow's edited volume of *Nottingham French Studies*, in which participants explored important continuities in many different theatrical contexts.[78] These corroborate Darlow's assertion that continuity was an inevitability during the Revolution, given that "Æsthetic paradigms cannot, of course, be invented anew."[79] But perhaps the most interesting conclusion to be drawn from the various contributions is that continuities and discontinuities existed side-by-side in the theatrical life of the Revolution. The discontinuities were localised: in institutional experiences, legal developments, and ideological or thematic novelties. On the other hand, the continuities were broader and more enduring, with a general preservation of aesthetic traditions and with innovation more evident than rupture.

But in Theatre Studies, as in Musicology, the rupture thesis maintains a powerful presence. Matthew S. Buckley explicitly dismissed the significance of localised discontinuities in the

---

[74] McClellan, "Battling over the Lyric Muse", 246.
[75] Michael Fend, "The Problem of the French Revolution in Music Historiography and History," in *Musicology and Sister Disciplines: Past, Present, Future. Proceedings of the 16th International Congress of the International Musicological Society London, 1997*, ed. David Greer, 239-251 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 244.
[76] Hibberd, "Cherubini and the Revolutionary Sublime", 318.
[77] Emmet Kennedy, Marie-Laurence Netter et al., *Theatre, Opera, and Audiences in Revolutionary Paris: Analysis and Repertory* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1996), 88-90.
[78] Mark Darlow, ed., *Revolutionary Culture: Continuity and Chang*e, Nottingham French Studies vol. 45, no. 1 (Spring 2006). For a summary of the participants' varied approaches, see "Introduction", 3-4.
[79] Ibid, 2.

theatre, arguing instead for an overall upheaval not entirely dissimilar from Dean's notion of operatic 'cataclysm':

> the historical drama of the Revolution exploded the old dramatic forms with a violence that could not have been matched in the arts, not only demonstrating their inadequacy to the pace and structure of modern existence but also revealing in stark terms the limitations of their structures of action and the anachronistic assumptions of their implied social visions.[80]

In many regards, I believe Buckley is correct. The Revolution undoubtedly produced profound changes in drama, and his study is a compelling demonstration of how these changes occured. I also agree that we should not mistake the decade as a time of literary and dramatic hiatus, defined by formal stagnation.[81] Where I disagree, and where I believe the case of *opéra-comique* suggests otherwise, is with the idea of an 'explosion' which violently laid low old traditions, forms, conceptions, and praxes, ushering in a radically different "modern" drama. I believe that Buckley comes closer to the truth when he alludes to the idea of a transition based on the Revolution's curious alteration of the aesthetic paradigm, in which politics and formal development in drama became inextricably entangled.[82] I would simply add that we should be careful not to forget that transition implies development, which is in turn contingent on continuities between the past and the present. No matter the enormity of these development, Darlow is still correct that aesthetic paradigms cannot be invented anew and are contingent upon past traditions.

Admittedly, in the present project I am concerned less with dramatic or musical form than I am with aesthetic perspectives of the practical and pedagogical utility of *opéra-comique* specifically, in no small part because helping us to better understand the revolutionary conception and application of this genre is my principal ambition. Nevertheless, in engaging with the issue of rupture versus continuity in *opéra-comique*, I hope also to contribute to the broader corpus of scholarship identified above which seeks a more nuanced picture of the historical reality. In short, my aim in the present project is to demonstrate that even whilst we are coming to terms with a strikingly new mode of application shaped by the socio-political necessities of the day, we should continue to recognise the theoretical and practical continuities between pre-revolutionary and revolutionary praxes in composition, repertoires, and theorising. I concur strongly with the conclusions made by Darlow et al., which taken together emphasise large-scale continuities whilst acknowledging the importance of the localised disruptions identified by musicologists and scholars of theatre alike. I similarly find

[80] Matthew S. Buckley, *Tragedy Walks the Streets: The French Revolution in the Making of Modern Drama* (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 6, 149.
[81] Ibid, 2.
[82] Ibid, 6.

Mongrédien's argument in favour of 'evolution' convincing, if a little too categorical in refuting the idea of 'revolution' entirely.

The second debate concerns 'propaganda'. What we might think of as the mobilisation of *opéra-comique* to contribute to the Revolution's socio-political progress was not unique to this particular artistic genre. For many decades, the traditional interpretation of the revolutionary application of the arts perceived it simplistically as propaganda, and limited revolutionary artistic function in terms of subservience to a government unified by its desire to advance a single, homogenous ideology. Mark Darlow rightly points out that this has been particularly acute in the theatrical and literary spheres (from which opera naturally draws heavily), where the presumption of 'sterile' propaganda lingers.[83]

For example, James Leith argued in the 1960s that both the Convention (1792-1795) and the Directory (1795-1799) sought only "art which would impress the masses and help to attach men to republican institutions", regarding "the critic who in theory dismissed as "sterile imitation" all art without a political or moral message" as an apposite representation of the revolutionary governments.[84] Emmet Kennedy later contended that art was used to batter audiences into ideological submission, writing: "The transfer of sovereignty from the royal will to the general will demanded new loyalties. According to the sensationalist psychology of the century, this could be achieved only by repetition, by battering the senses with new impressions."[85] As with the issue of rupture, the propaganda narrative continues to exert an influence: even very recently a study on propaganda by Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell has concluded that the arts were subordinated to a "massive propaganda campaign, the purpose of which was to "sell"… new ideas and the resulting alterations in the structure of French society and culture."[86]

In the case of opera, the idea of propaganda was forcefully put forward by Winton Dean, who argued that "It was natural that the revolutionary ferment should find an early outlet in opera, a field in which the French have an impressive record of contention and controversy. As one would expect, the libretti were affected before the music. The plots became ideological, at first mildly, then rabidly so", and that opera became merely "a vehicle for popular enlightenment and patriotic stimulus."[87]

---

[83] Mark Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution: Cultural Politics and the Paris Opéra, 1789-1794* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 7.
[84] Leith, *Art as Propaganda in France,* 130-131, 154.
[85] Kennedy, *A Cultural History of the French Revolution*, 329.
[86] Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion: Sixth Edition* (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore and Washington DC: SAGE Publications, 2015), 95.
[87] Dean, "Opera under the French Revolution", 78, 79.

Thankfully, this perspective has begun to shift decisively. Many excellent studies have now skilfully explored the subtleties and breadth of cultural life during the Revolution in a manner which precludes the overly-simplistic 'propaganda' function, and others have problematised the issue by exploring the complex and multifaceted interconnections between revolutionary politics and culture between 1789-1800. An excellent example in the field of Opera Studies is Amy Wygant's analysis of Cherubini's *Médée* (1797), in which she disputes Marianne McDonald's interpretation of the work as a "terrorist" opera where Medea embodies "the spirit of the Revolution" itself.[88] Wygant instead explores how *Médée* in fact expressed a complex range of attitudes and anxieties during the revolutionary decade, primarily those belonging to its audiences, including attitudes towards women, gender, the family, children, and politics.[89]

Darlow is even more explicit on this point in his study on the Opéra. He points out how pervasive and problematic this narrative has been in scholarship, and seeks to undermine it by demonstrating that from 1789 a "multiplicity of different entities could claim legitimate authority over culture… there was some confusion and competition between them, suggesting that ideology in the theater is contested between these different bodies." He also rightly states that "repertory devisions were made as much for practical and material reasons as for reasons of ideology."[90] I believe that these points apply equally to *opéra-comique* as to *tragédie-lyrique*, and so will return to them later in the present study. Feilla's monograph is similarly categorical, rejecting the lingering assumption that the revolutionary repertoire was only historically (and not aesthetically) interesting, characterised by "raw political violence"; and demonstrating that the repertoire "was more likely to speak the tender language of the heart and praise the gentle virtues of familial affection, benevolence, compassion and sincerity than it was to express the "brutal passions" of political propaganda and polemic."[91]

In this way, the issue of propaganda in scholarship is similar to that of rupture: the problem is not so much that the traditional narrative is unchallenged (because it is not), but that it is (first) allowed to linger in such a way that incorrect or unhelpful assumptions continue to be made, and (second) that it has bred an interpretative vocabulary which I believe distorts our understanding of the true picture. Some examples include Martin Nadeau, who writes: "revolutionary censorship and propaganda in the theatre cracked down on [the] public";[92] and

---

[88] Marianne McDonald, "Medea è mobile: The Many Faces of Medea in Opera," in *Medea in Performance 1500-2000*, eds. Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh, and Oliver Taplin, 100-118 (Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, 2000), 114; and in the same volume, Fiona Macintosh, "Introduction: The Performer in Performance," 1-31, 12.
[89] Amy Wygant, *Medea, Magic, and Modernity in France: Stages and Histories, 1553-1797* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), 163-192.
[90] Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution*, 7, 384.
[91] Feilla, *The Sentimental Theater of the French Revolution*, 5-7, 10.
[92] Martin Nadeau, "La politique culturelle de l'An II; les infortunes de la propaganda révolutionnaire au théâtre," *AHRF* 327 (January-March 2002), 74.

Marie-Laurence Netter: "The vogue of patriotism no doubt responded to the will of the Committee of Public Safety to make the theatre an instrument of propaganda… Patriotism alone served all causes provided they were Revolutionary."[93]

Most problematically, we have been told by McClellan in the context of *opéra-comique* specifically that the revolutionary repertoire was explicitly propaganda. Although he does highlight the limitations of the concept of propaganda insofar as it pertains to the theatre of the French Revolution (largely due to its failure in terms of audience reception), it gains some traction as the study develops, as he begins to describe the theatre as a "pedagogical tool" serving a regime. Ultimately, he argues that:

> Throughout the Revolution, one aspect of theatrical representation was never questioned by the government, critics, or individuals involved in the production of theater, namely, theater's educational function. The concept of theater as a means of instructing the public had its roots deeply imbedded in the ancien regime. The revolutionaries, however, substantially altered the content of that education. In this way, the old notion of theater as a pedagogical tool served a politically progressive agenda simply by substituting revolutionary values for the norms of the ancien regime.[94]

I do not disagree totally with this conclusion. It is clear, for example, that theatre's educational function was never questioned, even if it came under suspicion during the tenure of more paranoid regimes during the Terror, as Huet argues in her chapter on 'Performing Arts: Theatricality and the Terror'.[95] Likewise, this concept was indeed deeply embedded in the *ancien régime*, though, again, the revolutionaries did indeed alter the content of that education.

However, I do not believe that the theatre was politicised through the simple substitution of revolutionary values for the norms of the *ancien régime*. That is too simplistic, implying a binary distinction between 'revolutionary' and *ancien régime* 'values' which, in McClellan's study, are never qualified. Many of the 'norms' and 'values' were in fact common to both periods (such as corporate liberty, personal virtue, and strengthened intersubjective relations between citizens, for example). I argue instead that the politicisation of the theatre during the Revolution occurred primarily through a gradual but distinctive politicisation of the sentimental, as the sensationist culture of the *ancien régime* – with its emphasis on the affective influence of theatrical sensations over the *sensible* audiences, and the development of intersubjective bonds between spectators within said audiences – began to be directed towards the socio-

---

[93] Marie-Laurence Netter, "The Great Successes of Each Year," in *Theatre, Opera, and Audiences in Revolutionary Paris*, eds. Kennedy et al, 35-50 (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1996), 43.
[94] McClellan, "Battling over the Lyric Muse", 247-248.
[95] Marie-Hélène Huet, "Performing Arts : Theatricality and the Terror,' in *Representing the French Revolution: Literature, Historiography and Art*, ed. James Heffernan, 135-149 (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1992).

political objectives of the Revolution in which both governments and citizens shared. I do not, therefore, support McClellan's more problematic claims that revolutionary *opéra-comique* functioned as a tool of the state which fulfilled the government's 'immediate propagandist needs'.[96]

I do believe, however, that the Revolutionary authorities desired to spread the ideals of Revolution. They hoped that this could be conducted through engaging audiences of *opéra-comique* emotionally, with works that contained moral principles rendered desirable and persuasive by the aesthetic particularities of the operatic art. However, the matter of refining and defining what constituted these 'ideals' was not resolved, and I contend that the authorities sought the participation of the nation's citizens and artists in order to complete the task. The emphasis was not on coercion, but on encouraging the citizens of France to participate in the communal national project. To outline this aspect of my argument, I will explore how the dominant sensationist aesthetic conception of *opéra-comique* as a tool to foster enthusiasm and civic unity indicates a far more participative ambition on the part of the authorities, composers and librettists than simply producing a pleasing vehicle for ideological coercion.

Although in problematising the propaganda narrative my ambition is similar to that of Darlow and Feilla, my methodology will focus primarily on aesthetic issues, rather than on developing an institutional history or a generic analysis of a specific repertory. Of course, both the institutional history and the repertoire of the Opéra Comique itself are pertinent and will be drawn into the present project. However, I have chosen to focus on aesthetics for two reasons in particular. First, as Darlow pointed out, revolutionary aesthetics have traditionally not fared well when it comes to the notion of propaganda, but have been broadly interpreted as overly-coercive and ideologically-driven. As such, they are largely neglected or heavily criticised.[97] I believe it is important that these aesthetics should be reclaimed, or at least afforded a more sensitive and nuanced interpretation as we seek to come to terms with revolutionary *opéra-comique*. This is an ongoing process. Second, a thorough understanding of aesthetic conceptions of this genre during the Revolution can afford us an invaluable insight into the compositional praxes of its composers during this period. Given that there are several underexplored aesthetic texts by the composers and librettists themselves currently available to the scholar (as will be seen in Chapter IV), this seems a particularly ripe opportunity to

---

[96] McClellan, "Battling Over the Lyric Muse", 116-117.

[97] Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution*, 7. In addition to Leith, Buckley, and Dean (all discussed above), Darlow highlights the very critical conclusions of Bernard Pingaud and Robert Mantéro, who saw the Revolution as a literary nadir in aesthetic and generic development from which it had to regenerate. See Bernard Pingaud and Robert Mantéro, *Les Infortunes de la raison, 1774-1815* (Paris: Hatier, 1992), 94.

examine just how far the sensationist aesthetics of the eighteenth century actually influenced their approaches to their work.

It is important to recognise that the present project builds on a rich field of scholarship on *opéra-comique* during the eighteenth century and the Revolution. The earliest institutional and genre history of the Opéra Comique dates back to well before the Revolution, in fact: Jean-Auguste Desboulmiers' two volume work, *Histoire du théâtre de l'opéra comique* was published in 1769. The *Histoire* affords the scholar a fascinating insight into contemporary perspectives of both.[98] New contributions appeared at the start of the twentieth century in the works of Georges Cucuel and Ernest Genest, which helped to clarify and establish the facts of the genre's emergence in France, including profiling the composers who were responsible for its growth in the eighteenth century.[99] The story of the Opéra Comique during the Revolution received close scrutiny earlier than this, however, with the publication of Arthur Pougin's impressively detailed monograph in 1891 which traced its experience year by year. The thoroughness of Pougin's archival research means that this is still an invaluable resource for the modern scholar, especially with regard to the relationship between the institution and the government, the reception of its repertoire, and issues of finance and ticket sales.[100]

An important and still-standard history of the Comédie-Italienne in the eighteenth century is Clarence Brenner's 1961 study, *The Théâtre Italien: Its Repertory, 1716-1793*.[101] The historical outline provided was detailed though not comprehensive, due to the fact that Brenner's monograph focused primarily on the theatre's repertory. But complementary sketches subsequently appeared in David Charlton's seminal work on Grétry and Andrea Fabiano's more general study of Italian opera in France.[102] Arguably the most complete survey is to be found in in the first seven chapters of an illustrated study published at the turn of the millenium by Raphaëlle Legrand and Nicole Wild, leaving any scholar of *opéra-comique* in an excellent position with regard to the chronological picture of its development and the institutional history of the Théâtre Italien.[103]

---

[98] Desboulmiers, *Histoire du théâtre de l'opéra comique*, passim.
[99] See Georges Cucuel, Les créateurs de l'opéra-comique français (Paris: F. Alcan, 1914); and Ernest Genest, *L'Opéra-comique connu et inconnu: son histoire depuis l'origine jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1925).
[100] Arthur Pougin, *L'Opéra-Comique pendant la Révolution de 1788-1801 d'après des documents inédits et les sources les plus authentiques* (Paris: Albert Savine, 1891).
[101] Clarence D. Brenner, *The Theatre Italien: Its Repertory, 1716-1793. With a Historical Introduction* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961).
[102] David Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of opéra-comique* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Andrea Fabiano, *Histoire de l'opéra italien en France (1752-1815): Heros et heroines d'un roman théâtral* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2006).
[103] Raphaëlle Legrand and Nicole Wild, *Regards sur l'opera-comique: trois siècles de vie théâtrale* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2002).

Around the time of the Revolution's biennial in 1989, scholarly interest in *opéra-comique* surged significantly. A diverse range of methodological approaches to the subject appeared, helping to establish a more detailed understanding of eighteenth-century opéa-comique and also to offer interpretations of important events, compositional praxes, generic particularities, and issues of performance. An excellent example is Charlton's monograph on Grétry, mentioned above, which offered a ground-breaking study of the composer's life, works, and contribution to the genre between the dates of his operas *Le Huron* (1768) and *Guillaume Tell* (1791). Charlton's thorough approach to fulfilling the work's two stated aims – demonstrating both the "operatic individuality" of Grétry's operas and providing "statistical and historical evidence" of *opéra-comique's* growth – allowed him to successfuly establish Grétry as central to the genre's development, and fully elucidate his qualities as a composer.[104] Another is an important essay by Michael Robinson, which probed the important relationship between French *opéra-comique* and Italian opera buffa during the 1770s and 1780s, in turn helping to establish the profound influence of intellectual debate on the development of *opéra-comique's* generic particularities.[105]

But the great diversity of studies and methodologies produced about this time is perhaps best evidenced by the two volumes edited by the Belgian musicologist Philippe Vendrix in 1992. One skilfully mixed an historical account of *opéra-comique* from the early eighteenth century to 1789 with a more thematic approach to a broad range of issues such as its theory and aesthetics, as well as its diffusion around Europe during this period.[106] The other, although ostensibly focused on Grétry and *opéra-comique* in Europe, actually limits these subjects to two sections. Two others are then devoted respectively to contemporary issues in the musicology of *opéra-comique* and broader themes, including formal developments, specific operas, and revolutionary developments in genre.[107] Jean Mongrédien's essay in the section on Grétry is particularly stimulating, because it was the first systematic attempt to come to terms with the composer's aesthetics. Mongrédien did so primarily through an examination of Grétry's *Mémoires*, and argued that they betray an evident conservatism more in keeping with the eighteenth century than the innovative ideas of the new era announced by progressive figures like Chabanon and Madame de Staël. Their primary value, he posited, is as a testament to "French *sensibilité* and taste during this period where all a world overturned, and

---

[104] Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of opéra-comique*, ix, 3.
[105] Michael F. Robinson, "Opera buffa into opéra-comique, 1771-90," in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. Malcolm Boyd, 37-56. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
[106] Philippe Vendrix, ed., *L'Opéra-comique en France au XVIIIe siècle* (Liège: Mardaga, 1992). Manuel Couvreur and Philippe Vendrix's chapter, "Les enjeux théoriques de l'Opéra-Comique" (see pp. 213-282) has proven especially relevant for various chapters of the present project, particularly with regard to matters of terminology.
[107] Philippe Vendrix, ed., *Grétry et l'Europe de l'opéra-comique* (Liège: Mardaga, 1992).

where we already forsee the great upheavals of the future."[108] In a later chapter, I would like to offer another interpretation. I agree that Grétry's aesthetics as they appear in the *Mémoires* do indeed demonstrate a great deal which is in keeping with his eighteenth-century intellectual heritage, and also that they are a testament to the 'sensibilité' of the age. Nevertheless, I do not believe this indicates an intellectual conservatism; in fact, I believe there is a great deal which is strikingly innovative.

The breadth of this corpus of biennial scholarship has proven highly fruitful. In more recent years, we have seen scholarly interest in *opéra-comique* continue to increase and to diversify. It is impossible here to provide a comprehensive review of this work, but some broader trends are evident.

First, there are the works which have dealt primarily with genre. The issue of genre in eighteenth-century French opera more broadly has attracted a great deal of musicological attention, as evidenced by Agnès Terrier and Alexandre Dratwicki's edited volume which encompasses everything from *tragédie lyrique* to melodrama.[109] Even in this volume, though, it is clear that questions of genre seem particularly pertinent to *opéra-comique*: for example, we have already considered Rizzoni's contention that scholarship has not yet managed to fully extricate itself from the traditional prejudice against *opéra-comique*.[110] This is complemented well by Sabine Chaouche's chapter which examines the exceptional diversity of pieces, influences, and persecutions experienced by the Opéra Comique during its early years, and posits that these produced a very ambitious and experimental approach to its various components: staging, singing and dancing. This boldness in turn necessitated new forms of interpretation which put the actor in the foreground, as they were compelled to interpret new laws and subvert them with ingenuity. This meant that later in the century interpreters were more attuned to the interpretative skill of the actor in characterising a work and its performance, enabling certain individuals (like Mesdames Favart and Dugazon, for example) to create and enjoy careers of celebrity.[111] Diversity of course necessitates scholarly care about generalising; Danièle Pistone has warned that genre in *opéra-comique* has always been mercurial, and that generic meaning depends at least as much on the institutional culture in

---

[108] Jean Mongrédien, "Les Mémoires ou essais sur la musique : un compositeur à l'écoute de lui-même" in Vendrix, *Grétry et l'Europe de l'opéra-comique*, 15-28 (Liège: Mardaga, 1992), 26-27.
[109] Agnès Terrier and Alexandre Dratwicki, eds., *L'invention des genres lyriques français et leur redécouverte au XIXe siècle* (Lyon: Symétrie, 2010).
[110] Rizzoni, "Inconnaissance de la Foire", 270.
[111] Sabine Chaouche, "Naissance de l'interprétation de l'opéra-comique sur les scènes des Lumières," in *L'invention des genres lyriques français et leur redécouverte au XIXe siècle*, eds. Agnès Terrier and Alexandre Dratwicki, 177-195 (Lyon: Symétrie, 2010).

which it was produced as it does on matters of form, style, or instrumental and vocal forces.[112] Nevertheless, said matters have also proven a fruitful area of study, as David Charlton's examination of the transformation of familiar forms in shaping *opéra-comique's* growth attests, and likewise R.J. Arnold's investigation into the development of the sentimental style in Grétry's operas.[113]

A second issue is the development of national style and its integration of foreign elements in *opéra-comique* and closely-related genres. This process at the Théâtre de Monsieur during the Revolution has been scrutinised by Alessandro di Profio, who provides evidence of the cultural and political significance represented by the adaptation of Italian *opere buffe* into French.[114] Similarly, the broader interactions between French and Italian opera during the eighteenth century have been examined by Mark Darlow, who highlights their reciprocity through his examination of French parodies and through the influence of Italian composers.[115]

A third, closely-related area of recent study has been the impact of *opéra-comique* on the wider musical life of France, which has resulted in many scholars re-assessing pre-existing assumptions. Julia Doe's recent PhD dissertation is an excellent example: she argues against the collapse of national pride in French opera (embodied in the tradition of *tragédie lyrique*) in response to competition on the eve of Revolution, and instead demonstrates that the emergence of the Comédie-Italienne as a serious competitor was actually a driving force in a process of operatic reform which expanded – but did not topple – this national, cultural pride.[116]

Finally, there are studies which offer more conventional musicological analyses of important operas. Particularly with regard to revolutionary operas, these analyses have proven helpful in correcting some general misconceptions about the repertoire. For example, Patrick Taïeb's assessment of ten scenes taken from *opéras-comiques* produced between 1789-1799 provides ample evidence to problematise a pervasive view of the repertoire as a transitory historical anomaly, of limited aesthetic value. Instead, he highlights just how fertile this period was as a nursery for many of the musical characteristics, dramatic themes, and compositional

---

[112] Danièle Pistone, "Contribution à la titrologie scénique Parisienne: les appellations génériques au théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique de 1762 à 1972," in *The Opéra-comique in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Lorenzo Frassà, 265-282 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 274.

[113] David Charlton, "Le matériel musical de l'opéra-comique," in *L'invention des genres lyriques français et leur redécouverte au XIXe siècle*, eds. Agnès Terrier and Alexandre Dratwicki, 239-256; R.J. Arnold, *Grétry's Operas and the French Public: From the Old Regime to the Restoration* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2016).

[114] Alessandro di Profio, *La révolution des Bouffons : L'opéra italien au Théâtre de Monsieur 1789-1792* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2003).

[115] Mark Darlow, *Nicolas-Etienne Framery and Lyric Theatre in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2003).

[116] Doe, "French Opera at the Italian Theater", 6-8.

techniques which would mature during the nineteenth century and be handed down thanks to a revolutionary institution: the Conservatoire de musique.[117]

Indeed, taking a different methodological approach, Taïeb consolidated this view a year later with an essay on the so-called end of revolutionary *opéra-comique*. In 1801 the Feydeau and Favart theatres merged and 'abandoned' their revolutionary repertoires. Far from regarding this as evidence of the repertoire's limited influence due to an unsuitable ideology, Taïeb argued that this abandonment was not as comprehensive as is often imagined and was due to cultural reasons, not political ones.[118]

This study is perhaps best situated in the first category of works listed above, largely because of its focus on issues pertaining to genre and its aesthetic significances. However, I will also attend to other pertinent matters, including the institutional experience of the revolutionary Opéra Comique, the development, application and reception of its repertoire, and the musicological significance of an opera composed during this period.

It is important to recognise that the political and historical complexity of the revolutionary decade is enormous. The important events and the broad chronological outline are generally well-known, although it is difficult for a scholar even to recommend one or other particular historical interpretation without too much controversy.[119] This difficulty is itself an indication of the instability of the era and the symptomatic rise and fall of regimes and powerful individuals. There were three major regimes before the turn of the century – the National Assembly (1789-1792), the National Convention (1792-1795), and the Directory (1795-1799) – and each pursued very different policies with regard to the theatre.[120]

---

[117] Patrick Taïeb, "La réunion des théâtres Favart et Feydeau en 1801. Quelques éléments pour une histoire culturelle du théâtre lyrique français," *Histoire, économie et société* 22e année no. 2, 239-260 (2003), 259-260.

[118] Patrick Taïeb, "La réunion des théâtres Favart et Feydeau en 1801 et l'opéra-comique révolutionnaire," in *Les Arts de la scène et la Révolution française*, eds. Philippe Bourdin and Gérard Loubinoux, 341-366 (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise-Pascal, 2004), 363.

[119] Accordingly I will recommend three, and seek shelter behind the caveat that these works have been chosen simply because they proved useful and interesting to the author. The first is William Doyle's *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, originally published in 1988 but updated recently (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), which provides a very readable account of the major revolutionary events. Another detailed history published a year later is Simon Schama's *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution*, updated in 2004 (London: Penguin, 2004). A more recent volume was edited by David Andress in 2015, entitled *The Oxford Handbook of the French Revolution* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[120] There are many excellent studies of theatrical life during the Revolution traversing these epochs, many of which provide a helpful survey of the major events. These include Marvin Carlson, *The Theatre of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), and F.W.J. Hemmings, *Theatre and State in France, 1760-1905* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). A helpful, concise survey of the political events of the period and their entanglement with aesthetic policy can be found in the conclusion of Kennedy and Netter's, *Theatre, Opera, and Audiences*, 87-90. Lastly, an excellent

The period of the National Assembly witnessed perhaps the most liberal approach, with the authorities gradually beginning to dismantle the traditional system of *privilège* which preserved the *status quo* in the theatrical hierarchy. Whereas before 1789 certain institutions were afforded the monopoly over particular genres and the right to perform them, the early years of the Revolution gradually but decisively shifted towards a free market in which the stepping-back of Government supervision through censorship would allow the apparently moral force of public taste to reform the repertoire. This policy culminated in the Chapelier Law of 1791, which ultimately removed institutional monopolies and established entrepreneurial rights to free competition.

Under the National Convention, and particularly towards and during the onset of the Terror (1793-1794), these freedoms were eroded and censorship re-introduced (to be overseen by the Comité d'instruction publique from the 6 June 1794). Official policy was that theatres were expected to contribute works which explicitly espoused values in keeping with revolutionary values, with financial rewards and disciplinary threats made to encourage co-operation with these measures. Much attention has been devoted, for example, to the closure of the Comédie Française by the government after performances of the purportedly seditious *Paméla, ou la vertu récompensée* (Nicolas François de Neufchâteau, 1788) in September 1793.[121]

The last four years of the Revolution were overseen by the government of the Directory, which faced the difficult task of dismantling the structures of the preceding era whilst retaining order and control in a period of increasing unrest. They kept up and arguably increased their commitment to censorship (Netter and Kennedy point out that by the last years of the decade, the Ministry of Police were responsible for overseeing the process and required that manuscripts of works be submitted in advance for authorisation),[122] but because the government was itself deeply divided (republicans fought against both a resurgence of royalism and lingering Jacobinism) the theatres again became battlegrounds where conservatives and radicals "aggressively grappled for domination of the cultural symbols that defined France."[123]

One problematic consequence of so much upheaval for any scholar of the revolutionary theatre is the impossibility of establishing a stable message between 1789-1799. There was

---

thematic approach to the subject with a much wider geographical purview is available in the volume, cited above, edited by Bourdin and Loubinoux: *Les Arts de la scène et la Révolution française*.

[121] See James Grantham Turner, "Novel Panic: Picture and Performance in the Reception of Richardson's Pamela," *Representations* 48 (Fall 1994), 70-96; and Martial Poirson, "Paméla en France ou les infortunes de la vertu," in *Paméla européenne. Parcours d'une figure mythique dans l'Europe des Lumières*, ed. Lucie Comparini, 73-116 (Montpellier: Presses universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2009).

[122] Kennedy and Netter, *Theatre, Opera, and Audiences*, 80.

[123] McClellan, *Battling Over the Lyric Muse*, 164.

no single ideology, nor were there many consistent objectives. Moreover, as Susan Maslan pointed out, the relationship between politics and theatre was complex: "Revolutionary theater was no mere extension of revolutionary politics, nor can revolutionary politics be read as theatrical text or performance."[124] However, I hope to demonstrate that there was at least one consistent ambition for all parties involved in the Revolution's theatrical life, which is continually evident in revolutionary texts produced both by the politicians and the artists themselves throughout the decade. This was the ambition of fostering civic virtue and social unity through the use of sensation.

---

[124] Susan Maslan, *Revolutionary Acts: Theater, Democracy, and the French Revolution* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 1.

# Chapter I. The Freedom to Feel: *Sensibilité* and Moral Instruction in the Eighteenth Century

*All freedoms are bound together and are equally dangerous. Freedom in music implies freedom to feel, freedom to feel implies freedom to think, freedom to think implies freedom to act, and freedom to act is the ruin of nations. If we wish to preserve the kingdom, let us keep opera as it is...* – Jean le Rond d'Alembert (1759)[1]

In Denis Diderot's satirical text, *Le Neveu de Rameau*,[2] it is not long before the reader encounters the rather unusual Nephew himself. Given only the appellation 'Lui', he cannot fail to make a lasting impression. A highly volatile mixture of eccentricity and extroversion (well-captured by an anonymous printer in fig. 1), his exuberant outbursts perplex not only the protagonist, 'Moi', but also the entire background cast of chess-players and bystanders who have the (mis)fortune to stumble across his capers. In one particular scene he is drawn into a discussion of opera, which before long proves a trigger for some rather strange behaviour:

> And off he goes, walking up and down, making guttural humming noises to the tunes of *L'Ile des Fous [The Island of Fools], Le Peintre amoureux de son modèle [The Painter in Love with his Model], Le Marèchal ferrant [The Blacksmith] and La Plaideuse [The Lady Litigant]*, and occasionally he would raise his hands and look up to the skies, and exclaim: 'Is it beautiful? Good grief! Is it beautiful? How can you have two ears on your head and ask such a question?' He started getting all impassioned and singing softly. He got louder the more impassioned he became; next came the gestures, the grimaces, and the bodily contortions; and I said: Here we go, he's lost his head, and we'll be seeing some new scene any moment now, and in fact, he immediately let rip: *Je suis un pauvre miserable* [*I am a poor wretch*]… *Monseigneur, Monseigneur, laissez-moi partir* [Your Lordship, Sir, please let me leave]… He piled up and mixed together thirty tunes: Italian, French, tragic, comic, with lots of different characters; at points, he would descend to the depths of the underworld in a low baritone, at others he would go right up high in a glass-shattering fake falsetto, mimicking the different singing roles in the way he walked, held himself, and gestured… All the pawn-pushers had left their chessboards and gathered round him. The café windows were crammed with passers-by who had stopped to see what the noise was. The laughter was loud enough to bring the ceiling down. He was completely oblivious; he carried on, in the grip

[1] Jean le Rond d'Alembert, "De la liberté en musique," in *Mélanges de littérature, d'histoire, et de philosophie*, vol. 4 (Amsterdam: Zacharie Chatelain et fils, 1759), 397.

[2] *Le Neveu* was written in intervals between 1761 and 1774 but published only posthumously, in 1805. The first publication was a German translation by Goethe. Because the original manuscript was lost, the first French edition did not appear until de Saur and Saint-Geniès translated it back into its original language in 1821.

of a fit of mental alienation, of enthusiasm so close to madness as to make it uncertain whether he'd ever emerge from it, or whether we oughtn't throw him in a cab and have him taken straight to Bedlam, while singing a passage from Jomelli's *Lamentations*.[3]

Fig. 1. Unattributed. *Neveu de Rameau*. 1821, Print, 13.5 x 9.2 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Accessed 20/02/18, available: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b2200088p.r=neveu%20de%20rameau?rk=21459;2.

[3] Denis Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew/Le Neveu de Rameau: A Multi-Media Bilingual Edition*, ed. Marian Hobson, tr. Kate E. Tunstall and Caroline Warman (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2016), 76-77.

What caused this outburst? Although it must be regarded as particularly eccentric behaviour even by the standards of eighteenth-century literature, there is good reason to believe that the Nephew's actions in response to (remembered) musical experience – foregrounded physiologically above – would have been read as extreme examples of effects which might be drawn from any opera-goer during the eighteenth-century. These opera lovers might not spontaneously devolve into frenzied displays of quasi-acting, but they would certainly expect to feel the emotional effects of the musical drama move their spirits and affect their bodies. As we shall explore in the present chapter, this expectation was certainly present in the work of many influential eighteenth-century writers and theorists who were fascinated by the idea of man's passionate disposition, and who in their work demonstrated a deeply entrenched faith in the power of artistic sensation to exert a strong influence over humanity's innate *sensibilité*.

Diderot shared this faith and fascination. Indeed, in the context of *Le Neveu*, Scott Sanders presents a compelling argument proposing that Lui "embodies" Diderot's "philosophy of sensibility" to the reader, not only representing but demonstrating the power of their own *sensibilité* by establishing a "musical dialogue" which acts upon their senses.[4] This fits well with Béatrice Didier's interpretation of the function of the Nephew, whom she believes personifies a Parisian musical culture "resonating" in response to the beguiling influence of music. In a sense, his own *sensibilité* represents the corporate *sensibilité* of a city.[5] In a similar vein, Jacques Chouillet finds that Diderot employs the Nephew primarily to warn of the dangers of separating the *éthique* and the *esthétique* in contemporary culture. He argues that Lui's sensory richness appears far more attractive to the reader than the dry and stoic 'Moi', and this despite his questionable morality. *Sensibilité*, therefore, might be regarded a potentially dangerous power, and a possible "dissonance in the social harmony."[6]

The centrality of human *sensibilité* in *Le Neveu* is therefore of the highest significance. It functions not only as an expressive device within the fabric of the text, but also externally to it by prompting the reader to examine their own characteristics, contexts, and proclivities. However, this effect cannot be fully understood in isolation from the broader context of eighteenth-century sensationism in which *Le Neveu* was written. In its simplest form, the influential theory of sensationism held that the human body was affected by objects which produced a sensation that the mind translated into impressions or perceptions, which would then in turn shape the way the human engaged with the world. This was the body's *sensibilité*.

[4] Scott M. Sanders, "Sound and Sensibility in Diderot's 'Le Neveu de Rameau'," *Music & Letters* 94 no.2 (2013), 258-262.
[5] Béatrice Didier, *La Musique des lumières: Diderot–L'Encyclopédie–Rousseau* (Paris: PUF, 1985), 371.
[6] Jacques Chouillet, *La Formation des idées esthétiques de Diderot 1745-1763* (Paris: A. Colin, 1973), 531-532, 551.

An individual's behaviour was believed to be altered or even determined by their exposure to powerful sensations, of which the most potent were produced by the arts.

The purpose of this chapter will be to show the importance of sensationism for a developing conception of the utility of the performing arts for social moral instruction. In particular, I will demonstrate that polemics on the subject of theatrical didacticism (as they were formulated by the French *philosophes* around the middle of the eighteenth century) were contingent upon theories of *sensibilité*, or, in other words, upon a shared understanding of humans as passionate beings at once sensitive and vulnerable to the vehicle of artistic expression and therefore the principles or ideologies they might carry. Within the broader context of the study as a whole, this chapter conceives of the mid-eighteenth century as a period of gestation for a conceptualisation of opera which would later encourage the Revolutionary project to mobilise this genre to didactic ends, because of its uniquely powerful affective potency. I will argue that the process of intertwining aesthetic possibility and didactic or political function was not simply a revolutionary phenomenon, but evidence of socio-cultural continuity with the *ancien régime*.

Two issues are of particular relevance. First, we must explore the theory of sensationism insofar as it pertained to art, music, and didacticism. The primary subjects of our attention will be the *philosophes* who worked on or were roughly contemporary with the famous *Encyclopédie*, which was edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert and featured articles on the subject by polymaths like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, doctors like Ménuret de Chambaud, and others besides.

Second, it is necessary to demonstrate that the polemic which raged in this period about the (un)suitability of the theatre (including the opera house, naturally) for moral instruction hinged upon perceptions of the potential utility versus danger of the performing arts' particular sentimental power. This will be foregrounded primarily in the controversies concerning the theatre during the mid-eighteenth century, which sparked a lively debate in which Rousseau, d'Alembert, and Jean-François Marmontel were the main protagonists.

### Theorising *sensibilité*: reason *and* sense versus reason *or* sense

Writing in the 1760s for Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, Doctor Henri Fouquet described *sensibilité* as a property of the human body allowed external sensations to produce proportional internal impressions:

> [*Sensibilité* is] the faculty of feeling, the sensitive principle, or the common sentiment of individual parts, the foundation and preservative factor of life, animal nature *par excellence*, the most beautiful, the most unique natural phenomenon, etc. In the living body, *sensibilité* is an attribute

> by which certain [body] parts have means of perceiving the impressions of external objects, and therefore producing movements relative to the degree of intensity of this perception.[7]

This conception of human nature was not radically new. The idea of vitality as a product of an interaction between the external and the internal had a clear intellectual heritage dating back to Aristotle's theory of the soul and the body as formulated in *De Anima*, and more recently to Descartes' dualist argument which crystallised in his theory of the pineal gland.[8] However, if the *philosophes* of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries shared a distinctive intellectual heritage which to some degree resulted in a shared understanding of *sensibilité*, the matter was complicated by a great deal of disagreement. For many of the *philosophes*, the *sensible* aspect of humanity's disposition was evidence of its duality; of the innate conflict within between the rational and the *sensible*. Francis Coleman suggested that writers can be divided into two camps according to their understanding of humanity's binary or non-binary nature, with Jean-Pierre de Crousaz, Jean-Baptiste Dubos, Pierre Estève, and others arguing that reason and *sensibilité* were separate faculties; versus Montesquieu, Yves Marie André, Denis Diderot, and their camp as breakaways who believed that the two were closely related.[9] This dichotomy has more recently been explored by William Reddy, who similarly distinguishes between those who hoped to decrease the gap between reason and emotion and of those who sought to establish the primacy of reason alone.[10]

For those who believed that reason and *sensibilité* were separate, evidence pointed towards a clear distinction between the mind (the seat of reason) and the heart or soul (the seat of feeling). Nowhere was this distinction clearer than in Crousaz's *Traité du beau* (1714), where he wrote:

> Ideas occupy the mind while sentiments interest the heart. Ideas amuse us, they exert our attention and often tire it, according to the degree to which they are more or less mixed or linked together. But sentiments dominate us, seize control of us, they decide our fate and make us happy or unhappy, according to whether they are sweet or upsetting, enjoyable or unenjoyable.[11]

Crousaz's dualistic antithesis between reason and *sensibilité* serves as an excellent backdrop against which we are able to perceive the notion of sentimental power in art. Although writing earlier than most of the others (1714), the arguments of Crousaz and his contemporaries (particularly Dubos) had a wide diffusion across both France and Germany and were still influential later in the century, culminating in the twin notions of *galanterie* and

[7] Henri Fouquet, "Sensibilité, Sentiment", 15:38.
[8] Thomas, *Music and the origins of language*, 151.
[9] Francis X. J. Coleman, *The Aesthetic Thought of the French Enlightenment* (London: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971), 3-47.
[10] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 154, 236.
[11] Jean-Pierre de Crousaz, *Traité du beau* (Amsterdam: François l'Honore, 1715), 8.

*Empfindsamkeit*. Cowart has demonstrated the extent to which these early eighteenth-century notions were common currency later in the century.[12] The organic nature of the sensationist debate ensured that earlier ideas were rarely discarded, but instead continued to circulate and be developed on. Indeed, Anne C. Vila has shown that sensationist ideals and understandings circulated widely across both disciplinary and chronological boundaries (between the literary arts and medicine in particular).[13] In this instance, the circulation of Crousaz's ideas would seem to an apt example: at least one contemporary commentator was aware of the explicit influence of Crousaz's ideas on Rousseau's sensationist aesthetics.[14]

Crousaz believed that ideas occupied the mind, but sensations exerted an influence altogether more noteworthy. The power of the emotions (here bound up in Crousaz's 'heart' and notion of *heureux* versus *malheureux*) was the power to dominate, to seize control, and even to decide fate. Jean-Baptiste Dubos agreed that *sensibilité* and reason were quite distinct. As an aesthetician, his concerns were largely framed within parameters of artistic beauty, which he believed was best appreciated by the senses rather than by the mind. That was not to say that reason had no place; but that reason's contribution was in understanding not if but how or why an object was beautiful.[15] This argument remained influential later in the century too; Pierre Estève concurred in 1753 that "The movements of the nerves impact the soul in general, enabling it to judge and praise; but because the emotions of the senses are here most essential, the pure pleasure of bodily sensation can serve as the principle enabling the perfection of the fine arts."[16]

Aestheticians were not alone in their distinction between reason and *sensibilité*. Writing at a similar time to Estève, an influential school of physicians from Montpellier – colloquially known as the Montpellier vitalists, fronted by Menuret de Chambaud, Théophile de Bordeu, and Louis de la Caze – proposed physiological reasons for this distinction. As Timo Kaitaro has shown, the consensus was that man consisted of "a hierarchical organization in which different organs are related to each other by 'sympathies', so that the organs form systems around 'centres' definable by central organs." In their opinion, the mind (reason) was by no means authoritative. In fact, the brain was understood to play a subsidiary role to the diaphragm and other "centres

[12] Georgia Cowart, "Critical Language and Musical Thought in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *College Music Symposium* 27 (1987), 29.
[13] Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology*, 1-12.
[14] Anon., "Aux Editeurs. Particularités sur Messieurs de Crousaz & Rousseau," *Journal helvétique* (Février 1751), 119-130.
[15] Jean-Baptiste Dubos, *Réflexions Critiques sur la poésie, la peinture et la musique* (Paris: Jean Mariette, 1719), 305.
[16] Pierre Estève, *L'Esprit des beaux-arts* (Paris: C.J. Baptiste Bauche fils, 1753), 3-4.

of the affections" in defining how man perceived and understood the world of sensations in which he was immersed.[17]

Where reason and *sensibilité* were conceived of as opposing (or at least as uncooperative) faculties, it was usually *sensibilité* which was distinguished as the pre-eminent influence over experience, judgement of beauty, and behaviour.[18] However, there were many thinkers who preferred to blur the boundaries between reason and *sensibilité*. They emphasised the importance of union (rather than division) in the relationship between intellectual and emotional or physiological experience. We might consider Montesquieu, whose posthumous *Essai sur le goût* (1757) argued that the product of (and evidence for) man's exposure to the world was the formation of taste; and that taste could only truly be understood within the combined parameters of intellect and *sensibilité*:

> The broadest definition of taste… is that which attaches something to us by means of sentiment. This does not mean that it cannot be applied to intellectual things, the knowledge of which gives such great pleasure to the soul… The soul knows by means of its ideas and by its feelings, because although we oppose the intellectual faculty to the feelings, when the soul sees a thing it feels it [also], and there is no thing so intellectual that the soul sees, or believes that it sees, that it does not also feel.[19]

For Montesquieu, therefore, whilst reason and *sensibilité* were different faculties, human experience (resulting in the cultivation of taste) was contingent upon both faculties co-operating. As Elizabeth Williams has demonstrated, he (and the Vitalists) did not believe that an individual's behaviour was determined by external influences, but rather by the combined interaction of the "salutary role" of the external senses and the "independent action of the brain".[20] This was reiterated throughout the eighteenth century by diverse authors, including Denis Diderot and Yves Marie André.[21]

Williams' point is pertinent: the sensationists did not subscribe to a deterministic view of human nature. Sensations could not by themselves dictate actions. Nevertheless, this should not diminish our understanding of their perceived behavioural influence; even where the sensual and critical faculties were perceived as symbiotic, the senses were usually attributed the

---

[17] Timo Kaitaro, "Emotional Pathologies and Reason in French Medical Enlightenment," in *Forming the Mind: Essays on the Internal Senses and the Mind/Body Problem from Avicenna to the Medical Enlightenment*, ed. Henrik Lagerlund (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 313-314.
[18] Elizabeth Williams, *A Cultural History of Medical Vitalism in Enlightenment Montpellier* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 153-154.
[19] Montesquieu, *Essai sur le goût* (Geneva: Librarie Droz, 1757/1967), 65.
[20] Williams, *A Cultural History of Medical Vitalism*, 153.
[21] Denis Diderot, "L'Origine et la nature du beau," in *Œuvres esthétiques*, ed. Paul Vernière, vol. 1 (Paris: Garnier, 1965), 419; Yves Marie André, *Essai sur le beau* (Paris: H.L. et J. Guérin, 1741), 58. See also Coleman, *The Aesthetic Thought of the French Enlightenment*, 28.

upper-hand.[22] In addition to Crousaz, Montesquieu, Diderot, and André were particularly clear that sensations worked a powerful effect upon the body.[23]

Therefore, despite an apparent and important disagreement on the connection between reason and *sensibilité*, *philosophes* on both sides of the debate consistently demonstrated a shared emphasis on the remarkable power of *sensibilité* over the body. To put it another way, they argued that the fruit of man's innate receptivity to sensation was ultimately borne in his corporeal being, which was testament to an internal transformation of disposition. In fact, in seeking to understand eighteenth-century conceptions of *sensibilité* it is imperative to return frequently to the idea of the body. Even purely aesthetic theories were deeply interconnected with the work of thinkers like the Montpellier vitalists – especially Bordeu, Gabriel François Venel and Paul Jospeh Barthez – who understood that 'passions' (or emotions) resulted from the stimulation of the body, and yet also returned to act upon it.

The conceptual implications of this theory were therefore profound, and it would be difficult to overstate its influence during the eighteenth century. Throughout this period, medical practitioners, philosophers and aestheticians consistently returned to sensationism in order to formulate their perspectives of human nature and behaviour, and, significantly, Williams has demonstrated that its profoundest effect was on the Encyclopedists – the very individuals who would be responsible for their generation's ground-breaking texts on music.[24]

In light of this, two further questions must be posed: first, what constituted a sensation? This will be addressed as we consider how *sensibilité* was understood to relate to art and music. Secondly, if *sensibilité* yielded physiological reactions to sentimental stimuli, what implications did this bear for the behaviour of an individual exposed to them?

---

[22] Montesquieu, for example, used the analogy of laughter to demonstrate how particular sensations (in this case, surprise) could elicit an uncontrolled behavioural response before reason was fully able to participate in the experience. He wrote: "When we want to stop ourselves laughing, our laughter redoubles… When [the sensation of surprise] hits us suddenly, it can excite a sort of joy in our soul, and make us laugh." Even so, joyful outbursts were not the only response which *sensibilité* might produce: "If our soul perceives [the sensation] as a calamity... it can excite pity; if the soul regards it as something which might damage us… it regards it with a sentiment of aversion." See Montesquieu, *Essai sur le goût,* 64.

[23] A later chapter of André's text went into great detail exploring the connection between musical sensation and the anatomy of the body. This chapter might be regarded as something of a halfway house between aesthetics and Montpellier vitalism. Here he described how music could be used to elicit precise emotional reactions through exploiting man's *sensible* nature, in turn describing their effects on the body. See André, *Essai sur le beau,* 145-150.

[24] Williams, *A Cultural History of Medical Vitalism*, 147-184.

**Sensation, *sensibilité* and music**

When the sensationists sought to elaborate on what constituted the sensations that exerted their influence over *sensible* individuals, it was to the mysterious power of music that the majority turned. Notably it was not just aestheticians who identified music as a particularly useful example, but also the medical Vitalists who contributed many articles to the *Encyclopédie*. They tended to emphasise the physical or corporeal nature of a musical sensation. Chambaud, for example, described music as an art whose sentimental power was derived from the oscillation of sounds at between 66 and 1038 oscillations per second. Upon striking the body, the nervous system interpreted sounds as *impressions* which carried a stimulus to which the emotions could respond accordingly:

> Music works its greatest wonders primarily upon men who are more susceptible to different impressions and more capable of feeling the pleasure which music excites, whether in giving birth to and animating the passions or in producing changes to the body which run parallel to those worked upon inanimate objects. The music of Antiquity – simpler, more imitative – was more moving and more powerful. It applied itself more strongly to stirring the heart and to moving the passions than to satisfying the mind and inspiring pleasure… It was categorised into two primary modes. One was called the Phrygian, and had the power to excite fury, anger, to animate courage etc. The other was known as the Dorian (*modus doricus*) and inspired the opposite passions, stirring up spirits of a more peaceful nature.[25]

As he saw it, the human body had a remarkable ability to both derive meaning from the external sensations of music, and then to produce within itself an appropriate emotional and physiological response, manifested externally.

André shared Chambaud's notion. He conceived of music as a *science mixte* of physics and mathematics, whose power over the emotions and the body could be explained by the science of harmony. The combination of certain frequencies produced unique vibrations which acted in one way or another upon the body, and specifically upon the ear. We have already seen that André believed that the ear worked co-operatively with the mind; he expanded on this to argue that where a musical sensation pleased both the ear and the mind, it would work powerfully on the emotions and the body in order to "excite in the soul those movements which are most capable of ravishing all the faculties."[26]

---

[25] Ménuret de Chambaud, "Musique, effets de la," in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc.*, eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project [Spring 2013 edition], ed. Robert Morrissey), accessed 03/01/20, http://artflsrv02.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.9:2337:3.encyclopedie0513, 10:905.
[26] André, *Essai sur le beau*, 122-123.

André's theory was highly deterministic. He believed that one could differentiate between various harmonic combinations and correlate these with every conceivable emotion and passion:

> There are sounds which have a secret understanding with our heart which we cannot be unaware of. Lively sounds, which inspire courage in us; languid sounds which soften us; happy sounds, which make us joyful; sad sounds, which sadden us… Love and hate, desire and fear, anger and pity, hope and despair, admiration, terror, temerity; as many different passions as we have, so there are as many sounds in nature which express them and imprint them [in us].[27]

André evidently agreed with Chambaud that the essence of musical sensation was not abstract but physical; not obscure but clearly defined by harmonic proportions. To elicit one emotion or another required only the proper knowledge and application of harmonies. There was an attractive inevitability about such a reductive argument in which musical sensation could act so decisively upon the *machine humaine*.

Indeed, harmony provided the *philosophes* with a very compelling system of reference for those aestheticians like André who believed music's power was derived from the physical interaction between sound and the ear. After all, the theory of harmony provided a neat framework for theorists to categorise and thus better understand the nature of and relationship between sound waves oscillating together in order to produce certain vibrations, which in turn acted upon the body; and since the composer Jean-Philippe Rameau had published his seminal treatise on harmony in 1722, entitled *Traité de l'harmonie reduite à ses principes naturels*, aestheticians had a useful point of reference from which to draw in their work. As Catherine Kintzler has shown, each of his four major treatises relied heavily on the existence human *sensibilité*. She argues that Rameau consciously sought to exploit this, identifying a "*domaine technique et esthétique*" in his work pertaining directly to the manipulation of human passion.[28] This seems apt considering that Rameau himself reiterated that the primary purpose of musical sound was to "please, and to excite diverse passions within us."[29] Scholars have shown that Rameau's emphasis on the mathematical relationship between pitches and their correspondence with the passions proved immensely influential during the eighteenth

---

[27] Ibid, 147.
[28] Catherine Kintzler, *Jean-Philippe Rameau. Splendeur et naufrage de l'esthétique du plaisir à l'âge classique* (Minerve, 1988), 24-25.
[29] Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Génération harmonique, ou traité de musique théorique et pratique* (Paris: Prault fils, 1737), 30. See also Thomas Christensen, *Rameau and Musical Thought in the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 237.

century, especially to those who subscribed to a Cartesian epistemology.[30] These included Michel-Paul Guy de Chabanon and the author Boyé.

However, there was a very vocal group of opponents arrayed against the theory of the expressive pre-eminence of harmony. The series of disputes between Rameau and the harmonists on one hand versus critics like d'Alembert as well as ardent melodists like Rousseau and his supporters are well-documented, and it is not useful to retrace them here.[31] Nevertheless it is important to note that many of the greatest proponents of *sensibilité* and the sentimental power of music were diametrically opposed to the idea that harmony could be the source of musical expression. Rousseau himself was rarely prepared to countenance the idea that harmony could be anything other than a short-lived sensation of pleasure, and certainly not the vehicle for any meaningful sensation which might act upon the emotions.[32]

Instead, Rousseau argued that music's expressive function depended upon its linguistic character and its ability to imitate and reproduce through melody the means by which one communicates intense emotional experience. It should be noted that some scholars, following the traditional distinction discussed above, have reductively assumed that the proponents of harmony and melody can be neatly divided into subscribers to reason or *sensibilité* respectively. This is evident in the work of scholars such as Lionel Gossman and Kiernan Colm, but has been reiterated in recent years by Cynthia Verba (though in other instances she has sought to distance herself from this perspective).[33] However, this perspective overlooks the harmonist investment in the sentimental power of music on the body, which, as we have seen, was common to both camps.

For Rousseau, music's sentimental power came from melody, for melody was able to imitate the manner in which humans communicate their deepest and most intense passions. Music

---

[30] Christensen, *Rameau and Musical Thought in the Enlightenment*, 1-2. See also Paul Henry Lang, 'Diderot as Musician,' *Diderot Studies* 10, (1968), 99. On Rameau's Cartesian epistemology, see Kintzler, *Jean-Philippe Rameau. Splendeur et naufrage de l'esthétique du plaisir à l'âge classique*, 1-25, which develops on Christensen's earlier interpretation.

[31] For more on these controversies, see for example Cynthia Verba, *Music and the French Enlightenment: Reconstruction of a Dialogue, 1750-1764* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). See also Jonathan W. Bernard, "The Principle and the Elements: Rameau's 'Controversy with d'Alembert'," *Journal of Music Theory* 24 no. 1 (Spring, 1980), 37-62.

[32] As Rousseau put it: "Let us therefore not think that the empire Music has over our passions is ever explained by proportions and numbers. All these explanations are only nonsense and will never produce anything but disbelievers because experience constantly belies them and because one cannot discover in them any type of connection with the nature of man.". See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "On the Principle of Melody, or Response to the 'Errors on Music'," in *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music,* eds. Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998), 269-270.

[33] See Lionel Gossman, "Time and History in Rousseau," *Studies on Voltaire* 30 (1964), 319; Kiernan Colm, ''Rousseau and Music in the French Enlightenment," *French Studies* 26, no. 2 (1972), 158; and Cynthia Verba, *Music and the French Enlightenment: Rameau and the Philosophes in Dialogue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 34.

was therefore a language of cries and gestures, or, as Downing Thomas interprets it, a language in which vocal sounds were understood by their listeners as signs of the passions.[34] The idea of music as such a language was a trope that Rousseau returned to time and again in his writings on music, from the time of his articles for Diderot's *Encyclopédie* (c. 1749) to his later *Dictionnaire de musique* (1768).[35] It was affectively powerful over the passions primarily because it had the capacity to act as "signs of our affections", and to "excite in us the emotions they express and the image of which we recognize in them."[36]

Rousseau was clearly convinced of the extreme effect that this process could produce. The re-experience which music prompted was understood to be every bit as intense as the original experience. We see this alluded to in this extract from the *Encyclopédie*, but Rousseau's writings on music are full of anecdotes from history and from mythology which in his mind attested to the very real and significant effects of melody over the emotions and the body. For example, he gave accounts of Alexander the Great roused upon hearing Timotheus' Phrygian mode and calmed by his Lydian; of Eric of Denmark who killed his servants because a Phrygian melody played in his presence made him inexplicably angry; of a courtier to Henri III caused to take up arms in the kings' presence but calmed by the hypophrygian; and of a terrified Gascon knight whose bladder emptied at the sound of bagpipe melodies.[37]

It is prudent not to attribute too much literalism to eighteenth-century invocations of Antiquity, but even a restrained interpretation of these texts must acknowledge his striking conclusions

[34] Thomas, *Music and the origins of language,* 175.
[35] For example, in an article for Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, Rousseau wrote: "It is by the different sounds of the voice that men first had to express their different feelings. Nature gave them the sounds of the voice in order to depict outwardly the feelings of pain, joy, and pleasure which were internally affected, just like the desires and needs which were urgent. The formation of words followed this first language. One was the work of instinct, the other was a consequence of the workings of the mind… This sort of language, which is common to all countries, is also understood by all men, because it belongs to Nature. When children come to express their feelings with words, they are only heard as people speaking the same language because words come from convention… These feelings which animate and stir up the soul in such a lively manner must necessarily depict themselves within the song with more vivacity than ordinary feelings, thus this difference that we find between the song of ordinary language and the musical song… Song – dedicated by Nature to distract us from our hard labours, or for softening the effect of our weariness, and found to express joy – served soon after to celebrate the thanksgiving that man offered unto the Gods, and once established for this purpose, quickly passed into public festivals, into triumphs, into feasts etc. It employed gratitude to pay homage to the Supreme Being; flattery to praise the leaders of nations; and love to express tenderness". See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Chant" in *Encyclopédie*, *ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc*., eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project [Spring 2013 edition], ed. Robert Morrissey), accessed 03/01/20, https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/3/636/, 3:141.
[36] Rousseau, "Dictionary of Music," in *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music,* eds. Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998), 421.
[37]Ibid*,* 442-443.

about the perceived power of music. For example, Thomas has shown how Rousseau's musico-linguistic signs function in his sociological theories as society's primary unifying force:

> music activates the mechanism of intersubjective community which, at the origin of language, heralded the initial moments of society and culture. The experience of the senses leads to another, specifically communal, awareness. This idealized community – utopian mirror of the origin – is formed by subjects both present to themselves and present to each other within the participatory mimetic experience.[38]

Similarly, John T. Scott has explored how this unifying force is for Rousseau the basis of the legislator's relationship with the people (politics). The ultimate power of music is therefore no less than the foundation and continuation of a free society.[39]

Although we will consider the issue of the revolutionary reception of Enlightenment aesthetic and didactic ideals in later chapters, it is pertinent to observe here that several important studies have in recent decades explored the influence of Rousseau's musico-linguistic theories on the politics of the Revolution. Gregory Dart, for example, interprets Rousseau's social theory in terms of the importance of establishing a "necessary link between the transcendental order and the state" and collapsing any attempt to privatise feeling. This aptly fits Thomas and Scott's conclusions about music, which they argue was intended to undo the barriers of private and corporate by thoroughly unifying society. Dart shows that Rousseau's ideals underpinned Robespierre's understanding of government, as he "was increasingly driven to seek civic unity through the manipulation of aesthetic effects, to encourage forms of collective activity in which everyone might discover a sense of their new identity while learning to police the recalcitrant behaviour of everyone else." Not only Robespierre, in fact, but the entire revolutionary pedagogical project from Le Peletier to Condorcet emphasising aesthetic education.[40]

Although Dart is not concerned specifically with music, Geoffroy-Schwinden's investigation into Rousseau's influence on the revolutionary repertoire demonstrates that its authorities and citizens considered his principles germane in this context too. She has drawn similar conclusions about the various governments' commitment to unity, describing the mobilisation of music in terms of "politically unifying goals" and establishing that "Rousseau's prescriptions for the place of music in politics, as found in [the Essai sur l'origine des langues] as well as his Lettre à d'Alembert, became articulated in revolutionary society… and developments in

---

[38] Thomas, *Music and the origins of language*, 175.
[39] John T. Scott, "Rousseau and the Melodious Language of Freedom," *The Journal of Politics* 59 no. 3 (Aug 1997), 824-825.
[40] Gregory Dart, *Rousseau, Robespierre and English Romanticism*, Cambridge Studies in Romanticism 32 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 100-109.

Parisian popular musical practices from 1749 to 1794 may be seen to shed new light on the living sources for Rousseau's writing about music." These prescriptions, she points out, were fundamentally contingent upon a musical language which had the sentimental power to unify disparate humans into community.[41] Of course that is not to suggest that such views were the exclusive preserve of the governing faction; we must heed the warnings of scholars who have aptly pointed out that Rousseau's ideas (aesthetic, social or otherwise) were as much an influence on the counter-revolutionaries as on the revolutionaries themselves, and his ideas were widely dispersed in French intellectual culture.[42] However, this only emphasises how deeply his ideas were ingrained during the Revolution. Rousseau's musical sensationism was highly pertinent to the socio-political project of Revolution, and offered the revolutionaries a strikingly unique model for fostering unity amongst citizens.

The influence of Rousseau's concept of linguistic signs in music was also significant in his own lifetime, not just during the Revolution. There were many who shared his understanding of music as a language of cries and gestures, and of musical sensation as the natural imitation of experience. Each took significant pains to emphasise its extreme power. Charles le Pileur d'Apligny argued that music was the 'natural' response of humans to attempt to communicate their most intense emotional experiences, such as wonder at the marvels of the universe. It was in this way a primordial linguistic attempt to convey profound ideas which were not translatable into words, and yet imitated the accents of speech in order to trigger an empathetic understanding in the audience through eliciting the appropriate emotional response.[43] Daniel Jost de Villeneuve argued that music moved the passions as if it were a "language of the Gods".[44] In a treatise on the mechanism of the passions, Jean-Baptiste Joseph Lallemant devoted an entire chapter to this art which he considered "the goad of every passion", in which he sought to reconcile harmony and melody in order to explain how it was capable of 'ravishing' the emotions. Although Lallemant evidently disagreed with Rousseau about the importance of harmony, he nevertheless shared his conception of music as a language which imitated the accents of impassioned speech in order to move the passions.[45]

---

[41] Rebecca Dowd Geoffroy-Schwinden, "Rousseau and the Revolutionary Repertoire," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 43 (2014) 90, 98.

[42] Joan McDonald argues that not only were Rousseau's ideas readily received by the counter-revolutionaries, but that they produced much more sophisticated analyses of his political theories. See *Rousseau and the French Revolution 1762-1791* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 115-154; and also Robert Wokler, *Rousseau on Society, Politics, Music and Language: An Historical Interpretation of his Early Writings* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1987).

[43] Charles le Pileur d'Apligny, *Traité sur la musique, et sur les moyens d'en perfectionner l'expression* (Paris: Demonville and Saugrain, 1779).

[44] Daniel Jost de Villeneuve, *Lettre sur le méchanisme de l'opéra italien* (Naples: Duchesne and Lambert, 1756), 26.

[45] Jean-Baptiste Joseph Lallemant, *Essai sur le méchanisme des passions en general* (Paris: Pierre-Alexandre le Prieur, 1751), 9-34.

Likewise, Eugène de Mézières (1709-1781) wrote a pamphlet entitled *Effets de l'air sur le corps humain,* wherein he explained the remarkable power of Ancient Greek music (which he argued had the power to elicit every shade of emotion, to teach society virtue, and even to control the behaviour of dangerous animals like tigers and lions) as the result of a commitment to natural, uncomplicated melody rather than to the mathematical rules of harmony.[46] In addition, Tili Boon Cuillé has argued that Diderot, Cazotte, and Beaumarchais, though disagreeing with Rousseau on the musical value of the French language, shared his concept of musico-linguistic signs; these signs afford the beholder affective participation in these signs through *intérêt*.[47]

Nor was Rousseau alone in exploring the political potential of music. Consider de Mézières' desire to use music to control behaviour and teach virtue, for example:

> I submit these ideas on the use we could make of singing to the judgement, direction, and wisdom of our learned composers: having the noble ambition to be more than learned, that they might manage to inspire morals in us by the laws of pleasure; …that in our age they might renew the admirable effects of music witnessed in the first. In order to operate these [effects], the ancients did not serve calculations, nor definitions; they were perhaps less well-instructed in the rules of harmony, but they followed [the principles of] natural melody, and calmed tigers and lions.[48]

Likewise, d'Apligny argued that music could have great moral effect in society and encouraged his readers to reflect on the music of the Ancients:

> All these wonders [of ancient music] take on several degrees of truth if we first consider that these effects were in part due to the eloquence of precise words, strengthened by song… We therefore do not completely doubt the effects attributed to the music of the Ancients… All the divine and civil laws, the exhortations to virtue, the divine and human sciences, the lives and the deeds of great men were written in verse, sung in public by choir accompanied by instruments, because this was judged the most effective means of impressing moral sentiments in the spirits of men.[49]

It is important to observe, therefore, that the ramifications of this debate were primarily practical and socio-political, rather than abstract and theoretical. It was not only the primacy of one or other particular conception of music which was at stake, but, because Rousseau and the melodists had shifted their focus to socio-political issues, also the way that legislators conducted their relationship with society and the ways that citizens conducted themselves virtuously within society. And in this regard, it would seem fair to conclude that the harmonists

[46] Eugène Éléonore de Béthisy de Mézières, *Effets de l'air sur le corps humain, considérés dans le son; ou discours sur la nature du chant* (Amsterdam and Paris: Lambert and Duchesne, 1760).
[47] Tili Boon Cuillé, *Narrative Interludes: Musical Tableaux in Eighteenth-Century French Texts* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 113.
[48] Ibid, 41-42.
[49] d'Apligny, *Traité sur la musique,* 10-12.

were on the back foot. Although they had an attractive theory of corresponding sounds and passions which could influence behaviour and instruct in virtue, the social and political implications of Rousseau's language of signs and gestures were undoubtedly more fully realised; meanwhile his colleagues had explicitly considered this avenue more thoroughly than the harmonists.

Diderot's position is a little less clear, however, despite his evident interest in musico-linguistic symbols identified by Cuillé. He is often considered to have been a staunch pro-melodist, largely due to *Le Neveu de Rameau* in which the essence of musical expression was proposed to be a melodic and vocal cry of pure passion.[50] As might be gleaned from his discussion of musical sensation as "the accents of passion and of the phenomena of nature by melody", Diderot was indeed deeply indebted to Rousseau for his theory of music and seemed to share his conclusion that music's expressive power over *sensibilité* derived from the communication of passion through melody.[51] Furthermore, Matthew Riley offers a compelling interpretation of *Le Neveu* as undermining an overly-mechanistic 'natural' view of music in favour of one in which musical expression is better understood in terms of Rousseauian signs or 'hieroglyphs' akin to poetry: "in which numerous images are present to the mind at once, and in which not only the signified ideas but also the sounds of the words their rhythms and inflections contribute to the "expression". In this way [it] manages to capture at least something of the character of lived experience… [by exploiting] arbitrary signs, whose comprehension required knowledge of their respective codes."[52]

However as Cynthia Verba has recently pointed out, the matter is not as straightforward as we might think. Another of Diderot's contemporary texts, the *Leçons de claveçin et principes d'harmonie par M. Bemetzrieder* (1771), seems to emphasise instrumental harmonic progressions in a way which is "considerably at odds" with the melodist arguments of *Le Neveu*.[53] In fact I would argue that there is even earlier evidence to substantiate the presence of an harmonic perspective in Diderot's aesthetics: the matter seems to have begun in Diderot's *Lettre sur les sourds et muets* which was published in 1751. We might consider, for example, the way Diderot described musical sensation acting upon the body:

---

[50] See for example Jane Fulcher, "Melody and Morality: Rousseau's Influence on French Music Criticism," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 11, no. 1 (Jun., 1980), 45-57; and Daniel Heartz, "Diderot and the Lyric Theater: 'The New Style' Proposed by Le Neveu de Rameau," in *Garrick to Gluck: Essays on Opera in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. John A. Rice (Hillsdale, NY, 2004), 237-54.

[51] It is pertinent that Diderot was responsible for engaging Rousseau – not Rameau – as the primary author of articles on music for his *Encyclopédie*.

[52] Matthew Riley, "Straying From Nature: The Labyrinthine Harmonic Theory of Diderot and Bemetzrieder's *Leçons de clavecin* (1771)," *The Journal of Musicology* 19 no. 1 (Winter 2002), 6.

[53] Cynthia Verba, "Music and the Enlightenment," in *The Enlightenment World,* eds. Martin Fitzpatrick, Peter Jones, Christa Knellwolf and Iain McCalman (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 320.

> In music, the pleasure of sensation depends on its particular effect, not just upon the ear but upon the entire nervous system. If there are 'resounding heads', there are also bodies I would call willingly harmonic; men in whom all the fibres oscillate with so much speed and vivacity that upon the experience of the violent movements which harmony causes them, they feel the possibility of movements more violent still, and reach the idea of a sort of music which would make them die from pleasure. As such, their existence appears to them as if joined to a single stretched fibre which too great a vibration might break… They resemble those fragile souls who cannot hear any story of a poor wretch without bursting into tears, for whom there are no bad tragedies.[54]

Whereas Diderot's conception of musical expression in *Le Neveu* indeed seems to be defined by its linguistic imitation of the accents of passion through melody, in his *Lettre* he seems drawn to the allure of a more mechanistic approach. In fact, there are distinct similarities between this description – characterised by "harmonic bodies", "oscillations", and the vibration of "fibres" – and Chambaud's *corps bruts* described in his contribution to the *Encyclopédie*. Thomas Christensen's interpretation of Diderot's *Leçons* seems apt here; he has demonstrated that Diderot's musical *sensibilité* hinges on a harmonic view of man like a "large harpsichord… that would resonate to the outside stimuli of the world. By transferring these resonances to the mind, complex capacities such as memory and feeling could be accounted for in a quasi-mechanistic manner."[55]

It would seem fair, then, to conclude that Diderot offered theorists a third way through which the relative power of melody or harmony depended upon the audience – whether they were what he termed "*têtes sonnantes"* or a "*corps harmonique"* respectively – rather than upon absolute theoretical principles. It is possible, of course, to argue that Diderot was simply inconsistent on the subject over the course of his career; but it seems more convincing to conclude, with Béatrice Didier, that he in fact expressed a more complex view of music than we have often allowed through various different modes of discourse.[56] This seems clearly to have been the case in the 1751 *Lettre*, and furthermore both the *Leçons de claveçin* and *Le Neveu* were produced contemporaneously, so there is no evidence to suggest that Diderot changed his mind. It seems likely that Diderot simply drew no distinction between the

[54] Denis Diderot, "Lettre sur les sourds et muets," in *Œuvres complètes de Diderot : revues sur les éditions originales, comprenant ce qui a été publié a diverses époques et les manuscrits inédits conservés à la bibliothèque de l'Ermitage, notices, notes, table analytique*, ed. J. Assézat, vol. I (Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1875), 408.
[55] Thomas Christensen, "Bemetzrieder's Dream: Diderot and the Pathology of Tonal Sensibility in the *Leçons de clavecin,*" in *Music, Sensation, and Sensuality*, ed. Linda Phyllis Austern, Critical and Cultural Musicology vol. 5 (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 44-45.
[56] Béatrice Didier, "Le Texte de la musique," in *Interpréter Diderot aujourd'hui*, eds. E. de Fontenay and J. Proust (Paris, 1984), 288.

respective capacities of harmony and melody to evoke memory and feeling and thus influence the emotions.

The purpose of exploring Diderot's perspective here is to highlight the multiplicity of different views on sentimental music which gestated and succeeded during this period. Because of Rousseau's famous and radical conception of language which was the epistemological foundation for his theory of music, and because this conception has received such a significant degree of scholarly attention in influential studies by figures like Downing Thomas, Tili Boon Cuillé, and Cynthia Verba, it would be easy to assume that the melodists triumphed over the harmonists in their dispute, and thus adopt an overly-simplistic understanding of Enlightenment musical aesthetics as prizing 'linguistic' melody over 'mathematical' harmony. It is certainly the case that many studies of post-Enlightenment music seem to emphasise the 'melodic' quality of composers' works as the reason for their success; R.J. Arnold, for example, concludes that the primary reason for A.E.M. Grétry's success before and after the Revolution was his "melodic", "galant" skill in a sentimental culture which prized the memorable tunes of the song above all else.[57] Arnold's evidence is convincing, yet in the broader context of eighteenth-century opera it is undoubtedly the case that this is but one side of the story. Paul Henry Lang's longstanding assertion that a more thorough assessment of Diderot's musical sophistication has borne fruit in the scholarship of recent decades, and so it bears consideration here.[58]

This diversity in theoretical approaches to music forms an intriguing juxtaposition with the unanimity of their conclusions about its social power. Diderot's belief in the power of music over the emotions and his understanding of the implications was every bit as pronounced as his contemporaries'. This profound power is detailed explicitly in his *Lettre*, in which Diderot discusses how the music of the Ancient Greeks operated in working upon its audiences.[59] He wrote:

> In [ancient] Athens, young men devoted almost all of ten to twelve years to the study of music; and so with a musician having only musicians for audiences and judges, a sublime piece was naturally bound to throw an entire audience into the same frenzy as experienced by those who have their works performed in our concerts. But it is the nature of all enthusiasm to communicate itself and to increase according to the number of enthusiasts. Therefore, men have a reciprocal effect upon one another by means of the dynamic and lively sight that they offer each other of the passion to

[57] Arnold, *Grétry's Operas and the French Public*, 211.
[58] Paul Henry Lang, "Diderot as Musician," 107. See also the studies by Heartz, Riley, Christensen and Didier listed above.
[59] Vanessa Agnew has devoted a great deal of attention to this fascination with Antiquity's music. See Vanessa Agnew, *Enlightenment Orpheus: The Power of Music in Other Worlds* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

> which each of them is transported. From this [comes] the crazy joy of our public festivals, the fury of our street riots, and the surprising effect of music amongst the ancients; effects that the fourth act of *Zoroastre* would have renewed amongst us, if our audiences had been filled with people as similarly musical and sensitive as the Athenian youth.[60]

Diderot's theory of music, like Rousseau's, offered significant socio-political implications. In dealing explicitly with issues of group dynamics in a setting which might provide an alluring allegory for society at large, he erects a model for society in which music could play an intriguing role in drawing citizens together and unifying them by virtue of a shared emotional and physiological experience, acting upon them with an almost mystical force which could immerse its audience in passionate sympathy as they depended upon each other for the very intensity of their experience. Having pointed toward Diderot for the vindication of harmony, it is interesting to consider that the mechanical lure of the harmonic system was so securely entrenched that it appears to have influenced even the way in which Diderot thought about the audience. Here, it is described in similar terms to a physical, *sensible* body: just as Diderot argued that harmony acted upon the nerves causing bodily fibres to resonate in sympathy with its 'violent movement', so too does he present the audience as a *corps* of 'enthusiasts' who seem to vibrate with a passion which incites their fellows to do the same and even to intensify their frenzied state.

Although Diderot describes festivals in this passage, a possible parallel with the opera house is one which must strike us as intriguing, particularly given his allusion to Rameau's *tragédie en musique* entitled *Zoroastre* (1749). This opera was to all intents and purposes a failure during its initial run, but featured a passionate climax in the fourth act in which the protagonist Abramane sacrifices to the Gods in order to summon the spirits of Despair, Vengeance and Hate. Diderot clearly believed that the intense passion of this scene should have worked a far greater effect upon the audience. If coupled with a systematic programme of musical study for opera-goers (similar to Athenian musical study), the performance of opera would provide a unique opportunity for utilising music to influence large bodies of citizens on a systematic basis.

It is notable that Diderot was greatly inspired by his conception of music during Antiquity. This is consistent with many of his contemporaries' accounts: for example, we have already seen many references to Ancient Greece (particularly in the writing of Rousseau and de Mézières). These included Marmontel, Charles Batteux, and Etienne Bonnot de Condillac.[61] Indeed,

---

[60] Diderot, "Lettre sur les sourds et muets," 409.

[61] Jean-François Marmontel, "Apologie du Théâtre, ou analyse de la lettre de M. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève, à M. d'Alembert, au sujet des spectacles," in *Œuvres de Marmontel*, ed. Villenave, vol. 5 (Paris: A. Belin, 1819), 770-772; Charles Batteux, *Les beaux arts arts réduits á un même principe* (Paris : Chez

references to modern works in terms of affective power were rare, so we may feel prompted to question whether this was because they saw modern music as a purely aesthetic experience and thus not a functional one.

This does not seem to be the case, however. Citing a wide range of aesthetic tracts, Downing Thomas has ably demonstrated how from the seventeenth century onwards French *philosophes* were absorbed with trying to recapture the "texture and spirit" of ancient Greek music because they believed that "selected rhythms, intervals, modes or keys, and instrumental temperaments could affect the animal spirits of the body, which in turn could occasion the soul to experience the various passions."[62] These devices were the inherited keys capable of unlocking an affective and productive music, and consequently became the focus of works concerned with the aesthetics of utility. The *philosophes* were not arguing to jettison modern music after all: only to modify or reform it. They sought to capture the 'texture and spirit' of ancient music rather than to have it replace their own.

In fact, Condillac was quite explicit in arguing that modern music was better than ancient music, or at least by virtue of artistic and organological advances had a significantly greater potential. He stated for example: "[let us judge] by the instruments they used, and we shall have reason to presume that the superiority is on our side."[63] Moreover, as we see from Diderot's description of *Zoroastre* in the *Lettre sur les sourds et les muets*, opera in particular was understood to capture much of the affective power of Ancient Greek musical expression. The audience, however, were simply not properly equipped to be receptive to it.

As such, the frequent references to the music of Antiquity should not be regarded as a desire to abandon modern music in pursuit of an anachronistic music of sentimental utility. Rather, it would be more accurate to conclude that the *philosophes* perceived ancient music as possessing particular characteristics which could be borrowed and then grafted into the 'superior' music of modernity, particularly in the case of opera which was able to exploit the power of language and song. Ancient Greek music in particular was perceived as something of a template from which contemporary composers could develop their own music with a didactic function. As Rousseau himself said of music in Antiquity, "a more effective means of

Durand, 1746), 250; Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1746).

[62] Thomas, *Music and the origins of language*, 24, 25.

[63] Condillac, *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*, vol. 2, 77. Quoted from Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language*, 80.

engraving principles of morality and the knowledge of duty in the minds of men could not be found."[64]

The evident connection between sensation and morality raises further questions. To what end did contemporary sensationists believe that music's power over human *sensibilité* should be applied, and by whom should these efforts be directed? What social benefit could there be in using music (and opera in particular) in order to elicit extreme emotional and physiological reactions from audiences?

### ***Sensibilité*** **and morality: Rousseau, d'Alembert, and the Geneva contention**

Music was not the only art capable of acting upon human *sensibilité*. Diderot spoke at some length about painting for example, and, as we shall shortly discuss, the theatre was a particularly contentious issue.[65] The most pervasive argument concerning the utility of sensation was in terms of moral instruction, produced through the correct application of sensations in order to elicit the experience of pleasure and pain from an audience where appropriate (although the exact terminology varied from author to author). In simple Aristotelian terms, when presented with artistic works which associated pleasure with virtue and pain with immorality, the audience would learn to take pleasure in virtue and to shun immoral behaviour.[66]

This mode of argument had received considerable attention in France during the seventeenth century, particularly in Nicolas Malebranche's *De la recherche de la verité*. Here, Malebranche argued that the sensation of joyous love draws people towards it because we seek to "experience it and to enjoy its good through the sensation of delight", whereas we can take joy even in evil sensations like aversion because they repel us towards the delights of the "opposite good".[67] For Malebranche, the power of sensation over *sensibilité* was ultimately just a distraction from hearing the didactic voice of God; however, many others concurred with his analysis but believed that the sentimental evocation of pleasure and pain might actually be

---

[64] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Musique," in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc.*, eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project [Spring 2013 edition], ed. Robert Morrissey), accessed 09/02/18, https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/10/3792/, 10:899.

[65] See Denis Diderot, "Essais sur la peinture," in *Œuvres complètes de Diderot : revues sur les éditions originales, comprenant ce qui a été publié a diverses époques et les manuscrits inédits conservés à la bibliothèque de l'Ermitage, notices, notes, table analytique*, ed. Assézat, J., vol. 10 (Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1875), 455-520.

[66] This argument had considerable pedigree dating back to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. See Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, tr. Susan D. Collins and Robert C. Bartlett (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 30.

[67] Malebranche, *The Search After Truth*, 347-349.

directed to didactic ends in themselves. As Alexander Cook points out for example, sensation was the basis of the moral theories of Helvétius, Hobbes, Hume and Smith.[68]

On the francophone side of the Channel, Claude Adrien Helvétius was particularly clear on the matter in both *De l'esprit* (1758) and *De l'homme* (1773). He argued that man's self-love drives him to seek pleasure and avoid pain, and that if the state were to reward virtue with honour then it should surely cultivate a virtuous people whose private interests were aligned with its own. Cultivating such a climate depended upon strong passions and emotions because they were the means by which a person's attention became fixed on the "object of their desire", and were inspired to acts of virtue and courage in its pursuit.[69] A person's passions were the very cause and sustenance of their morals, without which all morality was dead. Accordingly, he argued that "the more our passions are lively, the greater the effects which they produce."[70] Whilst the passions were thus the foundation of morality and virtue, Helvétius contended that the arts — as vehicles for sensation — were in turn the foundation of passion. He wrote: "We owe the invention and the marvels of the arts to strong passions: [the arts] must therefore be considered the productive seed of the spirit, and the powerful wellspring which carries men to [undertake] great actions."[71]

The arts' sentimental power was not simply a means of eliciting a bodily or emotional reaction, therefore. It was a means of both fostering unity and cultivating virtuous behaviour. As John O'Neal rightly points out, sensation was the very core of Helvétius' legislative system, and thus it required the methodical attention and care of the state were it to be employed to improve society.[72] Sensation (in performance) had potential here, being more powerful than the spoken word alone and not depending upon the sort of 'fixed' meaning which might hinder any attempt at universality.

This was a notion shared by Diderot (*Lettre sur les aveugles à l'usage de ceux qui voient*), Louis de Jaucourt ('Passions' in the *Encyclopédie*), Yves-Marie André (*Essai sur le beau*), Charles Batteux (*Les Beaux-arts réduits à une même principe*), and others besides.[73] In

---

[68] Alexander Cook, "Feeling Better: Moral Sense and Sensibility in Enlightenment Thought," in *The Discourse of Sensibility*, 89-91.
[69] Ian Cumming, *Helvetius: His Life and Place in the History of Educational Thought* (London: Routledge, 2001), 76.
[70] Claude Adrien Helvétius, *De l'esprit* (Paris: Durand, 1758), 297, 430.
[71] Ibid, 297-298.
[72] O' Neal, *The Authority of Experience*, 173.
[73] Denis Diderot, "Lettre sur les aveugles à l'usage de ceux qui voient," in *Œuvres complètes de Diderot: revues sur les éditions originales, comprenant ce qui a été publié a diverses époques et les manuscrits inédits conservés à la bibliothèque de l'Ermitage, notices, notes, table analytique*, ed. Assézat, J., vol. 1 (Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1875), 288; Louis de Jaucourt, "Passion (Peinture)," in *Encyclopédie*, *ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc*., eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project [Spring 2013 edition],

addition, Cuillé has drawn attention to a widespread intellectual investment in the moral, didactic power of the performing arts, taken up by diverse authors like Diderot, Cazotte, and Beaumarchais on one hand, and influential female writers (Charrière, Cottin, Krüdener, Staël) on the other who worked hard to overturn constraining prejudice against the musical education of women on grounds of immorality.[74] In short, the idea that art could help cultivate a better, more virtuous society through the power of sensation was common currency.[75]

These arguments were all contingent on the idea that those exposed to the sensations of art might learn virtuous behaviour through the experience of that which pleased or revolted them. But some of the *philosophes* argued that the performing arts in particular had an additional power to instruct: the ability to exchange the position of the audience and the subjects of the work, thereby allowing the audience to identify with the pleasure or pain they might feel, were they in the same position (*identification*). The sympathy generated from a vicarious emotional experience was believed to rouse the passions in such a way that the didactic lesson might be cemented as if the audience had lived the experience themselves.[76]

Whilst I have contended that the argument for art instructing audiences in virtue was prevalent in many eighteenth-century texts, I do not mean to suggest that there was total consensus on the matter. The theatre in particular was a cause of great controversy, primarily between Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, but also amongst a large group of conflicting pamphleteers. One scholar has counted over four hundred contributions from many different authors.[77]

---

ed. Robert Morrissey), accessed 09/02/18, https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/12/427/, 12:151; André, *Essai sur le beau*, 27-28; Charles Batteux, *Les beaux arts arts réduits á un même principe*, 129-131.

[74] Tili Boon Cuillé, *Narrative Interludes: Musical Tableaux in Eighteenth-Century French Texts* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 117-203.

[75] Robert M. Isherwood has explored the practical application of music to didactic ends in the period preceding the Revolution in some detail. He concludes that the government's efforts exhibited a common consensus that "the harmony of man, nature, and the cosmos was reproduced in music; that music had a profound effect on conduct and temperament; and that it therefore could be useful in creating and preserving a peaceful, orderly society… This last conclusion was perhaps the most important in the musical life of the age of royal absolutism. It was fully developed as a concept in a corpus of historical and analytical literature on music, becoming the dogmatic fulcrum of the musical thought and practice of the century." See Robert M. Isherwood, *Music in Service of the King* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1973), 2-3.

[76] Arguments of this nature were made by Diderot (*Entretiens sur le fils naturel* and *Réfutation d'Helvétius*) and Marmontel (*Apologie du Théâtre*) in particular, whereas Smith (*Theory of Moral Sentiments*) proposed the same but not in a theatrical context. As we shall see, Rousseau was equally convinced of the performing arts' power of *sympathie* but did not believe it could be didactically useful, which was a position Malebranche had taken for different reasons (as we have discussed) in *De la recherche de la vérité*.

[77] Lester G. Crocker, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, vol. 2 (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1973), 18.

The chronology of the disagreement has already been unteased in close detail elsewhere,[78] but suffice it to say that the problem began when d'Alembert's article 'Genève' was published in the *Encyclopédie*. The article was a reasonably substantial discourse on the city and its culture as a whole, about which d'Alembert was largely complimentary. However, Rousseau disagreed vehemently on the issue of Geneva's strict laws against luxury, which d'Alembert had argued were unnecessarily draconian, and focused on the theatre as a microcosm of the issue. Thus a small section of d'Alembert's article became the subject of a passionate debate with many hundreds of responses on the subject of Geneva's theatrical life and the didactic utility of the theatre more generally.

D'Alembert's primary concern was not even the theatre itself, but the actors (*comédiens*) who populated the stage. During the eighteenth century, French actors officially faced significant prejudice from the Gallican Church (which stopped short of excommunicating them, but officially refused them the right to marry or receive communion) and from the state who ostensibly marginalised them both socially and legally.[79] In practice though, as John McManners has shown, French actors were never treated that severely. A general mistrust of professional actors may have pervaded on an official basis, but in reality they enjoyed the financial support of the government, great popularity amongst audiences of all classes and tastes, and tolerance by the clergy.[80]

But d'Alembert perceived that the situation was worse in Geneva where *comédiens* were treated as debauchers (*libertins*), and proposed instead that attitudes towards them be relaxed and gentle laws be directed to regulate their behaviour, in order that Genevan actors might pursue virtue and become examples to the rest of Europe.[81]

Rousseau disagreed zealously, quickly publishing his response in his *Lettre sur les spectacles*. *Comédiens*, he argued, were men and women of bad morals, licentiousness, and scandal.[82] Although astonishing to modern eyes, these criticisms were simply an echo of the charges which had been levelled at actors for centuries. More significant were Rousseau's

---

[78] Most recently it has been covered in some detail by Joseph Harris in *Inventing the Spectator: Subjectivity and the Theatrical Experience in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 198-223.

[79] Lauren Clay, "Provincial Actors, the Comedie-Francaise, and the Business of Performing in Eighteenth-Century France," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38 no. 4 (Summer 2005), 653. See also Martine de Rougemont, *La vie théâtrale en France* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1988), 205-206.

[80] John McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France Volume 2: The Religion of the People and the Politics of Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 341.

[81] Jean le Rond d'Alembert, "Genève," in *Encyclopédie*, vol. 7, 577-8, accessed 09/02/18, https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/7/1890/.

[82] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *J.J. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève à M. d'Alembert… dans le VIIème volume de l'Encyclopédie, et particulierement, sur le projet d'établir un théâtre de comédie en cette ville* (Amsterdam: Marc Michel Rey, 1758), 135-136.

allegations that *comédiens* were innately false, and that the basis of theatre was to deceive the audience.[83] Rousseau argued that this deception was acutely dangerous when coupled with the sentimental power of the theatrical arts:

> These dressed-up men so well-practiced in the tone of gallantry and the accents of passions, do they never abuse this art in order to seduce young people? ...The orator or the preacher, one might say to me, puts themselves on the line as much as the actor. The difference is very great. When the orator displays himself, it's to speak and not to give a performance: he only represents himself… But an actor on the stage, spreading other sentiments than his own, only says that which somebody makes him say. He often represents a chimerical being annihilating himself so to speak, and is lost in his hero… [he becomes] the plaything of the audience.[84]

In recent years, a great many scholars have turned their attention to excavating the ideological foundations of Rousseau's diatribe against the theatre. David Marshall argued that Rousseau's true objection was to the unavoidable theatricality of civilised life, and therefore to the theatre primarily as a symbol (and an exaggerated form) of our fall from a natural state. Since this fall, humanity has conducted its relationships theatrically, living in and deriving "the sentiment of existence" from the judgement of others rather than from "within" themselves (and thus, like the actor, 'annihilating themselves' in order to exist only in judgement of others). In the theatre, this is celebrated and thus it should be avoided: "The rise of a theatrical perspective turns people into actors and encourages them to make spectacles of themselves; it also weakens the natural bonds between people by turning them into spectators."[85]

More recently, Roman Roszak has presented a similar argument but emphasised how Rousseau perceived the theatre weakening humanity's natural bonds by satisfying them with abstract, idealistic images of virtue. This he saw resulting in the dissipation of all connection between the represented and the real, and ultimately in the confiscation of "popular sovereignty" (*la souveraineté populaire*) and its surrender to whatever (immoral) power could fill the void.[86] The emphasis in both these studies, therefore, is the artificiality of the theatre in Rousseau's conception, which is actually augmented by its sentimental power. Jean-Michel Vives concurs, describing Rousseau's theatre in terms of facilitating a radical state of abandonment in the spectator (*étant hors soi*), but one which had no permanence because of its artificiality.[87]

---

[83] Ibid, 143-144.
[84] Ibid, 145.
[85] David Marshall, "Rousseau and the State of Theater," *Representation*s 13 (Winter 1986), 84-86.
[86] Roman Roszak, "Rousseau et le théâtre: trois dispositifs de clôture du monde bourgeois," *Cités* 68 no. 4 (2016), 143.
[87] Jean-Michel Vives, "De la haine du théâtre et du comédien: Petit traité de l'illusion," *Insistance* 2 no. 1 (2006), 59.

Vives is right to point out that Rousseau's primary concerns were about the *comédien*, rather than the theatre itself. As the vehicle for artificiality, it was the actor who produced the illusion which proved so contrary to helpful moral instruction.[88] In this regard, it is important to consider the influence of widespread and deeply-entrenched prejudices against France's *comédiens*, which Pierre Frantz has shown to have at least limited the *philosophes*' willingness to recommend it as a didactic social tool. He argues that there was a general "moral cynicism" (*cynisme moral*) which made them suspicious of the profession's *libertinage* and long-standing association with prostitution, and therefore identifies the *comédien's* influence with the public's fears of *seduction*.[89] In the specific context of opera with which this study is concerned, it is instructive also to consider T.C.W. Blanning's conclusions on the subject of musicians specifically, who it seems shared all the stigma of their contemporaries. Opera singers were especially dubious, he argues, for they bore an historical shame dating back to Ancient Greece and Persia. Though he does not deny that "Theatre and music were essential components of representational culture" in France, he also points out the tension produced by the fact that "their practitioners were all too often censured as immoral and despised as no better than vagrants."[90]

In this regard, Rousseau's objections were not unique, but in fact revived many of the arguments of the seventeenth-century theologian Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet. When it was published in 1694, Bossuet's *Maximes et réflexions sur la comédie* proved highly influential and resulted in the preservation of an ecclesiastical prejudice against the theatre long after these had dissipated from amongst the public. He argued that actors were to blame for its corrupting effect: though a playwright might seek to offer up virtuous heroes and heroines as models for the audience, actors are only capable of representing the passions they themselves have experienced. These, he believed, are likely to be the very things they should have confessed and had absolved by a priest.[91]

However, I would argue that Rousseau's issue was not solely with the combination of inauthenticity and stigmatised immorality. Other concerns included that the theatre would encourage citizens to waste their time and intensify the economic division of rich and poor in society, and that, as exhibited in the extract above, the *comédien*'s performance exercised a significant emotional influence over the audience through "spreading sentiments", working

---

[88] Ibid, 59.

[89] Pierre Frantz, "Le théâtre déstabilisé. Diderot et la critique de Rousseau," *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie* 48 (2013), 45.

[90] T.C.W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe, 1660-1789* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 81-83.

[91] McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France* vol. 2, 317. See also Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, *Maximes et réflexions sur la comédie* (Paris: Jean Anisson, 1694).

"seduction" on the audience through theatrical sensation. In these instances, the problem was the strength of the theatre's sentimental power, as he outlined in an earlier passage of his *Lettre*:

> These lively and touching impressions which we become accustomed to and which come back to us so often: are they suitable for curbing our sentiments if needed? …Don't we know that all the passions are sisters, and that one alone suffices to excite a thousand others, and that to combat one with another is only to render the heart more sensitive to all of them? The only means of purging them is reason, and… reason has no effect in the theatre.[92]

This needs to be moderated by the fact that Rousseau also spoke openly about the theatre's weakness. He argued, for example, that the theatre could only reflect the image of society in an exaggerated form, because fundamentally the theatre always had to 'please' the audience to be commercially successful. In so doing, a theatrical piece could only reinforce society's moral values as they already existed (including its vices) or fail dismally. The theatre was thus too didactically flawed to instigate social reform:

> Let nobody attribute to theatre the power to change either sentiments or morals which it can only follow and embellish. An author who wishes to collide with general taste would soon write for himself alone. When Molière corrected the comic stage, he attacked styles and absurdities; but he did not shock the public taste for all that. He followed or developed it, as did Corneille for his part… It follows from these initial observations that the general effect of the theatre is to reinforce the national character, and to augment natural inclinations, and to give a new energy to all the passions. In this sense it would seem that in its effect, being limited to intensifying rather than changing the established morals, Comedy would be good for the good and bad for the wicked.[93]

There is undoubtedly a tension here between strength and weakness, but it is important to observe that this tension was not a contradiction. The theatre's (problematic) strength was its ability to instil immoral principles through the power of sensation; its weakness was simply being unable to alter the public taste. The nub of the issue, therefore, was both the perceived lack of control regarding the power of theatrical sensation over a *sensible* audience, and a popular proclivity for unsuitable sensations.

So was the theatre really irredeemable? Though Rousseau indeed seemed to be fairly resolute on the theatre specifically, we should observe that he was not opposed to the theatrical. He recognised the opportunities to harness theatrical sensation in great festivals in the open air, where it was not in the hands of immoral actors but in the hands of the

[92] Rousseau, *J.J. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève à M. d'Alembert*, 23-24.
[93] Ibid, 19-22.

participating citizens themselves. In this way it could be put to a more productive and wholesome use in unifying the various strands of society in collective celebration.[94]

And although his arguments were undoubtedly influential, it is important to recognise that in many ways Rousseau's perspective ran directly against the grain of the era, not least because it opposed a long-established discourse which held that sensation might be used to correct other human passions and thus provide lessons in civic and personal virtue. This process, known as 'purging' the passions (*purgation* or *modération*),[95] dated back to Ancient Greece and to Aristotle's theory of tragedy. Here, suitable and desirable passions were perceived to purge other, undesirable passions, but also what Augusto Boal refers to as "non-social" or "socially forbidden instincts."[96] More recently, the theory had received significant attention and amendment from authors and theorists of catharsis like d'Aubinac, de Villiers, Saint-Évremond, Corneille, Racine, Perrault, Dacier, and others. Few authors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were prepared to endorse *purgation* as it stood in the original Aristotelian mode (Corneille was particularly critical of the theory),[97] but as John Lyons has pointed out, all acknowledged that pity, fear, and other passions could "improve the moral disposition of the audience" through moderating or purging other, inappropriate passions, thus fostering a state of civic virtue.[98]

Rousseau disagreed – he believed the power of the passions in the theatre was uncontrollable, and the practise of *purgation* was a fallacious temptress and a dangerous method of spreading unpredictable, influential passions amongst audience and society – but he was out of step with the prevailing intellectual current. The most measured counter-arguments were from d'Alembert and Jean-François Marmontel. D'Alembert conceded that the argument for *purgation* had been poorly propounded, whilst defending the author's ability to employ passions that safeguarded the audience from inappropriate influences. As examples, he argued that the tears elicited by Zaïre's misfortune (in Voltaire's *Zaïre* of 1732) instilled aversion to jealous and violent love; Brutus' patriotism (in Voltaire's *Mort de César* of 1736) safeguarded audiences against proud ambition; whilst the celestial vengeance of Sémiramis (in Voltaire's *Sémiramis* of 1748) protected against criminal inclinations and

[94] Ibid, 239-240.
[95] Louise Vigeant, "Les mots de la tragédie," *Jeu* 68 (1993), 94.
[96] Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, tr. Charles A. McBride, Maria-Odilia Leal McBride, and Emily Fryer (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 29.
[97] Emmanuelle Hénin, "Le Plaisir des larmes, ou l'invention d'une *catharsis* galante," *Littératures classiques* 1 no. 62 (2007), 228.
[98] John D. Lyons, *Kingdom of Disorder: The Theory of Tragedy in Classical France* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1999), 49.

inspired a hatred of crime.[99] In short, if deployed correctly, any given passion could be a useful pedagogical tool in the hands of a scrupulous author. With a clever *riposte*, d'Alembert attempted to undermine Rousseau's contentions concerning the function of reason and the innate goodness of humanity:

> reason, having to fight those passions which stifle its voice within us, borrows the assistance of the theatre in order to imprint the truths that we need to learn more profoundly in our soul. If these truths have no effect on resolute villains, they find an easier entry into the hearts of others: when they have already been engraved there, they reinforce themselves. Perhaps incapable of bringing back lost men, they are nevertheless suitable for stopping others from losing themselves… The effect of morality in the theatre is therefore less to bring about a sudden change in corrupt hearts than to forearm vulnerable souls against vice by means of honest sentiments, and to strengthen these virtuous souls in these same sentiments… These movements [which the theatre excites within us] are the tremors which the sentiment of virtue is dependent upon in order to be awoken in us; it is a fire which from time to time it is necessary to re-stoke and feed in order to stop it from going out.[100]

It is interesting that in arguing against Rousseau's criticisms d'Alembert should return to the traditional reason versus *sensibilité* debate. D'Alembert was firmly of the opinion that reason and *sensibilité* were conjoined or co-operative faculties, just as Montesquieu had argued in the formulation of his concept of taste. He argued that reason was contingent upon *sensibilité* in order to make its effect known, and in turn developed the argument by conceiving of sensations as a vehicle for reason. In other words, reason was certainly vital in ensuring the moral propriety of the theatre; but it was only by the power of sentimental impression that it could hope to exert any emotional influence over the audience and thus influence its behaviour.

Ever a realist, d'Alembert was not carried away by notions that moral pieces might convert even the most wicked, but presented a rather more equitable proposition for regular audience exposure to 'honest sentiments' which might serve to re-kindle the flame of virtue which already resided in most of mankind. The theatre is presented as an inoculation to prevent moral disease, and a regular booster which 'reinforced' the good desires in moderately virtuous citizens ("*la morale est comme la médecine*").[101]

Marmontel developed this theme in his own criticism of Rousseau's pamphlet. Whereas Rousseau had insisted that the dangers of *identification* meant that sensations of vice and

---

[99] Jean le Rond d'Alembert, "Lettre de M. d'Alembert à M. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève," in *Œuvres complètes de J.J. Rousseau, supplément à la collection*, vol. 26 (Deux-Ponts: Sanson et compagnie, 1782), 40.
[100] Ibid, 41-42.
[101] Ibid, 42.

immorality could have severe repercussions were they presented on the stage, Marmontel argued that these sensations might actually be used to inspire the opposite passions in the audience through a sense of aversion. In Antiquity, argued Marmontel, the Spartans had used just such a process to educate their youth in civic virtue: by plying their slaves with wine unto drunkenness and debauchery, they were successful in instilling a fear of and aversion to such lewd behaviour.[102] In fact, he opined that the repeated exposure to these passions and to dramatic examples of their negative influence might form the basis for a pedagogical project in society. This he termed *habitude* (custom or habit):

> Amongst the instruments which help those whose morals we can affect, M. Rousseau has left out the most powerful, which is habit. Repeated affections give birth to inclinations, and these — decidedly good or bad — constitute good or bad morals. Such is the infallible effect of the emotions that the theatre causes us: as short lived as they are, they remain at least a weak imprint within us, and the same imprints get deeper, engraving themselves so forwardly within the soul that they become natural to it.[103]

According to this argument, theatrical sensation was not a fleeting power able to elicit an emotional response for merely a moment. It was the influential, 'infallible' heart of a process which had the power to impress morals by virtue of habitual or repetitive application. Marmontel thought that sensation should be used systematically in order to become the basis of 'inclinations', and in turn to dictate morals and behaviour. His was a theatre at the heart of civic instruction, where audiences were taught by the influence of sensation to curb or embrace their passions and to behave virtuously. Marmontel's spectator, on the other hand, was a fundamentally malleable individual whose innate *sensibilité* made them vulnerable to the sentimental world of the auditorium.

We should consider that he (along with the majority of his adversary's critics, and especially d'Alembert) did not differ from Rousseau in this regard. Both shared this conception of humanity, and an understanding of the theatre as a centre of profound sentimental influence capable of shaping behaviour. There also seemed to be a clear consensus on the importance of participation, whereby the audience interacted emotionally with the characters and events unfolding onstage. For Rousseau, indeed, the theatre did not present enough opportunity for participation, which was why it was necessary for any sentimental instruction in virtue to be conducted in great outdoor festivals.

The notion of systematically applying theatrical sensation to exploit human *sensibilité* raises questions of regulation, application and control. In particular, what was the conceived authority

[102] Marmontel, "Apologie du Théâtre", 745.
[103] Ibid, 748.

behind the application, and who should be responsible for its use? Unfortunately, neither Marmontel nor d'Alembert devoted a great deal of attention to this issue. However, Marmontel did outline a brief but striking warning against a political solution. Whilst he acknowledged that the theatre had been deeply political in Ancient Greece, he believed that should French theatre be employed to teach political lessons, its ability to educate morally would be impaired. Therefore, he argued, "it cannot and must not have connection to the administration of the state."[104] It is important to note, however, that these objections derived from Marmontel's underlying uneasiness about the state of political culture under the *ancien régime*, as Jeffrey Ravel points out. As a staunch proponent of a free and democratic *parterre*, the idea of aristocratic or authoritarian oppression in the theatre concerned him greatly.[105] Thus, a new, reformed regime could conceivably develop a healthier relationship with it. Moreover, Marmontel did state that the theatre had a duty to support the national constitution (and thus moral lessons at the expense of the state were equally intolerable).

However, the theorist and one-time director of the *Comédie-Italienne* Luigi Riccoboni grappled with this issue directly, producing a "radical, even shocking reform essay" on the subject in 1745.[106] Riccoboni's primary concern about the theatre centred on the troubling power of love, which he perceived made an especially strong sentimental impression on spectators in the theatre, where, if unregulated, it threw all the passions into disorder and could potentially lead to immoral behaviour in a state of impassioned confusion.[107] His solution was indeed radical: Riccoboni proposed a board of four censors representing Church, State, authors, and actors to oversee the moral conduct of theatrical performances; certificates of moral conduct for the actors themselves; the rewriting of plays which were deemed morally dubious, and a blanket ban on love scenes.[108]

Similar views were shared by the playwright Barthélemy-Christophe Fagan, whose *Nouvelles observations* of 1751 put forth many of the same proposals (although in less radical terms).[109] But as McManners points out, this was a contested field, with authors clashing frequently on the moral potential of the theatre and especially on the matter of state regulation. Ultimately, the attitude of the Church and the regulation of the State cultivated a fairly stable distinction between official policy and enforcement. This mirrored the tension between a general

---

[104] Ibid, 772.

[105] Jeffrey S. Ravel, "Le théâtre et ses publics : pratiques et représentations du parterre à Paris au XVIIIe siècle," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 49 no. 3 (2002), 117.

[106] Charlton, *Opera in the Age of Rousseau,* 169-170.

[107] Riccoboni, *De la réformation du théâtre*, 17-19.

[108] McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France* vol. 2*,* 327.

[109] Barthélemy Christophe Fagan, "Nouvelles observations au sujet des condamnations prononcées contre les comédiens," in *Théâtre de M. Fagan, et autres œuvres du même auteur*, vol. 2 (Paris: N.B. Duchesne, 1760), 393-429.

consensus that the theatre was “an inevitable evil to be regulated as far as possible”, and a complete lack of consensus on how best to do so.[110] In this regard, d’Alembert is an excellent example of the middle ground: though he made various statements in favour of national legislation to ensure the good behaviour of actors in particular,[111] he was unforthcoming on the issue of how this might be organised.

Potential methods of rehabilitating the theatre existed, particularly those programmes which advocated the aesthetic education of citizens as a protective measure. Such programmes were beginning to burgeon in Britain and France during the eighteenth century. As Cook has pointed out, there was a growing desire amongst the medical community to expose children to ‘sentimental training’ in order that they learn personal and civic virtue, and be forearmed against particularly extreme sensations. One proponent was Charles Augustin Vandermonde, who argued for “mental training… designed to nurture the quality [of the youth] and prevent its pathological degradation, with a program of bodily training… to maximise [the subject’s] sentimental capacity”.[112] Likewise, Rousseau and Diderot were part of a larger body of authors (including Samuel Richardson) who sought to move the passions at the sight of virtue, and thus ‘train’ their readers in a “taste for moral beauty”.[113]

Given this fact, and the broader cultural influence of sensationism in eighteenth-century France, it would be difficult to overstate the significance of the theatre’s perceived influence over the emotions and morals, for good or for evil. Its unique persuasive quality was seen to manipulate the emotions in such a way that the longevity of effect far outlasted the initial sensation.

### Conclusion: the moral utility of sensation in eighteenth-century France

In the present-day, Rousseau’s zealous opposition to the theatre has understandably drawn a great portion of scholarly attention, taking precedence over the 400 or so pamphlets published in response. Nevertheless, we must concede that Rousseau’s argument was by no means representative of the general consensus: it was highly innovative and accordingly proved difficult for many of his contemporaries to accept.

Indeed, it is striking that some scholars question whether Rousseau was in fact anti-theatrical. David Marshall in particular suggests that he was not against the theatre because of its sentimental danger, but only because it was an institution which rivalled “the surveillance,

[110] McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France* vol. 2*,* 323-332, 334.
[111] d’Alembert, “Genève”, 577.
[112] Cook, “Feeling Better: Moral Sense and Sensibility in Enlightenment Thought”, 97.
[113] Ibid, 97.

policing, and manipulation of amour-propre that serve the state."[114] Similarly, Timothy Costelloe argues that Rousseau was not so much 'anti-theatrical' as unconvinced of the benefits.[115] These are interesting arguments: a careful reader may indeed be surprised by Rousseau's reticence to cement his argument with a concrete condemnation of theatrical principles. For example, despite the zeal with which he outlined his primary concerns, he seems to have been careful to pepper his arguments with clauses permitting a retraction under certain conditions. His argument against the dangerous power of sensation over the emotions was not, after all, a condemnation of sensation,[116] for he conceded that sensation was an important didactic tool in the festal alternatives. Likewise, he conceded that *spectacles* might conceivably be useful in small towns if not in large cities,[117] and be an edifying art form for well-educated audiences.[118] He even thought that some societies could benefit from the way the *spectacles* aided the formation of taste.[119] Finally, as we shall see later, neither did he seem to feel that his critique of the theatre applied to opera.

It seems prudent, then, simply to recognise that the issue of theatrical didacticism was not fully resolved: certainly amongst France's circles of *philosophes*, and possibly even within Rousseau's own corpus. The problem of moral instruction through the theatrical arts was very much a live issue during the eighteenth century, and whichever side was taken the power of theatrical sensation over human *sensibilité* was a matter of the highest significance.

It should not be forgotten that there was overall a great deal of optimism for the theatre despite Rousseau's concerns. To quote Marmontel with regard to Paris:

> The performing arts are useful there, not to perfect taste when honesty is lost, but to encourage this same honesty with virtuous, publicly-applauded examples; not to varnish over the vileness of vice, but to make the shame and unworthiness of vice felt, and to develop the natural germ of virtue in souls; not to prevent poor morals from degrading into brigandage, but to spread and perpetuate goodness there by the gradual communication of healthy ideas and the habitual impression of virtuous sentiments. In a word, to cultivate and nourish the taste for truth, honesty and beautiful morality, which, whatever people say, is still held in reverence amongst us.[120]

Fundamentally, the pamphlet war sparked by d'Alembert's article on Geneva clearly indicates that issues of *sensibilité* were at the very core of the heated disagreement about the moral potential of the theatre. In order to understand the disagreement about the moral potential of

---

[114] David Marshall, "Rousseau and the State of Theater," *Representations* 13 (Winter 1986), 108.
[115] Timothy M. Costelloe, "The Theater of Morals: Culture and Community in Rousseau's Lettre à M. d'Alembert," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 27 no. 1 (Winter 2003), 63.
[116] Rousseau, *J.J. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève à M. d'Alembert*, 23-24.
[117] Ibid, 103.
[118] Ibid, 106.
[119] Ibid, 112-113.
[120] Marmontel, "Apologie du Théâtre", 793.

opera and specifically *opéra-comique* in eighteenth-century France, a matter to which we will shortly turn our attention, it is first imperative that we come to terms with contemporary perspectives on the emotions and the affective power of the arts.

It is for this reason that in the present chapter we have taken a theoretical approach to the issue which we will continue in Chapter II, identifying and evaluating the currency of sensationist ideas and their influence in France during the eighteenth century. We have not explored the operas produced in the intellectual climate outlined here, though to do so would undoubtedly prove illuminating; the constraints of space simply do not permit us to explore both matters in the present project. Instead, given that this period of Enlightenment was an enormously significant – if not the defining – component of the Revolution's aesthetic inheritance, we have established what sorts of ideas were circulating concerning the potential of music to benefit and improve society, so that in later chapters we might directly address the issue of music's application during the Revolution, and grapple with the twin problems of propaganda and rupture versus continuity in relation to contemporary understandings of opera's sentimental power.

# Chapter II. *Une École agréable de mœurs*: Sensationism and Moral Instruction in Opera and *Opéra-comique* before the Revolution

*"I will always maintain… that the French theatre, purified as it is today, is an enjoyable school of morality, where young people find constant lessons in wisdom, honour and virtue, from which they could draw the best part, if they paid a little more attention…* – Charles de Fieux Mouhy (1780)[1]

Having explored the striking pervasion of sensationism in eighteenth-century culture and specifically the extent its formative influence in aesthetic and moral contexts, we turn our attention now to its impact on opera and *opéra-comique*. As in the wider aesthetic culture of the period, discussions and theories of opera frequently took on a noisy and polemical tone,[2] though I will argue that all parties in these disagreements shared a sensationist understanding of operatic aesthetics. By this, I mean that they had in common a desire that every operatic device should be subordinated to the greater ambition of affecting or moving the spectator's emotions to an intense degree, which was to be accomplished by exerting the medium's influence on the specator's *sensibilité* in terms familiar from the previous chapter of the present study. Writers on opera during this period advanced many different opinions on the subject of opera's expressive power and utility – though it was described very often in terms of "astonishing", "shocking" or even "seducing" the spectator – but regardless of their polemical position, these writers consistently returned to ideas which we would now understand in terms of intersubjective or interpersonal experience. The sentimental power of opera was ultimately to be realised fully in a corporate, social context.

Notions of intersubjectivity and its implications (particularly as described by scholars such as Thomas, Leavens, Scott, Dart and Geoffroy-Schwinden) both in *opéra-comique* and in the arts generally have already been discussed: it was hoped that they could be used to promote connections between individuals, as well as reconcile their isolated subjectivities and forge a collective experience.[3] It is important here, though, not to overlook the very practical implications of an otherwise abstract debate. Intersubjective experience fostered through the

---

[1] Charles de Fieux de Mouhy, *Les Dangers des spectacles, ou les mémoires de Champigny,* vol. 1 (Paris: L. Jorry and J.G. Mérigot, 1780), 1.
[2] Verba, *Music and the French Enlightenment*, 5-7.
[3] See pp. 17-23, 53-55.

sentimental power of opera was never the end in itself; rather, theorists hoped that this power could be applied in order to unite society, instruct and disciple citizens in civic virtue, and ultimately combine the two by encouraging citizens to invest in a united society established on moral virtue. This has largely been overlooked in the context of opera.[4] In the present chapter, I seek to draw attention back to this practical, moral dimension of opera in eighteenth-century French aesthetics. *Opéra-comique* provides a helpful example of why this is necessary: though both Thomas and Leavens have already explored the influence of sensationism in the aesthetics of contemporary *opéra-comique* – and though I concur with Thomas in this chapter that eighteenth-century reconceptualisation of opera was indeed dependent on it for a "conceptual matrix" which could offer "a lyrical study of the human soul"[5] – the moral, functional dimension of the genre as it was understood by theorists of the period remains to be demonstrated.[6]

I will show that the inverse was also true and significant: moral standards or principles to be taught through opera were predicated on sensationist principles identified today as "intrapsychic bodily and cognitive experience… inner worlds of emotion and imagination and outer worlds of action" (by Leavens), and "multiple inflections of individual subjective feeling

---

[4] The exception to this is Catherine Kintzler, whose argues in her work on the poetics of opera from Corneille to Rousseau that, during this period, Classical aesthetics were becoming separated from their Aristotelian origins and moralised according to Christian values under thinkers like Pierre Nicole and Bossuet. She identifies the emergence of a preference for realistic instead of fantastical opera (despite the continued interest in Rameau and Lully) and argues that this was partly due to moral concerns, with the latter coming to be known as 'immoral' due to its abuse of sentimental power in causing audiences to be absorbed and influenced by fictive, and ultimately distracting, dramatic influences. Kintzler's arguments will be explored in the present chapter. Where this study departs, however, is in its specific focus on the importance of *opéra-comique*, and also on the senationist basis of didactic instruction through opera. See *Poétique de l'opéra français de Corneille à Rousseau* (Paris: Minerve, 1991), 106, 481.

[5] At the heart of Thomas' study is the conclusion that, though in the seventeenth century Bossuet and Saint-Evremond rejected sensation as a valid means of influencing the emotions – because they feared its power to elecit harmful passions through opera which would corrupt spectators – eighteenth-century developments in the theorisation of lyric theatre rehabilitated it through the concept of *sensibilité*. Accordingly, he argues that the 'paradigm shift that revalorized sensation' resulted in opera (and *opéra-comique*, in this context) becoming understood as a 'lyrical study of the human soul' rather than bad mimesis. This is the basis for his contention that sensationism offered opera theorists a new 'conceptual matrix' for their idea of opera. My emphasis on the moral potential of *opéra-comique* in this chapter builds on Thomas' assertion: without this new conceptual matrix of *sensibilité*, *opéra-comique* could not have been theorised to have the significant didactic and social function I argue that contemporary theorists believed it to have. See Thomas, *Music and the origins of language*, 149.

[6] I believe there is a parallel between opera and the sentimental narrative in French literature, which Denby argues was indicative of ongoing endeavours to reform society according to "new standards of social solidarity and sympathy"; but we must not forget that these 'new standards' were not only sympathetic but moral. See Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France*, 2-4. Operas naturally possess narratives, which enable them to carry moral messages in the same way as a text; but as we will see in the present chapter, it was believed that music added a separate depth of expression sometimes conceived of as a language. This could therefore enhance the sentimental impact of any moral messages which the author intended to convey.

with general traits of a common humanity" (Thomas).[7] An important corollary, demonstrated by scholars like Elena Russo, Katherine Astbury, and Gregory S. Brown, was the renegotiation of the author's authority and social significance, mediated through their claims for an increased moral agency on behalf of the nation and for the good of the *patrie* and its citizens.[8]

Ultimately, I argue that these ideas were exhibited especially well in aesthetic theories of *opéra-comique*. Scholars have to a limited extent disputed whether the *philosophes* believed that this genre was of merit. Jean-Christophe Rebejkow, for example, believes that Rousseau and his camp rejected *opéra-comique* on the grounds that the French language was unsuitable for opera, and so too the adaption of Italian music and the mixing of languages found in early works of this nature.[9] But is this the full story? After all, Thomas argues that in general *opéra-comique* was prized for its "mutability", which offered an entire generation of theorists enough promise for them to overcome their misgivings about its possible aesthetic "incoherence", caused by its mixing of spoken and sung media.[10] It is necessary therefore to revisit the philosophes' conception of *opéra-comique* and the sentimental potential it offered, and in doing so I wish to highlight the importance of the 'moral' in the debate over *opéra-comique's* generic legitimacy. I argue that since the *philosophes*' writings exhibit a clear preference for expressive techniques and paradigms (such as *ridicule* and *vraisemblance*) which were able to instruct citizens in personal and civic virtue, in our re-evaluation we must properly take into account the suitability of *opéra-comique's* generic particularities – particularly in comparison with those of *tragédie lyrique* – to meet the didactic needs of the era.

Because *opéra-comique* only emerged during the eighteenth century, few of the *philosophes* discussed it explicitly with the sort of clear generic terminology we might hope for. However, many were concerned with a number of the dramatic or musical hallmarks of this lyric medium

---

[7] Leavens, "Figures of Sympathy in Eighteenth-Century Opéra-Comique", 225-226; Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime*, 179-180.
[8] Elena Russo, *Styles of Enlightenment: Taste, Politics, and Authorship in Eighteenth-Century France* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 2-7; Katherine Astbury, *The Moral Tale in France and Germany 1750-1789*, SVEC no. 7 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2002), 53-70, 95-112; Gregory S. Brown, *A Field of Honor: Writers, Court Culture, and Public Theater in French Literary Life from Racine to the Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 412-414.
[9] Rebejkow, "Rousseau et l'opéra-comique: les raisons d'un rejet," *The Romanic Review* 89 no. 2 (1998), 184. Rebejkow writes: "Rousseau, cause of the new rise of *opéra-comique* in France with *Le Devin du village,* did not, however, share the views of the composers which he directly or indirectly inspired. The reasons for this rejection [of *opéra-comique*] pertain to the fact that he considered the French language as unsuitable to song, and that he rejected pantomime as being destructive to [his principle of] unity of language, [which was] essential in opera… He therefore opposed the movement of adapting Italian music in the critique he made of Dauvergne, because, according to Rousseau, the French language, devoid of accent, would not be able to adapt to the inflections of ultramontane music. Also, he criticised the mixture of languages which one encounters in *opéra-comique* of the first half of the century."
[10] Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime*, 220-223.

(such as the mixing of spoken and sung media, for example), and from their theories on such matters it is possible to reconstruct their attitudes towards *opéra-comique*. Moreover, the *philosophes*' theories of 'comédie' (the adjectival relation being our 'comique') are pertinent and will be considered here in an operatic context.[11] At the same time, Sedaine's work in and on *opéra-comique* provides an illuminating specificity on the matter.

### ***Sensibilité*** **and didacticism in opera**

Much in the way that a belief in the extraordinary power of sensations seemed to bridge disagreements both theoretical (regarding the rational or sensual basis of *sensibilité*) and practical (regarding the melodic or harmonic foundation of musical expression), so it seemed that a consensus on the sentimental potency of opera was shared by both sides of the operatic controversies or *querelles* which raged in France throughout the eighteenth century.

During the bitter *Querelle des Bouffons* (1752-1754) and beyond, the composer Jean-Philippe Rameau's harmonic theories and zealous loyalty to French *tragédie-lyrique* proved intolerable

[11] As one author put it, very simply, "Le comique, c'est-à-dire le genre de la comédie." See Anon., 'Comique' in *Encyclopédie*, vol.3, 681. *Opéra-comique* fits within the broader family of French *comédie* by virtue of its prevailing characteristics: which were, as Marmontel described, "the imitation of morals put in action: the imitation of morals in which it differs from *tragédie* and the *poëme héroique*." See Marmontel 'Comédie (Belles-Lettres)' in *Encyclopédie*, vol.3, 665. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/3/3113/. Indeed, as Elizabeth Bartlet and Richard Smith point out, the earliest forms of *opéra-comique* performed at the Comédie-Italienne (mixing sung and spoken dialogue) were known as *comédies*: *comédies mêlée d'ariettes*. They were '*comédies*' because of "the significance of certain literary norms in part judged by the standards of French spoken theatre", and '*mêlée d'ariettes*' because of "the unique quality of the genre in which specially written music (mostly, though not exclusively, lighter airs for soloists was implied) had an increasingly significant role". This appellation was still commonly in use during the Revolution, although the same characteristics can also be identified in works which were given other names by their creators. See *M*. Elizabeth C. Bartlet and Richard Langham Smith, 'Opéra-comique' on *Oxford Music Online*, http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000043715. Bartlet and Smith discuss the relationship between all different sorts of *comédies* with each other (including *opéra-comique*) at some length, and point out that the French '*comédie*' and '*comique*' have no precise equivalent in other languages, and thus they should not be misinterpreted as corresponding with our 'comedy' and 'comic'. They also draw attention to Marmontel's *Encyclopédie* entry as an appropriate (though limited) yardstick, where *comédie* depicts 'staged mores' revealing the human condition and weaknesses. The three categories Marmontel gives for *comédie* in this article – *bas*, *bourgeois*, and *noble* – should be regarded as transcending (or at least overarching) the various *comique* genres. There is still a danger of oversimplifying the matter, however, and we should not forget that "French playwrights drew on a rich heritage that included the works of Rabelais, the satirical and licentious 16th-century poet, Marivaux, the witty early 18th-century playwright noted for sparkling bourgeois dialogues, and Molière, whom Marmontel and others took as the model for comédie", thus defying – at least to an extent – the broad brushstrokes of generic categorisation.

for his opponents. Yet they shared this in common at least: a fundamental belief in the sentimental power of opera to affect the emotions and the body in the profoundest sense. As he put it, true musical experience depended upon a total self-abandonment [*un pur abandon de soi-même*] to musical sensation, in which, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the passions played an operative role.[12] As Thomas observes, Rameau was directly influenced by an established tradition of conceived spectatorial 'possession' in French operatic aesthetics, in which the audience was 'seized' so as to be 'powerless' by the sensation of fictive passions portrayed onstage by the dramatis personæ.[13]

On the other hand, even Rameau's staunchest adversaries shared this conception of opera's power over human *sensibilité*. This included Diderot, whose fictional portrayal of Rameau's nephew amply demonstrated his conception of the power of opera, and d'Alembert, who argued that opera's primary purpose was to affect the emotions by eliciting weeping through touching scenes.[14]

Even Rousseau — despite his ambivalence about the theatre — seemed more inclined to accept the operatic art,[15] and in doing so chose to highlight the deeply emotional and physiological effects worked over audiences by the power of sensation.[16] This was in contrast with instrumental music, which he perceived as confusing and largely incoherent.[17] From

---

[12] Jean-Philippe Rameau, "Observations on Our Instinct for Music and on Its Principles," in *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music,* eds. Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998), 175. In the original French, "Pour joüir pleinement des effets de la Musique, il faut être dans un pur abandon de soi-même, et pour en juger, c'est au Principe par lequel on est affecté qu'il faut s'en rapporter." See Rameau, *Observations sur notre instinct pour la musique* (Paris : Prault fils, Lambert and Duchesne, 1754), iii.

[13] See Downing A. Thomas, "Opera, Dispossession, and the Sublime: The Case of "Armide"," *Theatre Journal* 49, no. 2 (May 1997), 185. This is corroborated by Cynthia Verba, who has demonstrated in considerable detail how Rameau's commitment to *tragédie-lyrique* was greatly influenced by his understanding of its overwhelming emotional impact on the senses. See Cynthia Verba, *Dramatic Expression in Rameau's "Tragédie en Musique": Between Tradition and Enlightenment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 160. Numerous excellent studies of the *Querelle* exist, though Andrea Fabiano's *La "Querelle des Bouffons" dans la vie culturelle française du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2005) provides an excellent recent survey and analysis of the major events and their cultural implications.

[14] Jean le Rond d'Alembert, "De la liberté en musique," in *Œuvres de d'Alembert,* ed. A. Belin, vol. 1 (London: Martin Bossange, 1821), 523.

[15] This confusing contradiction has been explored in some detail by Michael O'Dea. See *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Music, Illusion and Desire* (London: St Martin's Press, 1995).

[16] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Letter on French Music," in *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music,* eds. Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998), 152.

[17] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Sonate," in *Encyclopédie*, *ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc.*, eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project [Spring 2013 edition], ed. Robert Morrissey), accessed 19/01/17, https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/15/1610/, 15:348. Rousseau writes: "Who does not feel how far instrumental music is removed from the soul and this energy? …In order to know all that the overwhelming jumble of the sonata wants to say, one would have to be like the crude painter who was obliged to write underneath of his paintings: 'this is a man, this is a tree, this is an ox.'"

Rousseau's perspective, opera was affective because of its comparative comprehensibility, due to the fact that it mixed the fixed meaning of words with the abstract and imitative but emotionally powerful effects of music.[18] Opera, as a union of two languages, thus provided the basis for a deeper engagement with the sentimental meaning of art; an idea which gained considerable traction also in the work of Louis de Jaucourt and Friedrich Melchior von Grimm.[19]

Division arose, however, over the conceived source of opera's sentimental power, which was foregrounded in a particularly virulent debate over the place of the *merveilleux* in opera. Superficially, 'merveilleux' was a term employed to describe the elaborate effects, machinery, and fantastical narratives featuring Gods and monsters which derived from seventeenth and early eighteenth-century *ballets de cour* and *tragédies aux machines*. At a deeper level the term signified a drama's particular aesthetic style or code and indicated the incorporation of all these devices in such a way as to profoundly influence the composition and drama. By Rameau's time it had become closely associated with the tradition of the French *tragédie-lyrique* in which he himself composed.[20] Because of its close association with *tragédie-lyrique*, when the *merveilleux* came into question so too did the genre itself.

---

[18] As Rousseau wrote of his *Devin du village* (1752), "The very thing that makes this opera valuable for people with taste is the perfect accord between the words and the music, the close relationship of the parts that compose it, the precise fit of everything… The Musician thought, felt, and spoke like the poet throughout; what is expressed by one always corresponds so faithfully to what is expressed by the other that they are seen to be moved by the same spirit always." See "First Dialogue," in *Judge of Jean-Jacques*, eds. Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1990), 20.

[19] As we have seen in considering the interrelation between music and *sensibilité*, the idea of music as a language of cries and gestures was prevalent. A diverse group of authors constituted a melodist camp, who were greatly influenced by Rousseau's theory of the intertwined origins of music and language and perceived music as a language of pure passion supremely capable of affecting the emotions; they valued the possibility of uniting such a powerful language of the passions with the definite clarity afforded by the spoken word increased its expressive potential. Louis de Jaucourt and Friedrich Melchior von Grimm, for example, were clear that the text of a spoken drama indeed shared something of the sentimental power of music, but nevertheless argued that its primary purpose was to conform to the sensations expressed by the music, supporting it with la précision du discours. See Louis de Jaucourt, "Opéra," in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc*., eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project [Spring 2013 edition], ed. Robert Morrissey), accessed 05/01/20, https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/11/2459/, 11:494; and Friedrich Melchior von Grimm, "Poème lyrique," in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc*., eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project [Spring 2013 edition], ed. Robert Morrissey), accessed 05/01/20, 12:824.

[20] "Merveilleux," Oxford Music online, accessed 23/03/17, http://0www.oxfordmusiconline.com.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/O903073. In fact, Catherine Kintzler and Downing Thomas have argued that the *merveilleux* came to be the defining feature or "fundamental law" of *tragédie-lyrique* as it emerged in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in contradistinction to spoken *tragédie*, until by 1745 the two genres were truly separated by their own, distinctive aesthetic codes. See Catherine Kintzler, *Poétique de l'opéra français de Corneille à Rousseau* (Paris: Minerve, 1991), 259-277; Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647-1785* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 104.

Grimm's article for the *Encyclopédie*, 'Poème Lyrique', levelled a substantial attack on its value in three parts. First, he believed that the sorts of protagonists which regularly appeared were entirely unsuitable for moving the passions. The *tragédie-lyrique* featured a preponderance of Gods, demi-Gods, mythological beings and semi-divine acolytes who were certainly capable of making an impression on audiences; but according to Grimm, not the sort of impression which might foster a sense of identification between spectator and character or move the passions.[21] Second, he held that narrative cohesion (*unité d'action*) was grievously wounded by the dominance of unrealistic events, again preventing any empathetic response from the audience. Third, he argued that the *tragédie* held back the progress of French music by its reliance on a style which, like its dramaturgy, was only capable of striking or 'shocking' the listener rather than moving their emotions. It required cold, functional singing and bold, dominating harmonies which were capable of taking on the style of the dramaturgy itself but once again failing to reach the emotions beyond the initial sense of shock. Evidently the disagreement over melody versus harmony was also making its presence felt in the operatic sphere.[22] From Grimm's perspective, the problem of the *merveilleux* was so acute that it had undermined French opera totally, necessitating drastic reform or abandonment.

The thread connecting these arguments was the contention that the *merveilleux* was damaging to the *vraisemblance* of the *tragédie-lyrique*. *Vraisemblance*, defined by Louis de Jaucourt as "[that which is] possible in the circumstances which one puts on the stage", was commonly regarded as the first and foremost rule of a poet (or dramatist). Nothing was to be included which "might be contrary to [a drama's] *vraisemblance*".[23] Rousseau agreed, arguing that the lure of the *merveilleux* distracted composers and librettists from presenting more realistic subjects with which the audience might identify and experience pathos with.[24]

---

[21] The notion of *identification* in French dramatic theory gestated in the mid-eighteenth century. It stressed above all the importance of empathy, compassion and other "intersubjective affective states, sensibility also" between stage and spectator, providing audiences with a sentimental reference for their subjective emotional experience in the theatre. See Joseph Harris, "Identification and the *Drame*," *Nottingham French Studies* 47 no. 3 (Autumn 2008), 56-57.

[22] Grimm, "Poème lyrique", 828-830.

[23] Jaucourt wrote: "The first rule which the poet must observe when depicting the subject that he has chosen is not to insert anything which is against the *vraisemblance* [of the scene]. Something *vraisemblable* is something possible in the circumstances which are portrayed onstage." See "Vraisemblance (Poésie)" 17:484.

[24] Rousseau, "Dictionary of Music", 450. He wrote, "The most ingenious machines, the most daring flights, tempests, thunderbolts, lightning, and all the magic tricks of the wand were employed to fascinate the eyes while multitudes of instruments and voices astonished the ears. With all this the action always remained cold and every situation lacked interest… Thus, the apparatus was immense and produced little effect, because the imitation was always imperfect and crude, because the action, taken beyond Nature, was without interest for us, and because the senses lend themselves poorly to illusion when the heart does not become involved in it."

Despite their objections, the striking aspect of this debate (which continued to rage throughout the middle-part of the century) is that neither side actually disputed the central importance of *vraisemblance*. Kintzler has demonstrated in considerable detail that although the aesthetic codes of *tragédie-lyrique* differed considerably from the classical model of spoken *tragédie*, it was nevertheless governed by unwritten rules established through an ongoing negotiation between composer or dramatist and their spectators about what could be considered plausible. In other words, within the aesthetic parameters of the *tragédie-lyrique*, there was a different (and much more lenient) set of expectations for what was considered *vraisemblable*. This included the *merveilleux*.[25] Moreover, Charles Dill argues that within the *tragédie-lyrique* the presence of the *merveilleux* – signaling to the audience that they should suspend their disbelief and shift their aesthetic expectations – was actually an important means of safeguarding its *vraisemblance*. This was particularly important in the presence of music, which would normally undermine the spectator's ability to accept the fiction onstage as reality (simply because one does not expect to find one's actions accompanied by music: music thus functions as an intruder in *vraisemblable* theatre). According to Dill, the presence of the *merveilleux* thus afforded the composer the opportunity to consolidate a sense of intensified reality in which the supernatural and the musical – separate aesthetic entities – mutually reinforced each other.[26]

For both sides of the debate on *tragédie-lyrique* and the *merveilleux*, *vraisemblance* was therefore a vital aesthetic precondition for good opera; a perspective which is consolidated by Thomas' work on Jean-Baptiste Lully, who emphasises how the *merveilleux* in opera was subordinated to passion and verisimilitude dating back at least as far as his collaborations with Philippe Quinault in the seventeenth century.[27] Although Cuillé has on the other hand highlighted the separation between the "conflicting codes" of *vraisemblance* and *merveilleux* and shown how sensitive negotiation on the part of the author was required in order to mediate between them within the same work, like Kintzler, she concludes ultimately that this negotiation resulted in a separate code of verisimilitude for works incorporating the *merveilleux* which functioned within the bounds of the spectators' expectations.[28]

---

[25] As Kintzler puts it: "to satisfy the reason and enchant the body are not contradicting objectives." See *Poétique de l'opéra français de Corneille à Rousseau*, 63. Kintzler also argues that the parameters for a *vraisemblable merveilleux* had been established (though not universally accepted) in France since the innovations of Corneille in the seventeenth century.

[26] For Dill, it was actually Rameau's desire to incorporate music less intrusively in the traditional poetic framework which caused controversy because it breached the expectations of a predominantly literary culture. See *Monstrous Opera: Rameau and the Tragic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 34, 36-41.

[27] Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647-1785*, 100-104.

[28] Cuillé, "La Vraisemblance du merveilleux: Operatic Aesthetics in Cazotte's Fantastic Fiction," in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 34 (2005), 178-179.

*Vraisemblance* was not important for its own sake, but, as Grimm's argument made clear, because it was so vital for fostering a sentimental experience of identification or pathos amongst the audience for the characters onstage. Nor was Grimm alone in this argument. In an article on lyric theatre and spectatorship during the eighteenth century, Thomas has shown that new visions of theatre design produced in this period – including those by Charles-Nicolas Cochin, Claude Nicolas Ledoux and Pierre Patte – as well as new aesthetic conceptions of the theatre by Diderot and Louis-Sébastien Mercier demonstrate a striking development in favour of designs and devices which would "reinforce the idea of an interactive community of spectators by way of theatrical experience". He demonstrates that a vital corollary to this increased desire for intersubjective theatrical experience was a new insistence on *vraisemblance* in the theatre.[29]

The significance of this shared commitment to *vraisemblance* is not only that it in itself represents common ground between two sides bitterly divided by noisy polemic (though that is true), but that the two sides were both deeply committed to the sort of intersubjective, sentimental pursuit of opera which was described in the previous chapter in the context of spoken theatre. But if both sides shared significant common ground, what was significant enough to turn their disagreement into the rather bitter polemic it ultimately became? Most obviously there was the dispute over whether the *merveilleux* did indeed have a sufficient code of verisimilitude; it is clear that Rameau and his supporters evidently believed there was, whereas his opponents did not. There was also undoubtedly a very personal (especially between Rousseau and Rameau) and arguably political aspect to the quarrel.[30] However, there is also evidence to suggest that both parties were arguing at cross purposes, with very different agendas and priorities.

Rameau, after all, was clearly concerned with the place of the *tragédie-lyrique* and its pedigree. The sudden attack on its aesthetic value was a direct threat to Rameau's reputation

[29] Downing A. Thomas, "Architectural Visions of Lyric Theater and Spectatorship in Late-Eighteenth-Century France," *Representations* 52 (Autumn, 1995), 52-75. Similarly, Joseph Harris argues that *vraisemblance* was closely bound up with the emotional identification of the spectator with the stage, establishing "tight bonds of sympathy" so that we might "embrace [the characters'] sentiments more easily, and take on all their passions." See *Inventing the Spectator: Subjectivity and the Theatrical Experience in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 164-198, 190. Janet Morgan has made a similar point, arguing that in the French Classical tradition "The emotional involvement of the audience which is the poet's initial aim is presented… as dependent on the degree of credence accorded to his subject by that audience and not on the objective status of the subject." See "The Meanings of Vraisemblance in French Classical Theory," *The Modern Language Review* 81 no. 2 (April 1986), 294.

[30] Charles B. Paul portrays the *Querelle des bouffons* as a political or national struggle between the pro-French party – championed by Rameau, Louis-Bertrand Castel, Caux de Cappeval, Jacques Cazotte and Pierre de Morand – versus anti-French antagonsists including Rousseau, Grimm, Diderot, and d'Holbach. See "Music and Ideology: Rameau, Rousseau, and 1789," in *Music and Ideology,* ed. Mark Carroll (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 2-3.

because he himself was “universally extolled as France’s greatest composer”, and “large audiences were flocking to the numerous performances of his dozen operatic works, the mainstay of France’s musical repertory”.[31] Consequently, the area of primary importance in his defence of *tragédie-lyrique* was its aesthetic value. Throughout the polemics he intended to protect the aesthetic pedigree of the genre.

On the other hand, Rousseau and his colleagues appeared to have numerous other concerns in which the aesthetic value of *tragédie-lyrique* played a highly important, but only partial, role. In particular, the extent to which Rousseau and Diderot especially seemed to emphasise the moral, didactic importance of opera seems at odds with Rameau’s aesthetic interests. Rousseau outlined the connection between moral instruction and *sensibilité* in art as early as his articles on music for the *Encyclopédie*. In ‘Mélodie’ for example, he argued that the sentimental purpose of imitation in music was to “affect the mind by various images, move the heart by various feelings, arouse and calm the passions [and] work, in a word, moral effects which pass beyond the immediate empire of the senses.”[32] But as John T. Scott has shown, the connection between musical expression, its influence over “human sensibility”, and ultimately its moral powers to instruct listeners in virtue overarches a wide breadth of his work (a connection most clearly made in the *Essai sur l’origine des langues*): “Music and language can be understood for Rousseau only as semantic systems with a specific affective basis… music is a semantic system based on "moral" causes and effects, the accents of the passions imitated in the melody.”[33]

In the context of opera specifically, Rousseau conceived that these “moral effects” were directly contingent upon a dramatic *vraisemblance* too. Opera required earthy, quotidian and largely rustic settings, lifelike characters with well-developed emotional depth, and plausible narratives not only for the sake of dramatic quality, but also to ensure that ‘moral effects’ might be worked at the opera house. It follows that Rousseau’s attitude towards the *merveilleux* was typically intractable. Because they detracted from *vraisemblance* and its moral powers cultivated through identification they should be “purged” from all opera, and totally replaced with material “worthy of pleasing people of taste and of interesting sensitive hearts.”[34]

For Diderot, too, moral concerns were at the heart of his sensationist aesthetics. In his study on Diderot’s ‘moral materialism’, Hisashi Ida argues that Diderot’s notion of the moral obligations of humanity or *intuitions morales* overarch the breadth of his work. In all areas, but especially in the field of aesthetics, he proposes that Diderot used *sensibilité* to supplant

---

[31] Ibid, 2.
[32] Rousseau, “Dictionary of Music”, 421.
[33] Scott, “Rousseau and the Melodious Language of Freedom”, 817.
[34] Rousseau, “Dictionary of Music”, 454.

religion as the primary influence on human morality; and thus, in rehabilitating the moral value of the passions, that Diderot consistently intertwined them in such a way as to make them inseparable.[35] Indeed we do see in several key works a remarkable emphasis on *enthousiasme* (through the stimulation of the passions) and *sensibilité* as influences on human behaviour, and an insistence on their proper application to virtuous ends.[36] And as Gerhardt Stenger has indicated, Diderot's work from 1756 onwards (the date of the *Lettre à Landois*) is marked by a decisive turn towards a determinist moral conception in which human behaviour is influenced primarily by external influences.[37] In this framework, the sensations of music and opera are like Rousseau's "semantic system" of moral effects and a direct didactic influence on human behaviour. In addition, James Butler Kopp has rightly demonstrated how moral instruction was for Diderot "the prime concern and essential aim" of opera, dependent upon processes of identification fostered through dramatic verisimilitude and realism. He also shows that Diderot shared this moral vision of opera with an entire school of French dramatic thinkers, including Charles-Simon Favart, Pierre-Jean Baptiste Nougaret, and Barnabé Famian de Rozoi, for whom verisimilitude (specifically the identification it permitted) were vital tools for instructing audiences in virtue.[38]

For the anti-*merveilleux* party, therefore, there was a vital moral question at the heart of the debate on the *merveilleux*. As Kintzler puts it, it was most fundamentally their moral – not aesthetic – concerns which "forced" them to "deploy a conception of human passions" in which processes of identification were primarily intended to "purge and correct" morals by reflecting to the spectator an image of themselves.[39] If *vraisemblance* was impaired, it was not simply the expressive function of an opera which stood to suffer, but rather the didactic efficacy of its moral value. The *merveilleux* was thus a dangerous social distraction from the important task of moral education.[40]

---

[35] Hisashi Ida, *Genèse d'une morale matérialiste. Les passions et le contrôle de soi chez Diderot* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), 346. Ashley Hope Pérez makes a similar point, arguing that "radical materialism" is the basis of Diderot's challenge to us to "make sense of morality". See "Material Morality and the Logic of Degrees in Diderot's *Le neveu de Rameau*," *Modern Philology* 114 no. 4 (May 2017), 872.

[36] Ida identifies *Le Rêve de d'Alembert, Essai sur le mérite et la vertu,* the *Pensées philosophiques,* the *Promenade du sceptique,* key passages of *Encyclopédie,* and the *Lettre à Landois.*

[37] Gerhardt Stenger, "Le Neveu de Rameau ou l'impossible morale," *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie* 52 (2017), 72.

[38] Kopp, "'The 'Drame Lyrique'",10, 91-94.

[39] Kintzler, *Poétique de l'opéra français de Corneille à Rousseau*, 106-107, 121. Kintzler's primary argument in this chapter is that the *philosophes* broke away from a classical poetics of drama by insisting primarily on the power of horror – not pleasure – to affect the passions, move the soul, and nurture a moral code within the spectator. She describes this as a process of "double catharsis".

[40] A particularly nuanced vision of the *merveilleux* was advanced by Jean-François Marmontel, who shared an intensely moral vision of the theatre and concurred with Rousseau, Diderot et al. that the *merveilleux* was problematic in its present form. However, he did not regard it as irredeemable. He

It does not seem Rameau ever shared this concern, nor is there any evidence that he understood it. Indeed, Rousseau explicitly lamented Rameau's failure to engage with considerations beyond purely aesthetic matters, as Scott points out in his article on the political significance of Rousseau's theory of melody.[41] Whereas Rameau's aesthetics emphasised merely the physiological impact of sound on the senses (an approach which Scott terms 'sensationist universalism', because it assumed that all people are affected equally and in the same manner simply by the physical experience of musical sound), Rousseau believed that it was necessary to recognise the 'complex interplay of natural and cultural, physical and moral, forces in music' in which moral 'causes' worked moral 'effects'. By this, he meant that musical expression derived from the human need to communicate deeply-felt 'passions' (rather than Rameau's mathematical, physical system of harmony): passions which were themselves the basis of morality, because they functioned as the means of communication that directly underpinned the intersubjective relationships between individuals. These relationships in turn formed the basis of society, without which society could not function. The passions, therefore, were the basis for morality, because they ultimately determined the ways that individuals behaved towards each other.[42]

The debate over the *merveilleux* in *tragédie-lyrique* was thus in part aesthetic and in part moral. It seems likely that much of the bitterness and polemical nature of the dispute stemmed from the two parties' inability to reconcile the two in such a way as to recognise each other's

---

conceded that generally it struggled to foster the degree of *vraisemblance* which would permit moral learning through pathos and identification, not least because works of this nature generally depended on cold, passionless heroes and unrealistic situations. Another criticism was that the only characters Marmontel deemed to be effective in this sense were devils and demons, who he regarded as morally unsuitable. Nonetheless, he still hoped that the *merveilleux's* own code of verisimilitude could be adapted to become more realistic (and not merely allegorical) and be coupled with more *vraisemblable* expressive devices which centred upon human passions, vice, and virtue. See Marmontel, "Le Merveilleux," in *Supplément à l'Encyclopédie*, ed. Charles-Joseph Pancoucke, vol. 3 (Amsterdam: M.M. Rey, 1776-1777), 906.

[41] For instance, Rousseau criticised Rameau's mathematical approach by arguing, "Let whoever wishes to philosophize about the strength of sensations therefore begin by setting aside purely sensual impressions [that exist] apart from the intellectual and moral impressions which we receive by way of the senses, but of which the senses are only the occasional causes". See Rousseau, "Essai sur l'origine des langues," in *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music,* eds. Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998), 324.

[42] Scott, "Rousseau and the Melodious Language of Freedom", 817-818. This oversight was not just Rameau's responsibility, however. His librettist, Louis de Cahusac (1706-1759), contributed an article addressing the *merveilleux* ('Enchantment') in which he emphasised the importance of *vraisemblable* heroes (like Lully and Quinault's Amadis) for affecting the spectators. Although he highlighted the "reasonable effect" of the power of these heroes' passions in particular and discussed the *merveilleux's* own code of verisimilitude (once again established through tacit negotiation between the author and spectator), he refrained from addressing the moral importance of these sentimental processes. Louis de Cahusac, "Enchantement," in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc*., eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project [Spring 2013 edition], ed. Robert Morrissey), accessed 05/01/20, https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/5/2262/, 5:619.

very different priorities. Rameau was primarily concerned with the aesthetic pedigree of the genre in which he had forged his reputation and which, as he saw it, represented the national operatic heritage.[43] But for Rousseau and the *philosophes*, the sentimental in opera was primarily a moral concern. At the same time, they conceived that their moral, didactic hopes for opera would only be realised through sentimental processes in which *vraisemblance* was vital to foster the identification and pathos necessary for moral learning in the opera house.

### ***Comédie* versus *tragédie*: what role for didactic *opéra-comique*?**

Having established, then, that opera was prized by many of the *philosophes* for its didactic qualities (which were, moreover, directly connected to the strength of its sentimental affectivity), the question of moral potential seems particularly important in the context of *opéra-comique*. After all, there is good reason to suppose that its generic qualities highly commended it to the theories who prized *vraisemblance* and the intersubjective experience of strong passions in their dramatic and operatic theories. As both Leavens and Thomas have shown, *opéra-comique* offered spectators both "intrapsychic bodily and cognitive experience… inner worlds of emotion and imagination and outer worlds of action" and "multiple inflections of individual subjective feeling with general traits of a common humanity".[44]

The idea of comedy (in its broadest sense) as morally instructive had been prevalent since Aristotle, whose *Poetics* had postulated the notion of comic drama as a vehicle for social reconciliation.[45] In France during the eighteenth century, it rose to prominence as a corrective medium and was understood to have a unique expressive advantage which in turn augmented its didactic potential. In particular, early theorists did not neglect its unique capacity to provoke laughter and merriment. Speaking of *opéra-comique* explicitly in a letter to his friend Count Giacomo Durazzo, Charles Simon Favart,  dramatist and a pioneer of the genre, wrote: "All

---

[43] Paul concludes, "The vogue for Rameau, by and large, seems to have been motivated less by esthetic curiosity and pleasure than the nationalistic impulse to pay respects to the musical counterpart of Louis XIV, Boileau, and Racine. These four hallowed figures were usually exhibited as symbols of the peculiarly French virtues of order, reason, intelligence, and restraint, while Rousseau was generally exhibited as the incarnation of the allegedly un-French vices of disorderly imagination and licentious sensibility." See "Music and Ideology: Rameau, Rousseau, and 1789", 16.

[44] Leavens, "Figures of Sympathy in Eighteenth-Century Opéra-Comique", 225-226; Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime*, 179-180.

[45] Northrop Frye, "The Argument of Comedy," in *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frames,* ed. Brian Richardson (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2002), 104. Although Aristotle's primary work on comedy was lost (Book II of the *Poetics*), the discovery of the 'Tractus Coislinianus' in 1839 has yielded important information about his perspective. Present day scholars are largely convinced that the document is in fact a tenth-century summary of Aristotle's original text, and from this manuscript they have been able to reconstruct the essential details and outline of his theory of comedy. See Richard Janko, *Aristotle on Comedy: Towards a reconstruction of Poetics II* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984); and Walter Watson, *The Lost Second Book of Aristotle's "Poetics"* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012).

the world knows that comedy is the art of usefully entertaining men by unmodified depictions enlivened by their passions, by their schemes and their absurdities. Its goal amongst all nations is to correct morals in a pleasurable manner."[46]

However, the French 'comédie' does not correspond directly with the English word 'comedy'; in fact, of the three broad forms of *comédie* which many contemporary French theorists recognised, only one was considered overtly humorous.[47] As Marmontel put it, *comédie* simply sought to represent humanity as naturally and as realistically as possible, including its *malice naturelle*.[48] Far more important than humour was *comédie's* satirical quality (*ridicule*), which depended on *vraisemblance* in order to accurately depict society's abuses to which a solution would be offered within the narrative.

---

[46] Charles Simon Favart, *Mémoires et correspondance littéraires, dramatique et anecdotiques*, vol.1 (Paris: Léopold Collin, 1808), 10-11. Favart's understanding of the power of humour was shared by a good number of his contemporaries, and the concept of *ridicule* proved particularly compelling. This concept is clear in the extract from Favart's letter, which indicates his desire for a type of *opéra-comique* capable of employing depictions of man's less savoury attributes or actions – his 'absurdities' or *ridicules* – in order to fuel the didactic efforts of a piece. Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Nougaret (1742-1823) agreed: "a cheerful comedy presents us with an unmodified depiction of our absurdities… our weaknesses, our folly put in us makes us mock our very own debauchery." See *De l'Art du théâtre en général*, vol. 1 (Paris: Cailleau, 1769), 12. As Edmund J. Goehring points out in his analysis of *opera buffa*, theorists believed that "comedy undeceives through deceiving, and the mirror it holds up to society… distorts for amusement and pleasure (and instruction)." See "The Sentimental Muse of Opera Buffa," in *Opera Buffa in Mozart's Vienna*, eds. Mary Hunter and James Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 145. Quoted from *Essays on Opera, 1750-1800*, ed. John A. Rice (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 261.

[47] Marmontel and others recognised the *comique noble* (satirising the politer vices of the "les Grands" and polite society), *comique bourgeois* (satirising the vanity, luxury and misplaced pretensions of the professional classes), and *comique bas* (largely humorous, containing comic elements like farce in order to satirise the lower classes). Within these three categories one might recognise various sub-genres of the *comique*, such as *de caractère, de situation* etc., some of which were intended to employ various different styles of humour. See Marmontel, *Eléments de littérature*, vol. 2 (Paris: Née de la Rochelle, 1787), 173-180. For information on Marmontel's approach to dramatic and *comique* categories, see Jacques-Philippe Saint-Gérard, "Le Javelot de Marmontel au XIXè siècle," in *Marmontel: une rhétorique de l'apaisement,* ed. Jacques Wagner (Leuven: Éditions Peeters, 2003), 81-106. For a broader discussion of generic signification within *comédie* and the place of laughter in French dramatic theory, see Daniel Grojnowski, "Comique littéraire et théories du rire," *Romantisme* 74 (1991), 3-4. Grojnowski argues that in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, humorous comedy was regarded as inferior to the *comédies* which focused on character and situation, in which the *comique* pertained directly to the *vraisemblable* mode of presentation rather than to any humorous elements. A detailed overview of generic characteristics in eighteenth-century French Opera can be found in David Charlton, "Genre and Form in French Opera," *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera*, eds. Anthony R. DelDonna and Pierpaolo Polzonetti (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 155-183.

[48] Marmontel, *Eléments de littérature*, vol. 2, 138-139. Contemporaries posited that *comédie's* powers of *ridicule* made it particularly attractive to the lower classes, who would otherwise miss the didactic influence of the theatre. Nougaret, for example, argued that all comedy was primarily intended to instruct the lower classes in morality: Comedy makes us pass several hours immersed in honest pleasures; it has the ability of making us prefer a pleasurable and useful amusement to the inherent disorder of card games, and to the misfortunes which follow debauchery… Comedy is the school of the common man, or to put it better, the image of that which happens in the everyday events of life; and tragedy educates the noteworthy and kings." See Nougaret, *De l'Art du théâtre en général*, vol. 1, 13-15.

Marmontel was particularly explicit on the interconnection between realism and moral instruction, arguing that *comédie* could only instruct if it first allowed spectators to recognise vice within themselves and then to 'mock' their own 'debauchery'. He argued that on a personal level, the key component was the possibility for comparison:

> The effect of the *comique* results in the comparison we make, even without realising, between our morals and the morals we see put to ridicule, and supposes — between the spectator and the visible character — an advantageous difference for the former. However, it often happens that we laugh at our own image… We judge ourselves, condemn ourselves, mock ourselves as if we were someone else, and here pride finds its just reward.[49]

Marmontel was convinced that it was the dramatist who had to take responsibility for the moral education of society, but he was not alone. Emphasising the moral connotations of taste in the eighteenth century, Elena Russo has shown how *philosophes* and authors alike widely believed that they themselves should be responsible for "matters of taste and philosophy" (not least the moral utility of textual and dramatic production). They began to advocate loudly for their ability to serve the *patrie* in matters concerning the moral education of citizens, on behalf of the state and for the purpose of national regeneration.[50] They did this not only in their theoretical writing, but also in the sorts of literary or dramatic work they produced.

It is in this light that we should understand Marmontel's *Contes moraux*, which are two volumes of 'moral fables' to be used as a resource for other authors and composers.[51] He argued that these fables, which (like Aesop's fables) were essentially short works of fiction with a moral

---

[49] Jean-François Marmontel, *Eléments de littérature*, vol. 2,169. The process of *ridicule* therefore offered the spectator the chance to learn from their mistakes by means of a proxy, represented by the dramatic character onstage. This, mixed with a healthy dose of aesthetic distance, enabled the spectator to identify their own flaws in another in order to learn from them. It is important to note that this aesthetic 'distance' as theorised in the eighteenth century (particularly by Diderot and Rousseau) was not considered to be detrimental to the *vraisemblablance* of a work. As Andy Byford demonstrates, if dramatic representation distanced its object, it was "only to lead back to it in a controlled, secondary, 'peripeteic' displacement, reversing the 'misplacement' of sympathy that takes place in the theater." For Marmontel, this was the way to learn to perceive vice as an insult to one's own person. See Andy Byford, "The Figure of the "Spectator" In the Theoretical Writings of Brecht, Diderot, and Rousseau," *Symposium: A Quarterly Journal in Modern Literatures* 56 no.1 (Spring 2002), 30-31; and Marmontel, *Contes moraux suivis d'une apologie du théâtre*, vol. 2 (Paris: La Haye, 1761), 266.

[50] On the important connection between taste and moral or civic virtue, Russo writes "Taste was consubstantial with national culture and with the degree of civilization in a given nation. Discussions of good or bad taste thus always implied a cultural, moral, and political debate." This is convincing in the light of the evidence Russo presents from her analysis of thinkers from Voltaire to Diderot and Rousseau that their primary ambition was to emphasise and intensify the 'social function' of their art. See Russo, *Styles of Enlightenment*, 2-7.

[51] In fact these proved formative for the developing repertoire of *opéras-comiques* performed at the Théâtre-Italien, which featured many of the *contes* dramatised and set to music including *Annette et Lubin* (Justine Favart and Blaise, 1762), *Lucile* (Marmontel and Grétry, 1769) and *L'Ami de la maison* (Marmontel and Grétry, 1771). For a detailed discussion of pieces based on Marmontel's *contes moraux*, see C.D. Brenner, "Dramatizations of French Short Stories in the Eighteenth Century," *University of California Publications in Modern Philology* 30 (1947), 13-23.

principle, could only instruct if they also pleased. Their purpose, he proposed, was to instruct by "rendering virtue pleasurable" with touching scenes of relevance to society as a whole.[52] Other examples by diverse authors from both France and Germany, including Diderot, Wieland, Louis-Sébastien Mercier and Sophie von La Roche have been considered in a similar light by Katherine Astbury, who outlines a widespread exploitation of the vogue for *sensibilité* in order to offer socio-political comment on all sorts of social themes and issues. The aim, she argues, was to contribute to the regeneration of society; increasingly so as literary developments (especially an emphasis on greater realism) offered new and affective opportunities to do this.[53]

The increasing trend for writers to offer morally-instructive works in service of national regeneration was, therefore, a direct attempt to adopt a moral agency. In support of this claim, Gregory S. Brown has highlighted how common it became for men of letters to refer to works of a morally didactic nature as contributions to the good of the *patrie*, and argues that such offerings were a 'self-legitimizing strategy' appealing 'directly to the nation' in order to assert their own intellectual independence (they were not tools of the state, therefore) and importance to the nation.[54] At the least, they were therefore simultaneously offerings in service of civic moral instruction, but also signals of an important shift in the authority and social significance of the writer.

The fact that Marmontel's *Contes* proved formative for the developing repertoire of *opéras-comiques* performed at the Théâtre-Italien during this period – many of the *contes* were dramatised and set to music here, including *Annette et Lubin* (Justine Favart and Blaise, 1762), *Lucile* (Marmontel and Grétry, 1769) and *L'Ami de la maison* (Marmontel and Grétry, 1771) – is an indication of Marmontel's favourable disposition towards the genre and to *comédie* in general. Although Marmontel also saw *tragédie* as morally instructive in the right context, *comédie* was more so because it offered a greater opportunity for spectators to identify with the characters onstage. *Tragédie* was apparently inherently dependent upon an unrealistic form of man, high in his deeds and sentiments, living through "the horror of great crimes and the love of sublime virtues"; *comédie,* on the other hand, "takes men just as they are everywhere".[55]

---

[52] Marmontel, *Contes moraux*, vol. 2 (Paris : La Haye, 1761), ix.
[53] Astbury, *The Moral Tale in France and Germany 1750-1789*, 53-70, 95-112.
[54] Brown, *A Field of Honor,* 412-414. See also Russo, *Styles of Enlightenment*, 7.
[55] Jean-François Marmontel, "Comédie," in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc*., eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project [Spring 2013 edition], ed. Robert Morrissey), accessed 05/01/20, https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/3/3113/, 3:665. Ideas such as this permeated the *Encyclopédie*. It was a particularly important consideration for the anonymous author

The influential Riccoboni had learnt a similar lesson during his tenure as director of the Comédie-Italienne, for he wrote on the *vraisemblable* power of *comédie* in moral instruction a decade earlier than Marmontel. Riccoboni was clear in emphasising the necessity of sentimental impression in the process of moral education in the theatre. He argued that *ridicule* should "throw the seeds of aversion [to vice] into the heart of young people" as their minds and hearts received "sentiments" which were engraved there.[56] In an operatic context, Grimm held that this sentimental power over *sensibilité* was intensified by virtue of the expressive power lent by music, which granted it fresh originality, expressive finesse, and greater power over the senses.[57]

If theories of *comédie*'s sentimental qualities inevitably became intertwined with conceptions of its moral application, so too was the inverse true: didactic theories of *comédie* were contingent upon a sensationist understanding of its dramatic processes. They were, in other words, dependent upon the existence of human *sensibilité* and the power of dramatic sensations to affect it. This is particularly evident in Diderot's work formulating his theory of *comédie*. He wrote:

> The stalls at the *comédie* are the only place where the tears of virtuous men and villains are mixed together. There, the villain becomes irritated with the injustices that he would have committed, lamenting the evil he would have brought about, and becomes angered at a man of his own character. But the impression is received: it dwells in us in spite of ourselves. And the villain leaves his box less disposed to commit evil, as if he had been rebuked by a severe and hard orator.[58]

In Diderot's conception, didactic utility was best measured by the depth of a spectator's emotional response. After all, physical tears prompted by the impression of great sorrow or injustice are described as the great equaliser for immoral and virtuous people alike. Diderot even expounded certain techniques which one might exploit in *comédie* to elicit intense emotional reactions and to inculcate moral principles. The most noteworthy will be explored later in the present study: the dramatic *tableau*. The *tableau* was a sentimentally moving scene in which narrative time seemed to stand still as characters revealed the very depths of their

---

of the article "Déclamation", for example, who astutely observed that it would hardly be possible to suggest moral reform through dramatic means without first accurately identifying a moral lapse in a context which accurately resembled the real original. See Anon., "Déclamation," in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc.*, eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project [Spring 2013 edition], ed. Robert Morrissey), accessed 05/01/20, 4:683, https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/4/3482/.

[56] Luigi Riccoboni, *De la réformation du théâtre* (Geneva : Slatkine Reprints, 1971), 15-16.

[57] Grimm, "Poème lyrique", 824.

[58] Diderot, "De la Poésie dramatique", 312.

emotions, and it hinged on a *vraisemblable*, realistic setting, as well as the depiction of grand passion.[59]

For those interested in improving society, the *comédie* theorised by Diderot, Riccoboni, Marmontel, Grimm and others was thus potentially a very useful tool because of its unparalleled emotional influence over audiences.[60] The connection between *sensibilité* and *comique* didacticism is even more evident in the reforms that these *philosophes* proposed for the genre. As was the case with Italian *opera buffa*, it was widely held that *comédie* was as yet imperfect but full of potential. A great many of the proposed reforms were primarily moral. The proposals of Riccoboni are an excellent example of such reforms. He identified the lure of the theatrical representation of women and love as a particularly acute area of contention in *comédie*. Love, he contended, made an especially strong sentimental impression on men in the theatre, where, if unregulated, it threw all the passions into disorder and could potentially lead to immoral behaviour in this state of impassioned confusion. Reform was required to ensure the correction of these passions which had been carelessly encouraged in *comédie* for decades, and to safeguard against such practices in the future.[61]

More profound aesthetic reforms were proposed by the politician and author Jacques Bernard Durey de Noinville and developed by Diderot. In 1757, de Noinville published a pamphlet entitled 'Histoire du théâtre de l'opéra en France', in which he advocated for an opera capable of encompassing the full range of expressive possibilities: from the comic to the tragic, and the *vraisemblable* to the *merveilleux*.[62] De Noinville seems thus to have conceived of a hybrid opera which bridged the gap between the two traditional genres; and though Diderot did not share de Noinville's taste for the *merveilleux*, he also advocated for a genre which could reconcile the extremes of *tragédie* (high sorrow and the extreme remorse it could elicit) and *comédie* (in this instance, humour which could render a work more pleasurable.[63] This mixed genre Diderot called the *genre sérieux*, which would later become the *drame bourgeois*. He outlined the principal advantages thus:

---

[59] Denis Diderot, "Troisième entretien sur Le Fils naturel," in *Œuvres complètes de Diderot*, ed. J. Assézat, vol. 7 (Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1875), 134-169. It is important to observe that sorrow was not the only emotion which might prompt repentance and reform, for Diderot also described irritation and anger in this context. His description of the emotions in such transformative and enduring terms indicates the extent of the influence that earlier general theories of *sensibilité* had on Diderot's conception of the *comique* theatre as a site for moral instruction. For example, there is a clear parallel between Diderot's *comédie* and the Malebranchian conception of passion, which posited the seven elements of *sensibilité*. These elements meticulously detailed the working of sensations on the body from the initial emotional impression to the "fixing of passion" in the soul (pre-empting behavioural change). See pp. 62-63 of the present study.

[60] Ibid, 369.

[61] Riccoboni, *De la réformation du théâtre*, 17-19.

[62] J.B. de Noinville, *Histoire du théâtre de l'opéra en France* (Paris: no publisher, 1757), 5.

[63] Diderot, "Troisième entretien sur Le Fils naturel", 134.

> The advantage of the *genre sérieux* is such that, placed between the two genres, it has the means of elevating [in tragedy] or lowering itself [in comedy]… All the nuances of comedy are grasped between that genre and the *genre sérieux*; and all those of tragedy between the *genre sérieux* and tragedy. The farcical and the fantastic are both equally unnatural, and we cannot borrow that which is going rotten.[64]

The *genre sérieux* was thus intended to employ the best expressive possibilities of each genre, whilst reining in their extremes. It could be humorous and *vraisemblable*, but reach greater expressive heights in drawing upon the power of what he termed the *pathétique*, associated here with the great emotional turmoil of *tragédie*.[65] The very premise for its formulation was the moral utility of the theatre: Diderot wrote, "we distinguish a middle and two extremes in all moral objects. All dramatic action having a moral objective, it seems that it must correspondingly have a middle genre and two extremes. We have these extremes: they are comedy and tragedy. But man is not always in a state of despair or joy."[66] The *genre sérieux* was therefore the dramatic point which mediated between the very different moral methods of *comédie* and *tragédie*, and which aimed to capture the 'middling' sort of person. For example, it did not so much preclude noble themes or characters as seek to portray them in the private capacity; what mattered most, as Peter Szondi put it, was "the truthful depiction" of internal subjectivities such as feelings and experience.[67]

Most striking is the fact that Diderot seems to have conceived of the *genre sérieux* explicitly as a musical genre. As Béatrice Didier has indicated, Diderot initially unveiled it in his *Troisième entretien sur le Fils naturel* (1757) as a "project of musical theatre".[68] But although

---

[64] Ibid, 135-136.
[65] The *pathétique*, across the arts, was conceived in France to pertain to any given work's ability to inspire an enthusiasm or "véhemence naturelle" deep in the emotions of the spectator ("[il] agite le cœur de l'homme"). It was associated with what Sophie Marchand has termed "[un] discours sur les larmes… l'endroit le plus touchant de la tragédie". See Jaucourt, "Pathétique, Le (Eloquence/Art oratoire/Poésie)," in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc.*, eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project [Spring 2013 edition], ed. Robert Morrissey), accessed 05/01/20, http://artflsrv02.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.14:43.encyclopedie0513, 12:169-170; Rousseau, "Pathétique [Musique]," in *Encyclopédie*, *ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc*., eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project [Spring 2013 edition], ed. Robert Morrissey), accessed 05/01/20, https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/12/531/, 12:170 ; Sophie Marchand, "Mythologies de l'effet pathétique au XVIIIe siècle: nature et enjeux de l'efficacité dramatique dans le discours commun," *Littératures Classiques* 62 (2007), 259, 262.
[66] Diderot, "Troisième entretien sur Le Fils naturel", 134.
[67] Peter Szondi, "Tableau and Coup de Théâtre: On the Social Psychology of Diderot's Bourgeois Tragedy," *New Literary History* 11 no. 2 (Winter 1980), 324. The correlation between the *genre sérieux'*s sentimental basis and its functional utility has been explored by Sophie Marchand, who points out that in rectifying the 'degeneration' of the contemporary stage, Diderot saw that it was right to establish a theatre given over to a sentimental 'energy' which could harness the passions of the audience. See Sophie Marchand, "Diderot et l'histoire du théâtre: passé, présent(s) et avenir des spectacles dans la théorie diderotienne," *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie* 47 (2012), 10-11.
[68] Béatrice Didier, *La Musique des lumières* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), 363-364.

Diderot's *Entretiens* contained the clearest formulation of a hybrid dramatic form which was characterised by the best elements of both *tragédie* and *comédie*, allusions to an operatic genre capable of uniting both can also be found in the work of other theorists. One is Grimm who, in *Le Petit prophète de Boehmischbroda,* postulated that the ideal opera would be able to "express the full gamut of character from the tragic to the comic."[69] Another is Jacques Lacombe who applied Diderot's concept of 'conditions' (in which 'the lives of those who worked for their living' were substituted for characters, forming 'the basis of the plot and the morality' of a work) explicitly to *opéra-comique*, thereby endeavouring to establish a "critical legitimacy for a new *opéra-comique*".[70] These writers seemed drawn to an expressive malleability they believed to exist in opera, a malleability which rendered it ideal (and arguably better-suited than the spoken drama) for exploiting the most emotionally-powerful aspects of both *tragique* and *comique* genres.

Although Diderot's *genre sérieux* was a complex and nuanced entity with many 'fluid' features, as Stefano Castelvecchi points out,[71] a good overview of its defining features is provided by Diderot himself in the opening of his third *Entretien*, which might be condensed as such:

I. The *genre sérieux* should be realistic, depicting situations which are "the most common" in life (especially the domestic) and representing man as he most often exists; which is to say in-between the extreme states of joy and despair.

II. It must have a moral purpose.

III. It should forsake the extremes of base, *burlesque* comedy and the lofty *merveilleux* of *tragédie*. Nevertheless, it should draw upon their respective strengths, eliciting laughter from comic joy and weeping from tragic sorrow.

IV. If written with excellence, it should please all the people at all times. It is accessible to all.

V. For this reason, it should be simple and easily understood. Intrigue in a compelling plot is a necessity, but not so much that the work is incomprehensible for a wide audience.

---

69 Grimm, *Le Petit prophète de Boehmischbroda*, 220.

70 Charlton describes how important Diderot's concept of 'conditions' was as a "cardinal proposal" for spoken drama, focussing in on everyday lives, professions and family relationships. Lacombe's contribution was to demonstrate how apt a concept this was for *opéra-comique*, arguing that it should be adopted immediately. See Charlton, *Opera in the Age of Rousseau: Music, Confrontation, Realism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 227.

71 Stefano Castelvecchi, *Sentimental Opera: Questions of Genre in the Age of Bourgeois Drama* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 65.

VI. The dramatis personae should represent society in general (as in comedy) rather than the individual heroes of *tragédie*.[72]

Attentive readers familiar with the distinctive features of eighteenth-century *opéra-comique* will note with interest that this lyrical genre closely resembles Diderot's *genre sérieux* as it was formalised here. This is evident even from a brief glance at *opéra-comique*'s most general characteristics. For example, M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet and Richard Langham Smith allude, musically, to simple forms, as well as accessible and popular strophic songs within a more general "light and lyrical style" (fulfilling points IV and V); and, dramatically, to realistic or 'earthy' themes (I), moralising libretti (II), *comique* themes and devices allied to a more serious *larmoyant* tone (III), and bourgeois characters (VI).[73]

But a far more explicit connection between the *genre sérieux* and *opéra-comique* can be identified in Diderot's own plan for an *opéra-comique*, which is a little-known sketch from around 1753 surviving only as an unedited manuscript. The narrative is only outlined in skeleton, but unfolds in a Parisian *foire* and centres upon two young bourgeois characters very much in love and caught-out by an unanticipated pregnancy: Colin and Colette. They are opposed by Colette's guardian, Richard, who wishes to marry her himself (despite his advanced age) and conspires to do so. The couple nevertheless receive the support of a jolly community, headed by Colette's comical godfather. Although jaded and disillusioned with marriage (at one point he declares that he would give two women for a barrel of wine), he concedes to the merits of marriage and agrees to help them. Much intrigue and calamity occur before the two lovers are finally married in the midst of this community of shopkeepers, publicans, and *foire* acrobats.[74]

Even from this very brief synopsis it is clear that Diderot's planned *opéra-comique* in five acts was consistent with the *genre sérieux* he would later conceive.[75] But we might be more specific in our analysis of the work, according to the six features outlined above:

---

[72] Diderot, "Troisième entretien", 134-169.
[73] Bartlet and Smith, "Opéra-comique".
[74] J. Robert Loy, "Diderot's Unedited *Plan d'un opéra-comique,*" *Romanic Review* 46, no. 1 (February 1955). There has been very little scholarship on Diderot's *Plan* beyond general observations about the content of the plan and some consideration of its technical features. For information of this nature, see Jacques Proust, "À propos du *Plan d'un opéra-comique* de Diderot," *Revue d'histoire du théâtre* 26 no. 2 (1955), 173-188; Rebejkow, "Diderot et l'opéra-comique: de la farce au pathétique," *Romanische Forschungen* 107 (1995), 145-156; and Rebejkow, "Nouvelles recherches sur la musique dans *Le Neveu de Rameau*," *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie* 20 (April 1996), 57-74.
[75] For a detailed analysis of the *vraisemblable* themes of this work, see Loy, "Diderot's Unedited *Plan d'un opéra-comique*", 3-9.

I. The events of the *Plan* unfold within the *vraisemblable* world of a Parisian *foire* amongst the jolly company of Blaise's tavern (Colette's godfather), and depict realistic bourgeois characters on a compelling emotional journey from frustrated sorrow to joy.

II. Richard receives his comeuppance for trying to come between the two young lovers for his own selfish gain, being condemned as a villain but pardoned on the condition that he allows the young couple to marry. Thus the selfish villain receives the justice he deserves, and the proponents of the virtues of love, marriage and familial duty are victorious: a moral conclusion within a domestic context.

III. The work was clearly intended to draw upon both *comique* and *pathétique* aesthetics. Nowhere however would it seem that Diderot intended for a scene to devolve into farce, for comic moments are generally subtle and primarily serve to further the cause of a nuanced and sensitive characterisation. Neither is there any real use of the *merveilleux*; Loy points out that "there is no mythology in Diderot's outline and no magic save for the ruse of the *bataleurs* which fools only the ridiculous Richard."[76]

IV. The *Plan* is eminently simple with a cast of very few (primary) characters and familiar locations.

V. The plot is entirely comprehensible, with compelling intrigue but little complexity.

VI. Diderot's characters are well characterised but are nevertheless rooted in familiar tropes: the young lovers, the proud and selfish admirer, protective guardians, and humorous, well-meaning secondary characters. They are thus well able to stand for their counterparts in society.

Musically speaking, it is a little more difficult to establish conclusions about the work simply because Diderot was less thorough in providing indications of his intentions for any collaborating composer. Nevertheless, there are several important features which would seem consistent with the *genre sérieux*. First of all, from his own annotations it is clear that Diderot intended to adhere to the traditional format of alternating spoken dialogue with light, lyrical *ariettes* which would be accessible and pleasing for all.[77]

Second, there are several important scenes which would feature a chorus in order to produce the "powerful choral effects and the colorful *tableaux* for which Diderot wanted tunes which imitated the 'principal phenomena of nature.'" J. Robert Loy has contended that this was not

[76] Ibid, 5.
[77] This is confirmed by Rebejkow, who highlights their importance in Diderot's conception. See "Nouvelles recherches sur la musique dans *Le Neveu de Rameau*", 65.

common practice in contemporary comic opera,[78] but in fact the development of the chorus was one of the principal contributions of *opéra-comique* composers before the Revolution[79] and would come to play an important role in depicting the will or opinion of the audience-as-citizens (thus indicating that Diderot was something of a precursor to those who sought to envoice society in opera, pertaining directly to point VI).[80]

I am not necessarily trying to argue that Diderot consciously employed the developing genre of *opéra-comique* as his model for the *genre sérieux*, or — conversely — proposing that the *genre sérieux* was his theoretical framework for the *opéra-comique* of the future. Both are nevertheless possible. Some light might be shone on the matter if we consider the biographical context. As we have seen already, Diderot did theorise on opera from the late 1750s onwards, but Loy presents a convincing argument that the plan was likely written before this, at a time when Diderot was influenced heavily by *opera buffa* and the early *opéras-comiques* of the early 1750s.[81]

According to the chronology of these developments and considering the remarkable similarities between Diderot's conception of *opéra-comique* and the *genre sérieux*, it is most plausible that the developing genre itself likely attracted him with its particular expressive qualities, and provided a model both for this *opéra-comique* plan and for the formulation of his *genre sérieux*. We know, for instance, that Pergolesi's *Livietta e Tracollo* (1734) arrived in Paris in May of 1753, and that it deeply impressed Diderot. As Stephen Werner points out, in *Le Neveu de Rameau* Diderot invokes its performance as the turning point in which Italian music 'knocked the old idols' of French opera and established a new tradition.[82] At the same time, Charlton has pointed out how *Trocollo* 'most resembles a model' for the Nephew's madness, thus indicating its influence on Diderot's conception of opera.[83]

Regardless, the most important conclusion is that Diderot perceived *opéra-comique* was close to the ideal form of theatrical expression and had significant didactic potential. It was capable of deeply affecting the emotions of a *sensible* audience and thus of fulfilling the 'moral objective' which Diderot had argued underpinned any theatrical work.

---

[78] Loy, "Diderot's Unedited *Plan d'un opéra-comique*", 7.
[79] Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-comique,* 325.
[80] M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet, "The new repertory at the Opéra during the Reign of Terror: Revolutionary rhetoric and operatic consequences," in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. Malcolm Boyd, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 138.
[81] Loy, "Diderot's Unedited *Plan d'un opéra-comique*", 6.
[82] Stephen Werner, *Socratic Satire: An Essay on Diderot and Le Neveu de Rameau* (Birmingham, Alabama: Summa Publications Inc., 1987), 58-59.
[83] Charlton, *Opera in the Age of Rousseau*, 263.

Although Diderot's conception of the *genre sérieux* was perhaps the most well-developed framework for a hybrid genre of *comédie*, other theorists besides made more explicit links with *opéra-comique*. A particularly notable example is a text by the dramatist Barnabé Farmian du Rozoi entitled *Dissertation sur le drame lyrique* (1775), in which he argued that of all operatic forms, *opéra-comique* was the most expressively versatile, especially in comparison to *tragédie*.[84] He believed that reform was required, however: specifically that *vraisemblance* in characterisation and narrative be intensified, the hybrid quality of the genre enhanced by a new repertoire of weightier dramatic value, and all farcical elements removed.[85] This was the purpose of his writing the dissertation, indeed. But du Rozoi's primary ambitions for the genre were moral, rather than aesthetic. He desired that it should transform the opera house into a place:

> where children could come to be educated, seeing onstage all the events which have enhanced or withered the glory of their nation… A school where the son of a peer and an artisan, sat next to each other, accustom themselves to judging men, to seeing them unmasked by the truth in the eyes of posteriority, and finally to knowing the authentic virtues of all states and of all ages.[86]

For du Rozoi, the purpose of *opéra-comique* was to offer a powerful, sentimental repertoire which was capable of transforming opera houses into "schools" of virtue through the processes of identification offered by *vraisemblance*. It is striking that in this regard du Rozoi advocated patriotic works rooted in national history as the primary vehicles for moral instruction, especially considering the later Revolutionary predilection for identical themes.[87]

*Opéra-comique*'s hybridity was considered important in no small part because of the opportunities this offered its librettists to exploit the passions evoked by representations of romantic love. Du Rozoi, for example, conceived that affective depictions of love would be the sentimental key to moral instruction on a national scale in his reformed version of *opéra-comique*.[88] Indeed, for many French theorists of the eighteenth century, love was an important

---

[84] Bartlet, "The new repertory at the Opéra", 11. See Darlow, *Nicolas-Étienne Framery and lyric theatre in eighteeth-century France*, 53. It should be noted that there is significant discrepancy over the spelling of his name. He is variously referred to as Durosoi, Durozoy, Du Rosoi, Du Rozoy, Du Rosoy, De Rosoy, De Rozoy, and De Rosoi.
[85] Barnabé Farmian du Rozoi, *Dissertation sur le drame lyrique* (Paris: La Haye, 1775), 11-16.
[86] Ibid, 37-38.
[87] As we will explore later in the present study, the Revolutionaries encouraged a growing taste for the *fait historique*, which along with the *pièce de circonstance* (detailing contemporary events of national virtue) became a staple of patriotic didacticism at the Opéra Comique during the Revolutionary decade, as Raphaëlle Legrand has pointed out. See "L'information politique par l'opéra: l'exemple de la prise de Toulon," in *Le Tambour et la harpe: œuvres, pratiques et manifestations musicales sous la Révolution*, *1788-1800*, eds. Jean-Rémy Julien and Jean Mongrédien, (Paris : Éditions du May, 1991), 111.
[88] Du Rozoi termed this genre 'L'Histoire en madrigaux'. He explicitly associated the term *madrigaux* with "the expressions of a touching love" which he prized for their unparalleled ability to stoke audiences

didactic tool when harnessed to a sentimental aesthetic capable of profoundly moving the passions. For Marmontel, love explicitly offered the sorts of intersubjective opportunities described by Thomas and Leavens:

> This love inspires by nature… respect, benevolence, sweet and tender intimacy, from which results kindness itself in an object of preference to which we attach our very being. When the affection is mutual… it is the most perfect understanding which can rule over two sensitive beings. It is, therefore, if I might be permitted to say it, the transfusion and coexistence of two souls.[89]

Love was therefore a vital aspect of sensationism in *comédie*, and it seemed that a hybrid genre like *opéra-comique* was the ideal vehicle for its exposition. As Diderot had theorised, a hybrid work could remove the extremes of farce and fantasy and yet introduce tragic depth and comic height. Where love was concerned, it could be expressed in such a way as to accurately depict its beguiling sentimental power and thus inspire and instill the same sensations amongst audiences for the wider benefit of society. Or, as du Rozoi put it, to teach spectators "to love, to search for, to judge, to acquire, and to cultivate all that which pertains to the fruit of the human spirit."[90]

Another, later pioneer who contributed to the development of *opéra-comique* was Michel-Jean Sedaine. Though by no means an aesthetician in the sense that Diderot was – Sedaine wrote little of a theoretical nature, instead devoting himself to the production of dramatic works – the prefaces to his libretti provide an insight into his own experiments with hybridity. These are most illuminating, however, in the light of the hallmarks of his praxis: recent scholarship has demonstrated convincingly that his primary contribution was in consolidating and intensifying the dramatic sensationism of the genre, infusing *opéra-comique* with a new dramatic weight under which traditional comic elements gave way to emotion and the *pathétique*.[91]

---

into impassioned states of patriotism, and to encourage spectators to imitate the great deeds of national heroes inspired by love for their fellow citizens. See du Rozoi, *Dissertation*, 40-44.

[89] Marmontel, *Contes moraux*, vol. 1, 342.

[90] du Rozoi, *Dissertation,* 53.

[91] Raphaëlle Legrand offers an excellent account of Sedaine's contributions to the development of *opéra-comique*. Charting the course of these developments against three of his major works, Legrand identifies how Sedaine's experiments were primarily intended to enhance the sentimental impact of the drama in the following ways:

- Simplified narratives, constructed around a dramatic "statisme" which allows the "plan émotionnel" to take the foreground instead of narrative development.
- Simplified characters, allowing for a contrast between the characterisation and emotional experience of the major and minor characters. For example, in *Le Roi et le fermier,* the perverse and Machiavellian characters of the court are contrasted with the nobility of the King.
- Characterisation through musical numbers, which foregrounds the emotional richness of the dramatis personae. Said musical numbers provide the opportunity for the exposition of emotion and the moral principles of the work, whilst narrative action and social satire is developed through spoken dialogue.

Sedaine's preference for *opéra-comique* as a dramatic genre, Mark Ledbury argues, stemmed explicitly from its hybridity and the expressive possibilities this offered over and above the more salubrious *tragédie*. He argues that, like Diderot's, Sedaine's dramatic aesthetics prized hybridity because they were developed during and contributed to a period in which the traditional hierarchies and rigid genre distinctions were breaking down, to be replaced by a "discourse of opposition" in which the juxtaposition of opposites (the base and the noble, the satirical and the pathetical, etc.) was seen to be the basis of effective dramatic expression. This breadth of opportunity made *opéra-comique* and other such *comique* forms "more culturally and socially alert… not a dangerous transgression but a necessary artistic process."[92] The place of the sentimental in this interpretation of Sedaine's hybridity is central: its very expressive essence depended primarily upon "intimacy" and the "effet du réel" (*vraisemblance*).[93]

However, where Sedaine's developments exceeded Diderot's was that his aesthetics offered a final vindication of the hybrid which preceding aestheticians had been reticent to make. For example, Diderot found the hybrid alluring, but still feared the middle-ground 'discourse of opposition' would only produce incoherent 'monsters'. He theorised its potential but, unlike Sedaine, dared not liberate it completely, unable as he was to fully extricate himself from the consensus of so many of his contemporaries (including d'Aubignac, Grimm Du Bos, Batteux, and Voltaire) that all hybrids, whatever the artistic medium, were deplorable.[94] In this light, argues Ledbury, we must understand that Sedaine's influence was not simply due to the fact that his "drama pioneered naturalism, or the representation of bourgeois characters and

---

- Music thus becomes more tightly integrated into the dramatic fabric of the *opéra-comique*, and takes on an important structural function. The structure and form of musical numbers is more carefully considered and employed to emphasise and augment the drama, frequently becoming more experimental as they do so.
- An intensely melodic style of composition is favoured, allowing for a Rousseauian imitation of emotion which facilitated, as Leavens has described it, intersubjectivity.

See "'Risquer un genre nouveau en musique': l'opéra-comique de Sedaine et Monsigny," in *Michel-Jean Sedaine (1719-1797): Theatre, Opera and Art*, eds. David Charlton and Mark Ledbury (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2000), 119-148. That the purpose of these developments was to engage more deeply with the audience on a deeply sentimental level is corroborated by Karin Pendle, who argues that Sedaine's reforms turned *opéra-comique* into "un véhicule personnel de l'expression artistique" which was prized for its affective power, seen to be evidenced especially in the elicitation of tears. See Pendle, "L'opéra-comique à Paris de 1762 à 1789," in *L'opéra-comique en France au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Philippd Vendrix (Liège: Mardaga, 1992), 94. In a similar vein, Charlton has demonstrated how important such devices were to Sedaine's aesthetic. See "Sedaine's Prefaces: Pretexts for a New Musical Drama," in *Michel-Jean Sedaine (1719-1797): Theatre, Opera and Art*, eds. David Charlton and Mark Ledbury, 230-233.

[92] Ledbury, "Sedaine and the Question of Genre" in *Michel-Jean Sedaine (1719-1797): Theatre, Opera and Art,* eds. David Charlton and Mark Ledbury (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2000), 15-20.

[93] Ibid, 38.

[94] Mark Ledbury, *Sedaine, Greuze and the boundaries of genre* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2000), 27-30.

aspirations, but because his innovative vision of the possibilities of hybrid genre pointed forward to the most fertile experiments in dramatic form."[95]

What is overlooked in work on Sedaine's praxis, however, is the extent to which he conceived his experiments with sentimental hybridity to be bound up in moral instruction, even though Sedaine is well-known as a theatrical moralist in contemporary scholarship, and how evidently his limited textual production demonstrates his awareness of the interconnection between his dramatic intentions and sentimental processes.[96] It was on moral grounds that his sentimental, powerfully affective praxis was criticised, and simultaneously it was on grounds of morality that Sedaine defended it. After the initial performances of Sedaine's *Le Jardinier et son seigneur* (1761, collaboration with Philidor), the author was criticised by his opponents for employing scenes which were 'indecent' because of the vividness with which they depicted the intimacy of personal life and the passions of immoral characters. Sedaine responded that it was precisely because he wished to instil moral principles that he had committed so fully to *vraisemblance*: "someone made a reproach to me… for having employed indecent scenes… me, who, even at the Opéra Comique had sought to leave ideas of morality and instruction in the souls of the audiences."[97] Similarly, in *Aucassin et Nicolette* (1779, collaboration with Grétry), what Sedaine seems to have perceived as an unusually inhibited moral effect (in the context of his discussion about depicting the virtue and customs of the medieval period) on the audience was attributed explicitly to a failure of *sensibilité*. He highlighted their reticence to engage emotionally with the sentimental effect of the opera, specifically its ability to absorb and transport the spectator through its 'effet du réel'.[98]

More generally, it is important to recognise how across the breadth of his corpus the sentimental power of Sedaine's aesthetic was crucial in facilitating his moral objectives.

---

[95] Ibid, 307.

[96] In the preface to *Le Jardinier et son seigneur*, for example, Sedaine explicitly adressed moral issues arising from the work and his didactic intentions therein. In doing so, he described his sentimental processes in terms familiar from our study of eighteenth-century aesthetics thus far: specifically the imitation of nature, the communication of powerful emotional experience (with strong intersubjective resonances for the audience), and *vraisemblance* in both situational and emotional representation. He wrote: "the wisdom of the [dramatic] outline, the choice and style of the characters, the observation of things in their deepest sense, the creation of situations which are most appropriate to bring into play in the soul of the dramatis personae… here are the points on which I would take a just critique, and on which it is necessary to judge a work of theatre. See Charlton, "Sedaine's Prefaces: Pretexts for a New Musical Drama," in *Michel-Jean Sedaine (1719-1797): Theatre, Opera and Art,* eds. David Charlton and Mark Ledbury (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2000), 239. On Sedaine as a theatrical moralist, see Ledbury, "'Vous aves acheve mes tableaux': Michel-Jean Sedaine and Jacques-Louis David," *British Journal for eighteenth-century studies* 23 (2000), 59-84, and Theodore E.D. Braun, "The Controversy over the Morality of the Theatre in Early Enlightenment France," *Restoration and 18th Century Theatre Research* 29 no. 1 (Summer 2014), 57-75.

[97] Charlton, "Sedaine's Prefaces", 239.

[98] Ibid, 248. "I had taken the precaution of announcing and depicting the morals of the good old days ; this did not succeed for me, the audience did not wish to be transported to the twelfth century."

Consider, for example, how important Sedaine's use of pathos and *vraisemblance* is in *Le Jardinier* in depicting and exposing (through depth of impression) the hypocrisies inherent in the corruption of the royal court, as Ledbury points out, and, as Pendle argues, the sentimental trajectory of his praxis from *Le Diable à quatre* (1759, collaboration with Gluck) to *Aucassin* coincides with an increasingly moral focus.[99]

It is in the light of the theoretical momentum which hybridity achieved in the work of du Rozoi, Diderot and Sedaine in particular, as well as its practical success in the praxis of the latter, that the arguments against *opéra-comique* and its hybridity should be measured. There are two principal *philosophes* typically cited as opponents of the genre.[100] These are Grimm and Rousseau. We might add to this list the dramatist and songwriter Charles Collé, who was particularly vocal on the matter. Collé's objections were virulent and, as Downing Thomas has emphasised, focussed on the very hybrid character which had proven so attractive for Diderot.[101]

He rejected *opéra-comique* as a 'monstrous assortment of farce and opera' which, far from enhancing the expressive power of the opera, instead destroyed it, not least because it undermined its *vraisemblance*. Other criticisms were more technical or formal in nature. Grimm, for example, was opposed to the mixing of media (which *opéra-comique* was renowned for) in its alternation of spoken dialogue and sung *ariettes*, and was deeply critical

---

[99] Pendle, "L'opéra-comique à Paris de 1762 à 1789", 96.

[100] See, for example, Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime*, and Rebejkow, "Rousseau et l'opéra-comique: les raisons d'un rejet".

[101] "Some day our descendants will find us truly stupid for having laughed and applauded so extravagantly at this hybrid genre, which is nothing but a monstrous assortment of farce and opera, a genre that eliminates all theatrical illusion and which I find equally opposed to reason, to the truth and perfection of nature, and to the original institution of theater and of true dramatic poetry— it is the *sodomy* of all this." See Charles Collé, *Journal et mémoires de Charles Collé, sur les hommes des lettres, les ouvrages dramatiques et les événements les plus mémorables du règne de Louis XV (1748-1772)*, vol. 3 (Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot Frères, fils et Cie, 1868), 140. Translation taken from Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647-1785*, 220. Although it is likely that the circulation of Collé's ideas were limited due to the fact that they initially appeared only in his private memoirs (before later receiving publication), as an indication of the sorts of ideas which were circulating in intellectual circles more generally they provide helpful evidence. After all, many scholars have evinced how ideas about the theatre "impinged on the national life at every level, from the highest to the lowest" (Hemmings), whilst "any author of a dramatic text or a preface could expect to engage a wide range of persons, for whom collectively the historical moment was important in a new sense" (Charlton). Given the enormous influence of ideas on the theatre and their wide, pervasive circulation amongst a *bourgeois* public whose intellectual and cultural life was in no small part manifested in the theatre itself (Charlton), it would seem reasonable to treat Collé's perspectives as a helpful indication of the sorts of discourses which were occurring in public, especially in light of the publisher's later decision to publish them as a record of the theatrical life of the period. See Hemmings, *Theatre and State in France, 1760-1905* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1; Baker "Politics and Public Opinion under the Old Regime: Some Reflections," 206-245; Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, 30; and Charlton, "Sedaine's Prefaces: Pretexts for a New Musical Drama", 222-223.

of historic abuses in which all kinds of debauched scenes had appeared on the stage.[102] The mixing of media was particularly damaging to the dramatic *intérêt*, he noted, shocking the audience out of their absorption.

This is typically cited as evidence that Grimm was set against *opéra-comique*.[103] However what is then overlooked is that the passage in which Grimm criticises these aspects of the genre is subsequently followed by a favourable review of Sedaine's *comédies en musique*, which he believed would reform *opéra-comique*: "Without doubt Sedaine has formulated the project to turn [*opéra-comique*] around. By working in this genre, he truly intended to follow the route marked out by his predecessors, but his talent has opened a new route to him… From him we have a half-dozen charming *opéras-comiques*, full of innocence, character, originality and comic force."[104] *Opéra-comique* was thus by no means irredeemable according to Grimm's conception. Here again, then, we observe the significance of Sedaine's later developments in the vindication of *opéra-comique* as an expressive form of theatre.

Rousseau was also opposed to the mixing of media, as he made clear in a letter to Gluck concerning the composer's opera, *Alceste* (1767). Mixing singing and speaking, he wrote, was like mixing two languages which rendered themselves mutually incomprehensible and ridiculous.[105] But we should observe, as Jean-Christophe Rebejkow has contended, that Rousseau was also highly critical of the *merveilleux* which he thought was beginning to taint the genre; of any opera using the French language (which he deemed unsuitable for musical expression); and particularly of *opéra-comique*'s mixture of Italian style and French language.[106]

We must concede therefore that there were certain influential *philosophes* with significant concerns about the potential utility of *opéra-comique* as a genre; but are there legitimate grounds to question the perceived unique potential of the *opéra-comique* as an expressive and didactic genre, despite its evident alignment with many theories of the ideal dramatic medium?

---

[102] Friedrich Melchior von Grimm, *Correspondance littéraire, philosophique, et critique*, vol. 6 (Paris: Garnier frères, 1878), 71.
[103] Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime*, 219-220.
[104] Grimm, *Correspondance littéraire*, vol. 6, 71. This text was also initially a private document, but see footnote 101.
[105] Rousseau, "Letter to Mr. Burney and Fragments on 'Alceste'," in *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music,* eds. Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998), 496. For further information on how the mixing of media caused Rousseau to reject *opéra-comique*, see also Mark Darlow, "Eighteenth-Century French Musical Theatre," *French Studies* 66, no. 1 (2012).
[106] Rebejkow, "Rousseau et l'opéra-comique: les raisons d'un rejet".

First, the criticisms levelled at *opéra-comique* by Rousseau and Grimm in particular were hardly irreconcilable. Many were superficial, which is to say that they were focused on one or more of the technical — and mutable — features of *opéra-comique*: like the mixture of sung *ariettes* and spoken dialogue. Although with retrospect we would consider this feature inherent to *opéra-comique*, we must not mistake our understanding of the matter *ex post facto* with that of those who were contemporary and repeatedly demonstrated their propensity for reform, transformation, and experimentation in theatrical genres. Transformation was difficult under the *ancien régime* because of the oppressive system of *privilège*, but by no means impossible. Grimm in particular did not hesitate to express his admiration for the reforms of Sedaine, after all. In other words, the problem of *opéra-comique*'s traditional characteristics should not be considered incontrovertible. In the case of Rousseau, we should acknowledge that many of his criticisms were idiosyncratic: his opposition to French language opera for example was by no means prevailing. Collé's position is more difficult to reconcile of course, but he did not exert the same influence as Rousseau and Grimm and his argument ran in direct conflict with Diderot's more developed theory of hybrid expressivity.

Second, whatever their objections, both Rousseau and Grimm's ideal opera was remarkably close to *opéra-comique* as it appeared in this period. Both had advocated for an opera based upon Italianate musical style, and although Grimm may have been averse to the sort of clear melodic writing Rousseau preferred, he would have valued its emphasis on *vraisemblable* subject matter, particularly in relation to the 'conditions of men' Diderot advocated, far removed from the fantastical world of *tragédie-lyrique*.[107] Grimm was in favour of opera as a theatrical genre which united the twin powers of dramaturgy and music, and was ardent in his support of *comédie*; and although Rousseau was apparently set against the theatre for moral reasons when he published his letter to d'Alembert, he was undoubtedly convinced of its emotional power and also indeed the affectivity of opera as a medium which allied the power of two languages: word and music. There is an inherent inconsistency in Rousseau's moral conception of the theatre which is difficult to reconcile.

Third, these thinkers were by no means the majority. It is of course not possible here to examine every argument in detail, but Downing Thomas has produced a useful survey of the broader, positive perspectives on *opéra-comique* during the second-half of the eighteenth century, including those offered by Marmontel, Chabanon, du Rozoi, Laurent Garcin,

[107] Grimm had a particularly virulent reaction to Monsigny's experiments with *romance* style, for example, which he dismissed as heavy, facile, and doltish. See Heartz, "The Beginnings of the Operatic Romance: Rousseau, Sedaine, and Monsigny," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 15 no. 2 (Winter 1981-1982), 156. Perhaps, for Grimm, the complex Italianate style of Jommelli would have been more amenable.

Nougaret, Bricaire de la Dixmérie, André-Guillaume Contant d'Orville, and others besides all published treatises advocating *opéra-comique*.[108]

### Concluding remarks: *sensibilité*, moral instruction and opéra-comique before the Revolution

In the eighteenth century, conceptions of opera were directly shaped by the culture of *sensibilité* which was deeply invested in the power of sensation over the human being, and particularly their emotions, body, and (correspondingly) behaviour. This power was perceived to be significant, capable of transporting subjects to extreme states of emotion and of modifying behaviour in extreme and enduring manners.

We have seen over the last two chapters that the culture of *sensibilité* pervaded more broadly than just opera. Working within this culture, writers and practitioners sought to harness the sentimental power of all art to didactic ends, by improving society through its potential application for moral instruction. Of the arts which were seen to possess a particularly acute influence over *sensibilité*, music was arguably understood to be the most potent and thus attracted a great deal of attention. The reason for this potency was a matter of contention: resting either upon its harmonic function by which it struck the bodies of the audience and overwhelmed the senses, or upon its melodic capacity for the musical replication and communication of emotional experience. However, Diderot and others demonstrated a remarkable ability to reconcile the two modes of expression whilst preserving music's conceived sentimental power, in turn theorising its exponential intensification in places of assembly.

Because the basis of morality was understood to reside in feeling, it followed that the correct application for sentimental art was moral instruction. The arts were understood to have great potential in this regard, and several influential theorists (not least Helvétius and Rousseau) advanced arguments for their organisation to this end. For many, the theatre was the primary locus for the process of civil moral instruction for various reasons: it was an excellent site for assembly (which was important both logistically and for the intensification of emotional experience); it was well-suited to the systematic development of habit; the dramatic art was perceived to be capable of producing enduring impressions; and also because it offered unique opportunities for *intérêt* and identification, which were frequently proposed as the basis of moral instruction through the arts.

[108] Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime*, 220-223.

Of all the arts, opera maintained a commanding position in the minds of the *philosophes*. Because it unified the powers of text-based music (uniting a heady influence over the emotions with the clarity of fixed-meaning), and theatre (possessing significant powers, particularly of sympathy and pathos), it was understood to facilitate a deeper audience engagement with sentimental meaning. Likewise, there was a rising tide headed by d'Alembert (as the opening quote of the previous chapter attests) which advocated freely chosen opera as the foundation for significant societal reform. It is striking to note how contemporary discussions of moral instruction in opera depended upon the power of sensation, and conversely how frequently discussions of operatic or theatrical sensation were resolved through theorising its didactic application. The case of *opéra-comique* thus provides ample evidence for the gradual intertwining of aesthetics and (didactic) function in theatrical theory well before the Revolution.

Moreover, the burgeoning *opéra-comique* received significant support as a unique means of intertwining unparalleled expressive capability with powerful didactic functionality, especially over its *tragique* counterpart. This was in part because of its status as a genre which united the powers of opera with *comédie*, but also (according to Diderot and his contemporaries) because of its unique hybrid character which allowed it to employ an unusually wide range of expressive devices drawn both from the *tragique* and the *comique* modes. As we have seen, it also attracted significant criticism, but this criticism was by no means as incontrovertible as has typically been perceived (by Rebejkow in particular, but also by Thomas). Therefore, we must surely conclude that in the years immediately preceding the Revolution, *opéra-comique* occupied a significant (and arguably unique) theoretical position in France. Due to its expressive hybridity and what we now understand as its intersubjective qualities, it was perceived to offer unparalleled opportunities to affect the *sensibilité* of audiences.

Most importantly, this sentimentality was tightly bound up in its didactic implications for the moral instruction of society, which are evidenced most profoundly across the pertinent aesthetic debates of the period. Concerns were rarely purely aesthetic, as we have seen in the debate over the *merveilleux* and particularly from the contributions of the anti-*merveilleux* party; instead, the moral element of the debate (and one side's perceived failure to engage with it) contributed to the virulence of the controversy. At the same time, the morally didactic qualities of *comédie* and *opéra-comique* were highly prized by theorists, whose expressive goals were tightly intertwined with their desire to see opera mobilised to the edification of society through moral instruction. The operatic inheritance received by the generation of the French Revolution was thus highly favourable to *opéra-comique*, which was understood to be ripe with potential, in terms of both affective power and social instruction.

# Chapter III. Politicising Theatrical Sensation: Politics, *Sensibilité*, and the Moral Utility of Theatre during the Revolution

*We can use [the theatrical arts] to powerfully recall eras upon which it is useful to fix the attention of the people in order to nourish them; to excite generous sentiments of liberty, independence, and devotion to the fatherland up to the point of enthusiasm; and finally to engrave in their minds a small number of the principles which form the morals of nations and the politics of free men.* – Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat Condorcet (1791)[1]

We have now seen how, in the decades preceding the Revolution, the sensationist conception of opera amongst theorists became inextricable from their didactic intentions. However, it was only during the Revolution that concerted efforts were made in order to systematically exploit the didactic potential of opera and theatre over spectators' *sensibilité* on a national level. The government played a leading role in driving moral education throughout the decade, but important contributions were also made by civic institutions and even individual citizens during this period.[2]

A great deal of scholarly attention has been devoted to the pedagogical theatre of the Revolution, and the interrelation between theatre, didacticism and politics.[3] Two scholars in particular, Marie-Hélène Huet and Paul Friedland, have demonstrated how tightly these three were intertwined at all levels of revolutionary culture and politics, concluding that the very essence of the Revolution and the *modus operandi* of its governments had essentially become theatrical in its mode of operation (despite said governments' desire for transparency or

---

[1] Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat Condorcet, *Cinq mémoires sur l'instruction publique* ed. Charles Coutel and Catherine Kintzler (Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1994), 140.

[2] Nira Kaplan locates legislative efforts to guide public morality and instruction primarily in projects intended to cultivate citizens' emulation of virtuous examples. These projects included reforming the system of schooling and redressing the relational dynamic between teacher and student to make it imitative, and instituting national festivals as opportunities for mass education. She points out that 'national education projects' were both commissioned and instituted by the government, but initiated and presented to the government by citizens. This is also Lynne Hunt's conclusion: she argues, "the political practice of the republicans was fundamentally didactic… [but at the same time] various assemblies of the Revolution developed ambitious projects for the restructuring of all levels of education." See Nira Kaplan, "Virtuous Competition among Citizens: Emulation in Politics and Pedagogy during the French Revolution," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 36 no. 2 (Winter 2003), 244; and Lynne Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution: Twentieth Anniversary Edition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Pres, 2004), 68.

[3] For an overview of this corpus in relation to opera, see pp. 31-35 of the present study.

'antitheatricality').[4] But until recent decades, discussion on politics, didacticism, and the theatre were dominated by the concept of propaganda: I have highlighted how the theatre was commonly understood to have been an ideological weapon used by governments to coerce citizens into subservience and how even today such a perspective lingers amongst some scholars; likewise, I have pointed out several more recent studies which, directly or indirectly, undermine this propaganda narrative.

But of this corpus, only a monograph by Feilla has taken into account the importance of sensationism, which she addresses through her notion of 'sentimental theater', in fostering a didactic revolutionary stage which educated citizens morally and politically primarily through "sentimental terms and sentimental forms that placed a premium on the affective moral and social dimensions of life in the new order."[5] Feilla rejects the propaganda narrative first by demonstrating that the sorts of works which we have associated with this label (which she calls 'political action pieces') were far less common and popular than those which were 'sweet and sentimental', and then by showing how even political works were dependent on sentimental themes and processes for their didactic success. Instead of presenting the politicisation of the revolutionary theatre in terms of propaganda, her study thus identifies a much more complex negotiation between *sensible* spectators, their 'compatriots', and governments which were very interested in the political and psychological possibilities of new sentimental 'modes' for 'imagining the self and the self's relation to others'. She argues that "Sentimental theater offered the public a visible and continuously-performed ideal community… in a world where social, political, and religious attachments were being dissolved."[6]

---

[4] Marie-Hélène Huet, "Performing Arts: Theatricality and the Terror," in *Representing the French Revolution: literature, historiography, and art*, ed. James A.W. Heffernan (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1992), 147-149; and Paul Friedland, *Political Actors: Representative Bodies and Theatricality in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002), 295-296.

[5] Feilla, *The Sentimental Theatre of the French Revolution*, 10. It is true that in 2007 Mark Darlow argued for a set of official revolutionary aesthetics which prized the theatre for its "epistemological basis in sensation" but also its "contagious" quality, rendering revolutionary theatre instructive and contributing to its efficacy as a means of propaganda. He argued that politicians and theatrical commentators believed 'directing the passions' was "a crucial element of propaganda. They take a classic late-eighteenth-century position, insisting upon the strength of sensory reactions to music, yet also show the specificity of Revolutionary poetics, by explicitly linking these effects to a project of social and civic unification." However, he has since moved away from the propaganda narrative as we have discussed, leaving Feilla's more recent rejection of 'propaganda' through 'sentimental theater' unchallenged. See Darlow, "The role of the listener in the musical aesthetics of Revolution," in *Enlightenment and tradition; Women's studies; Montesquieu*, SVEC no. 6 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2007), 149.

[6] Ibid, 14-15. For a discussion of modern studies on the emotions during the French Revolution, see pp. 15-18 of the present study.

I concur with Feilla, and in the present chapter I similarly point towards the importance of sensationism as the ideological basis of the revolutionary conception of the theatre's political and didactic utility. Where this chapter is distinct, however, is that I seek to emphasise the continuities between revolutionary and *ancien régime* conceptions of didactic theatre, highlighting (in the light of the previous chapters) how the same sentimental concerns and processes underpinned both. Also, considering Chartier's important warning that historical continuities always involve "appropriation, which transforms, reformulates, and exceeds what it receives", I will examine how this sensationism was transformed by the revolutionaries who were compelled to respond to events of great political urgency.[7]

I argue that the politicisation of the eighteenth-century sensationist conception of didactic theatre left its foundations intact whilst developing original and creative new ways of responding to the specific needs of the moment. This approach is different and complementary to Feilla's: whereas she argues that the Revolution's didactic theatre produced a sentimentalisation of the political with political lessons being offered through sentimental themes and techniques, I emphasise that it produced a politicisation of the 'sentimental' as, under the influence of their sensationist understanding of the theatre, the revolutionaries began to explicitly imagine how the theatre could be mobilised in service of the *patrie*. To put it another way, the revolutionaries began to conceive of sensationist theatre within explicitly (and even exclusively) political parameters. This had not been the case before the Revolution.

In identifying evidence of both aesthetic continuity and transformation in revolutionary conceptions of didactic theatre, my argument corroborates Darlow's position in the continuity versus rupture debate, though from a different standpoint. Whereas Darlow sees rupture in localised issues like institutional experiences or legal developments and continuity in the preservation of aesthetic traditions, I see both existing simultaneously in theories of didactic theatre.[8]

In keeping with the recent corpus of scholarship on the revolutionary theatre, I also wish to move away from the notion that the revolutionaries regarded the theatre as a propaganda opportunity or a tool in service of their own agenda. Rather, I will show from their texts that they saw it as an important means of fostering the participation of the French public in a revolutionary project which was as contingent on them as it was upon the authorities for success.

There are two groups of so-called 'revolutionaries' whose perspectives are directly pertinent to this study in its entirety: those who helped shape and guide the nation's theatrical life

---

[7] Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, 19.
[8] Darlow, ed., "Revolutionary Culture: Continuity and Change", 2-4.

generally – the broader context in which *opéra-comique* was produced – by governing or assisting in governing the parameters in which theatrical institutions operated; and those who themselves created the *opéras-comiques* which came to constitute the revolutionary repertoire. The present chapter is concerned with the former group. The five figures whose conception of theatre we consider here (Bailly, Chénier, Condorcet, Clozet and Baillet) were all closely involved in the governance of France during the Revolution at various times, each holding an official position within the government.[9] Each of their conceptions politicised the sensationist view of theatre in slightly different ways, but all exhibited a creative approach to employing a sensationist form of theatre to meet contemporary political needs in order to benefit the nation.

In all of these areas, I examine revolutionary conception of theatre generally in order to establish the grounds for exploring the significance of *opéra-comique* specifically, for which we will turn later to one of its more voluble practitioners.

**By the stage divided: Jean Sylvain Bailly, public order, and civil strife in the *parterre***

Even as early as 1789, unmoderated passions were causing problems in the theatre. The Mayor of Paris at the time, the mathematician and astronomer-turned-politician Jean Sylvain Bailly, recorded the unrest produced by M.J. Chénier's *Charles IX* in his *Mémoires* completed just before his execution for treason in 1792. Chénier's *tragédie nationale, Charles IX,* was written for the Comédie Française in 1788, although it did not received its first performance until 6 November 1789 because it had been banned by government censors. The ban was put in place because the work was deemed to be inflammatory and dangerous to public morale,

[9] The circulation of the texts in which these conceptions were outlined varied, and so did their degree of influence during the Revolution. Chénier made a series of very noisy protests concerning the banning of *Charles IX*, appealing directly to the National Assembly and recording his objections in the preface to the first published version of the work. This matter was discussed widely. Similarly, Condorcet's plans for public instruction were published as *Mémoires* for the public itself in 1791, and he subsequently worked to summarise his researches for the benefit of the Assembly following the shelving of Talleyrand's earlier report. On this subject, see Charles Duce, "Condorcet on Education," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 19 no. 3 (October 1971), 276-277. On the other hand, Bailly's *Mémoires* (though written before 1793, when he was executed) were not published until 1821-1822, whilst Baillet and Clozet's reports circulated widely around the government (as the subject for official debate on means of public instruction) but it is unlikely that they reached the public itself. Nevertheless, Bailly's account is both pertinent and valuable as a contemporary record of the *Charles IX* controversy and as a barometer of general anxieties concerning theatrical sensation which were circulating more broadly; and Baillet and Clozet's reports offer a helpful insight into the political perspective of their contemporaries.

given that it depicted the horrific events of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre and connected these to the influence of the court on the young King Charles (thus risking anti-monarchism).[10]

Bailly recounted his own story of the controversy: although *Charles IX* had been banned under the *ancien régime*, with the Revolution came fresh pressure for its performance. However, Bailly opposed this pressure for as long as he could. Although generally against censorship, as a constitutional monarchist he feared the effect that too powerful an anti-royalist message could have on the audience. In the interests of protecting the current political status-quo, he believed that the work had to be banned. Eventually, however, Bailly was forced to concede to public demand, and the play went ahead on 4 November at the Comédie Française.[11]

An intriguing dichotomy underscored this feud over the legitimacy of censorship, and it derived from an implicit distinction between two different standards for censorship: one for text-based materials, the other for performance events. Bailly argued:

> I believe that the freedom of the press is the foundation of public liberty, but the same does not apply to the theatre. I believe that one must exclude the theatre as a place where many gather together and excite one another, in a way which can corrupt morals or the spirit of government. The theatre is a part of public instruction which cannot be left open to anyone, but must be put under surveillance by the government. It is easy to create a form of theatrical censorship which prevents arbitrary authority and which is always just. It is not an attack on the liberty of individuals: it is respect for the liberty and moral security of others. It is a small inconvenience for authors to refrain from exposing the delirium of their imagination or the corruption of their heart on stage; it is a great relief for me to be able to take or to send my children to the theatre, and to be sure that

[10] The St Bartholomew's Day Massacre was an event of dreadful violence which occurred in Paris on the 23-24 August 1572, before spreading across the country to the provinces. It is believed to have been instigated by the Queen Mother, Catherine de'Medici, and resulted in attacks on and murders of French Protestants by Catholic mobs. Estimates for the death total vary, but some are as high as 30,000.

[11] Jean-Sylvain Bailly, *Mémoires de Bailly: avec une notice sur sa vie, des notes et des éclaircissemens historiques*, vol. 2 (Paris: Baudouin frères, 1821-1822), 284-285. See also Israel, *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French Revolution*, 69. In truth, the story of *Charles IX* from ban to stage is more complex than Bailly allowed. For example, was it really popular demand which ultimately prevailed in getting the work performed? Daniel Hamiche has argued convincingly that it was actually pressure applied by a *bourgeois* minority which resulted in *Charles IX'*s premiere, and that said minority sought to employ it as an ideological weapon against their enemies in the First and Second Estates. Another important consideration is whether Bailly was merely performing his duty as a good constitutional monarchist by protecting the King, as he claimed, or whether he was troubled by the potential of the work to advance a wide range of political agendas opposing his own. After all, Charles Walton presents compelling evidence that *Charles IX* "offered a problematic kitbag of historical metaphors for making sense of present circumstances and for advancing various convictions and agendas." See Daniel Hamiche, *Le Théatre et la Révolution* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1973), 28-29; and Charles Walton, "Charles IX and the French revolution: Law, vengeance, and the revolutionary uses of history," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 4 no. 2 (1997), 129.

> they will absorb neither dangerous principles nor depraved customs. The National Assembly has decided otherwise."[12]

The significance of Bailly's intriguing dichotomy between text and performance is most evident in the resulting political paradox which was left unresolved in his account of the *Charles IX* controversy. This paradox was that a moderate could simultaneously endorse and reject censorship on the grounds of personal liberty. It demonstrates that, from Bailly's perspective, the co-application of both conservative and liberal principles – and not merely the one or the other – was a pre-requisite for a liberated society: a highly unusual inconsistency that can only be explained in the context of a distinction between textual object and theatre, which might also be understood in terms of object versus performance.

Looking a little more closely, it becomes clear from Bailly's own account that the reason for this distinction between object and performance was the power of the theatrical sensation, and its corresponding danger for society. In comparison, text did not represent such a danger because it did not wield the same sort of power as the performed work to 'assemble' people together in order to 'excite' them. In the theatre, however, spectators gathered together in such a manner that their emotions were intensified exponentially, and it was this state of emotional intensity or 'excitement' that Bailly feared precisely because of its potential to corrupt 'morals' or the 'spirit of government'.

Clearly the eighteenth-century notion that sensation and moral principle were bound together was still very influential. Indeed, Bailly's argument echoed elements of Diderot's theory of theatrical assembly, which, as we saw in Chapter I, posited the exponential intensification of emotional experience through the 'reciprocal effect' of spectators gathered together in the theatre.[13] But it also bore a strong resemblance to Rousseau's argument for the abandonment of the theatre, in which Rousseau had similarly warned of the danger of theatrical sensation produced through the proximity of the passions in performance: "Don't we know that all the passions are sisters, and that one alone suffices to excite a thousand others, and that to combat one with another is only to render the heart more sensitive to all of them?"[14] Of course, Bailly's proposition of censorship was far less drastic a solution than Rousseau's desire to move away from theatre completely, but nevertheless it is clear that the same apprehension of theatrical sensation underscored both perspectives. A direct connection with the theories of the Encyclopedists makes sense if we consider that Bailly maintained friendships with many of them, read their work, and had at one time counted himself amongst their number (although

---

[12] Bailly, *Mémoires de Bailly*, vol. 2, 286.
[13] Diderot, "Lettre sur les sourds et muets", 409. See also pp. 59-60 of the present study.
[14] Rousseau, *J.J. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève à M. d'Alembert*, 24.

he himself made no direct contribution to the Encyclopédie).[15] Thus it would seem that the clearest explanation for the political paradox of semi-censorship is the continuing influence of eighteenth-century models of sensationism. After all, if the rather dangerous power of theatre resided in the performance as Bailly implied, it made sense to control and restrict the act of performance itself.[16]

Bailly was explicit in his claims that the moral safety of French society as a whole was at stake, and not just French theatre audiences. After all, Bailly spoke in the most universal terms possible ('public liberty'; 'public instruction') and seemed not to recognise any distinction between the impact of the theatre on those who actually attended and were 'corrupted', and those who simply fell under the broader 'spirit of government'. Moreover, Bailly shared this perspective with many of his contemporaries: Jeffrey Ravel has provided compelling evidence that the revolutionary authorities recognised that the *parterre* was a significant locus for the diffusion of ideas throughout the public sphere, and not merely throughout the audiences of the various Parisian *spectacles*. He argues that the *parterre* became seen as an opportunity

---

[15] Edwin Burrows Smith, "Jean-Sylvain Bailly: Astronomer, Mystic, Revolutionary 1736-1793," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 44 no. 4 (1954), 442.

[16] At the time of the controversy, the National Assembly were still using mechanisms of censorship which they had inherited from the *ancien régime*. According to the seminal work by Hallays-Dabot on revolutionary censorship – which is still cited for its comprehensive methodology and use of documents since destroyed by fire – the individual in charge of dramatic censorship in Paris was officially the Lieutenant-General of Police, who in practice delegated to a 'censeur de la police'. The censor would read all dramatic works before they were performed and make a recommendation to the Mayor, who would ultimately decide whether a piece could be performed. On 13 January, however, this system changed significantly with the passing of the Le Chapelier Law, which abolished the system of *privilège* governing what theatres could perform which genres, and legally ended censorship. It was hoped that the law left public opinion as the only censoring power. In theory, Darlow shows that this meant that the Government "was obliged to tolerate whatever a playwright chose to offer and a manger or company of actor agreed to put on the stage; the most that could be done by those who might view the work as politically reactionary or morally suspect was to make that argument in print." In reality, however, there remained a diversity of competing powers keen to exert their authority over theatrical matters. The Government might not have been able to censor works pre-performance, but they were able to intervene and prevent a work continuing to be performed if it was deemed harmful to public order. For example, the performance of Jean-Louis Laya's controversial *L'Ami des Lois* (2 Jan 1793), which pilloried Robespierre and the Jacobins, proved too much for the Paris Commune (represented by the Mayor, supported by a *comité provisoire* of 22 members, and a larger body of 451 electors forming a General Assembly formed on behalf of all Parisian citizens), who on 12 January decided not to permit any further performances in the interests of public order. However, an appeal to the National Convention upheld their rights to perform and the play was put back on. This process of back-and-forth continued for some time, leaving the issue of the autonomy of the theatre and the power of the government unsettled. When Robespierre and the Jacobins came to power from June 1793, some further state controls were instituted, which included introducing stiffer penalties for theatre directors who staged plays running counter to the prevailing ideology and provided for state surveillance of the theatres to ensure the propriety of their repertoire and the order of their audiences. This continued even after Thermidor and the institution of the Directory, which reaffirmed these measures with an *arrêté directorial* in February 1796. See Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution*, 90-91, 123; F.W.J. Hemmings, *Theatre and State in France, 1760-1905* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 44-100; Charles Walton, *Policing Public Opinion in the French Revolution: The Culture of Calumny and the Problem of Free Speech* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 194-225; and V. Hallays-Dabot, *Histoire de la censure théatrale en France* (Paris: E. Déntu, 1862), 143-206.

for the transformation of groups of 'pleasure-seeking individuals' into "a coherent community capable of speaking on behalf of their compatriots", who, formed by their experience of community in the pits, could act as a nucleus for the rest of the nation which would follow their example.[17] Bailly's argument thus seems to be in keeping with the perspectives of his contemporaries regarding the remarkable power of theatrical sensation to spread and intensify. Given the alarming rise in levels of public disorder which lay behind Bailly's account, precipitated by or exhibited in numerous theatrical controversies which had developed since 1786, he would doubtless have felt justified in this perspective.[18]

Notably, Bailly also appeared to concur with his forebears that this process depended upon a form of experiential imitation, in which the artist used sensations in order to communicate to and recreate in the spectator the emotional experience of pre-occuring events or ideas. Having highlighted the importance of this process of experience, imitation and re-experience to Rousseau's theory of music and language and to the work of d'Apligny and Diderot in Chapter I of this study,[19] we should therefore note that Bailly shared a similar procedural understanding of this inculcation of experience: the playwright could expose "the delirium of their imagination or the corruption of their heart on stage" (from imagined experience to imitation), which would result in the spectators receiving "dangerous principles [and] depraved customs" (re-experience). The theatrical work was thus an imitation of the artist's own experience or perspective, and herein lay the source of the immorality received by the *sensible* spectator.

The apparent passivity of the spectator in this model of artist-spectator relationship is striking here in a Revolutionary context, and it is on these grounds of passive *sensibilité* which Darlow established his original propaganda narrative, arguing that the authorities believed audiences could be swayed because they simply "felt without thinking".[20] This is problematic, however, because Bailly was evidently indebted to the sensationism of Rousseau, d'Apligny and Diderot for his understanding of audience *sensibilité*, and in this model of sensationism the process of re-experience implicitly involved profound emotional participation on the part of the spectator in a way which is not congruous with this coercive model of propaganda. Indeed, we might even say that the initiative was perceived to lie with the spectator's prerogative rather than the

---

[17] See Jeffrey S. Ravel, *The Contested Parterre: Public Theater and French Political Culture 1680-1791* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 227.
[18] Charlton provides the context for this theatrical disruption which proved so troublesome to the authorities. Paisiello's opera *Le roi Théodore à Venise*, premiered in 1786, produced jibes and jeers at the expense of the King and the Assembly of Notables who had assembled to resolve France's financial crisis, and disruptions of public order continued regularly at the Comédie-Italienne throughout the year; they re-erupted the following year, partly due to the failure of Grétry's *Le prisonnier anglais*. Political reasons for the disruption were heard by Grimm. See Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique*, 277.
[19] See pp. 52-54.
[20] Darlow, "The role of the listener in the musical aesthetics of Revolution", 151.

artist's. Rousseau's work is an excellent example. For all his anecdotes of musical sensation compelling helpless subjects into extreme emotional states and behavioural patterns against his will, his theatrical aesthetics were nuanced by the idea that theatrical sensation, although powerful, was not powerful enough to alter or challenge the entrenched moral principles and sentimental tendencies of collective individuals.[21] The theatre was only able to exert a significant effect when the works performed on the stage aligned with the public taste. This naturally depended upon the willing agreement – the participation – of the audience. Furthermore, even the *philosophes* who were more inclined to see the pedagogical benefits of theatrical sensation, like d'Alembert, nevertheless shared a conviction that it was best applied to a willing audience already in agreement with the moral principles being treated.[22]

Because of their emphasis on the participatory nature of theatrical sensation, it seems reasonable to conclude that the idea of a coercive set of theatrical aesthetics would have been alien to the *philosophes*.[23] I would argue that this was also the case in Bailly's conception of the theatre. After all, the context of the *Charles IX* controversy indicates that Bailly's fears largely concerned the competing ideological biases of audiences across Paris and their intensification in the theatre rather than the dangers of despotic control. Describing the events which led to the debate over censorship, Bailly wrote:

> Finally, the revolution was made by the steadfast actions of the Assembly in the month of June and July, by the recognition of national sovereignty, by the toppling of the Bastille, and by the taking up of arms in Paris and across the whole country. The National Assembly was able to do and complete everything through wisdom: it had enough power that it did not need to embellish the degree of public support. A wise legislator, a skilled administrator needed to direct opinion; which is to say reinforce it in order that it did not yield, control it in order that it did not reverse the progress which had been made. Then, I wished that we respected [constitutional] monarchy at a time when the Assembly was going to decree it. We had acted sufficiently to combat the arbitrary form of monarchy. But many men who concealed themselves at the time did not wish to leave it there: many parties already existed, the enemies of the future constitution were sowing disorder to prevent constitutional monarchy from being established; enemies of the monarchy wished to

[21] Rousseau, *J.J. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève à M. d'Alembert*, 19-22. For examples of these anecdotes, see p. 53 of the present study.

[22] We might remember, for example, that d'Alembert had acknowledged the inability of the theatre to 'bring back lost men' and argued that its primary function was to co-operate with reason in order to "imprint the truths that we need to learn more profoundly in our soul". The implication, of course, was that these (moral) truths were already accepted and part-learnt, which fitted with his notion that theatre was primarily intended to 'reinforce' sentiments which had previously been 'engraved' or 'impressed' in other contexts. See "Lettre de M. d'Alembert à M. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève", 41.

[23] It would certainly have been an anathema to Marmontel's conception of the theatre, for example. See pp. 71-72.

make it abhorrent in order to destroy it… all behaved according to different views and in the same way.[24]

This account provides an important insight into the anxieties underpinning Bailly's fear of citizens gathering together in the theatre to incite each other to fever pitch. His conception was not of a 'top-down' model in which the government coerced the public into obedience, but of a culture of widespread participation in which citizens holding all sorts of destructive ideologies (his so-called 'dangerous principles') met together in the auditorium where their ideas were intensified by theatrical sensation. The public described here could hardly be labelled 'passive', and in fact to the contrary it seemed that Bailly understood the public opinion as the driving momentum in the progress of the Revolution.

Of course, there is a distinction to be drawn here between 'public opinion' and sentimental feeling. To our modern eyes, the former seems in some ways more a matter of reason and ideal than the latter, which primarily concerned emotional experience. But we should remember that the revolutionaries of 1789 were not so apt to distinguish the two: as William Reddy has shown, they perceived that "sincere emotions were of great importance in politics", and throughout most of the decade revolutionary politics was as much an appeal to the heart as to the mind.[25] Most importantly, we should note that Bailly himself did not draw the distinction particularly clearly. According to his own account, it was the combination of both political ideology and sensation together which made *Charles IX* so dangerous. He was not concerned with any ideology in particular, nor merely with the existence competing political principles. Rather, he feared the theatrical depiction of an immoral monarch abusing his citizens would exacerbate tensions between the various political factions of the day, exciting the emotions of the audience and causing them to spill over into conflict.[26]

---

[24] Bailly, *Mémoires de Bailly*, vol. 2, 285.

[25] Reddy, "Sentimentalism and Its Erasure: The Role of Emotions in the Era of the French Revolution," *The Journal of Modern History* 72 no. 1 (March 2000), 111, 136-144.

[26] Bailly wrote, for example, "the love of kings, and above all of Louis XVI, existing in all French hearts, I thought that it would not be a good policy to give him enemies at the risk of inciting a livelier sentiment and of multiplying, amongst the greater majority, his partisans and defenders. Similarly, I thought that as we were close to pronouncing the fate of the clergy it was necessary to do so peacefully and with fairness, and not to portray onstage a cardinal blessing daggers and encouraging assassins in order to stoke resentment and put hatred in the place of justice." See *Mémoires de Bailly*, vol. 2, 284-285. In this particular extract, the importance of the connection between political principle and emotion is alluded to in Bailly's abstraction of monarchism into a sentiment 'existing in all French hearts', but it is clarified in his discussion of the theatre's power to 'incite', rouse to action ('multiply'), alter perceptions ('sour'), and most drastically to upset the process of justice in France (replacing it with 'hatred'). In addition, underlying this set of rather significant social consequences was the conviction that theatrical sensation had the power to enhance division, leading to conflict and potentially violent retribution. In the case of a potential analogy between Charles IX and Louis XVI, for example, Bailly argued that theatrical representation had the power to stir up and intensify pre-existing pro and anti-monarchist divisions. He

Bailly's fears concerning the effect of theatrical sensation on public opinion reflect a broader concern about the volatility of public opinion. Jon Cowans points out that though the two are closely linked, there is an important distinction between public opinion and general will: whereas the latter would come to be bound up in issues of representation and political legitimation (which will be considered later in the present chapter), the former represented an unprecedented multiplicity of political and social views which had exploded after the election of the Estates General in 1789 produced a sudden expanse of the public sphere. This expanse was not simply understood in terms of having enabled the expression of the general will, but also the complete and disparate views of a diverse public. Accordingly, there was a real fear that it had simply produced a 'chaotic babble of voices'.[27] This, therefore, provided justification for Bailly's recommendation of censorship. As long as political division and theatrical sensation were kept separate, French legislators would not need to fear the theatre exacerbating unrest or outbreaks of excessive ideological zeal. And of these two, Bailly clearly believed that the latter was within the reach of the legislator.

There are evidently many elements of continuity between Bailly's sensationism and the aesthetics of the earlier eighteenth century. But there is also evidence of theoretical development in Bailly's writing beyond the purview of the *philosophes*, particularly in the politicisation of his perspective of morality and behaviour. Returning to the first extract quoted from his *Mémoires*, we might for instance remind ourselves of Bailly's intriguing problematisation of personal versus corporate liberty, in which the moral behaviour of the collective citizenry provided the justification for employing censorship to suppress the rights of the individual to express themselves. In Bailly's own terms, the "moral security of others" outweighed the liberty of the individual to expose "the delirium of their imagination" on the stage. Having probed into the nuances of this particular argument, we should not overlook the obvious point that the issue of political liberty in relation to theatrical censorship (conceived here strictly in terms of a negotiation to establish the parameters of government's duty to protect and nurture civic virtue in French citizens) was not so immediate a concern for the

did not suggest that a performance of the work could create a difference of opinion; nor did he argue that said difference of opinion would inevitably produce the 'corruption' of morals and the spirit of government in itself. But the two together – the union of competing political principles with theatrical sensation – could produce dire results for the stability of the nation by exciting partisans of each party to the same state of enthusiasm. Another paradox, then: inciting spectators to the same state of *enthousiasme* would likely exacerbate divisions in audiences and (by extension) in society.

[27] Jon Cowans, *To Speak for the People: Public Opinion and the Problem of Legitimacy in the French Revolution* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 54. For a broader discussion of public opinion in relation to political authority, see pp. 53-87.

*philosophes* in the way that it was for Bailly, simply because the social context had changed so drastically by 1789.[28]

After all, whereas they were largely concerned with producing the greatest moral good in the greatest number of potential spectators, Bailly recognised that the context of revolution had resulted in an important shift in the way the authorities mediated what constituted 'moral good' to national audiences. In other words, the coming of revolution had infused issues of political control of both society and theatre with a much greater immediacy than they had in previous decades. This was heightened by the multitude of competing political factions which Bailly had to mediate between, meaning that the inevitability of politicised sensation was both a helpful tool and a dangerous problem respectively. Whereas the *philosophes* were generally prepared to leave the issue of theatrical control unresolved as we saw in Chapter I,[29] Bailly did not have the same luxury because of the increasing complexity of what moral 'good' meant. From 1789 it not only meant the usual abstractions of personal virtue and social responsibility, but also incorporated individual and corporate positioning in relation to the social project of revolution.

This is made clearer if we consider that the politicisation of moral behaviour was mirrored by contemporary understandings of sensation. Whereas the *philosophes* had theorised the power of rather general influences such as love, anger, or jealousy, Bailly's perspective demonstrated a growing specificity with regard to what these sensations actually constituted. For example, the most prominent sensation was Bailly's conception of "the love of kings" which he believed existed in "all French hearts". Evidently this was not a new idea, for it could naturally be compared to 'love' more generally, patriotism, or pride perhaps. However, it was rather more tightly defined than these, and explicitly political. In fact, this powerful sentiment bound up an entire nation's feeling to one specific individual (King Louis XVI) and to the institution of the monarchy. He demonstrated this tendency throughout his account, also listing 'the hatred of power of Kings' and 'opposition to arbitrary power' as sensations which might be treated and inspired in the theatre.

---

[28] This is not to suggest that the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century were unaffected by the issue of censorship, of course, or that they hadn't critiqued it vociferously. In a way, censorship 'made' the *philosophes* by shaping their experience and providing fuel for their arguments. After all, censorship provided a thorny issue for many individuals, and particularly for those collaborating on the *Encyclopédie*. Diderot had been imprisoned in 1749 under censorship laws for his controversial *Lettre sur les aveugles à l'usage de ceux qui voient*. However, the *philosophes* were primarily concerned with text-based censorship (which Bailly opposed, as we have seen), and the issue was not truly a political one (in terms of negotiating the parameters of the government's duty to protect and nurture civic virtue in French citizens). Rather, it was more of a struggle against the forces of Counter-Enlightenment (primarily the *dévots* and the Jansenists) as Jonathan Israel suggests. See Jonathan Israel, "French Royal Censorship and the Battle to Supress the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and d'Alembert, 1751-1759," in *The Use of Censorship in the Enlightenment*, ed. Mogens Lærke (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 61-74.

[29] See pp. 72-73.

The specificity of these particular sensations is testament to the fact that Bailly had no problem politicising the rather more general system of theatrical *sensibilité* which the *philosophes* had established earlier in the century. Indeed, for all intents and purposes his conceived 'love of kings' performed exactly the same theoretical function in the theatre as did the general sensations of *philosophes*: it worked upon an audience, eliciting an intense emotional response (here discussed in terms of 'inciting a livelier interest') which in turn would produce a significant behavioural response, in this context ominously alluded to with Bailly's discussion of stirring up Louis' partisans and inciting hatred in place of justice. This was exactly the same as the familiar model of theatrical *sensibilité*, except with political feelings replacing the function of more abstract principles.[30]

Although it was not fully developed in Bailly's account and would receive much greater attention from other authors, as we will see, Bailly seemed to have a rather pragmatic perspective of the role of the dramatic author in his theorisation. The negative terms in which he described this individual – as a corrupt menace to society exposing the 'delirium of his imagination' – are striking, but these anxieties somewhat mask Bailly's evident respect for their social power. In the context of *Charles IX*, he plainly feared Chénier's desire to inculcate principles which would be damaging to the fragile state in which Paris found itself. But we should not forget that his ambitions for the government to utilise the theatre to promote the values of moderate revolution ('reinforcing' enthusiasm and preventing it from 'turning around', for example) were fully contingent upon the participation of the dramatic author. Without this participation, the theatre would be of no social use. He regarded the theatre as a "part of public instruction which cannot be left open to anyone", certainly, but evidently supported a collaboration between author and government with the latter in a supervisory role.

From Bailly's perspective the author was therefore potentially a pivotal figure in the didactic plan for France's regeneration. Authors had the power to corrupt, certainly, and to turn the theatre to devastating social ends. But if they were employed in a collaborative partnership, which incorporated fair and discerning censorship, the theatre could become a moral and didactic institution to which one might even send one's children.

[30] Of course, we might legitimately question the authenticity of Bailly's claims. Was it truly the monarchist feeling of the masses that he feared overflowing, or was it more likely that, as a constitutional monarchist, Bailly was concerned about inciting anti-monarchist fervour which could undermine the progress of the moderates in the early stages of the Revolution? Although this is a valid line of enquiry, we might consider that in either case we still witness a process of politicisation. It was the beginning of a process of politicisation which would continue throughout the Revolution, long after constitutional monarchism had fallen out of favour.

**M.J. Chénier: Painting passions for national glory**

On the opposite side of this controversy was the author of *Charles IX,* Marie-Joseph Chénier, who was closely involved with politics during the Revolution. At various times he sat on the Committee of Dramatic Authors, worked for the Committee of Public Instruction, and took on the role of a Paris section and district leader. Chénier gave his side of the story in a preface to the work somewhat grandiosely entitled *An Epistle Dedicated to the French Nation*, which railed against theatrical censorship as an arbitrary abuse of power, arguing that it prevented the theatre from reaching its full potential as a "school of virtue and of liberty."[31] In direct opposition to Bailly, Chénier argued that censorship was an anathema not only to a broad conception of civic virtue, but in fact to the very core of the revolutionary project:

> The theatre has an immense influence on general morality. For a long time it was a school of fawning, insipidity and libertinism: it is necessary to make it a school of virtue and of liberty. People will no longer go there and receive these languid impressions which adulterate them. They will become better and more worthy of your love: they will become men… Fathers of families, let your children frequent these serious theatres. With respect for the law and for morals, there they will gain a taste for our history, strangely neglected in schools. And you, children, future nation, hope of the fatherland and of a century which has not yet come to pass, you will be nothing like the men of former prejudice and slavery. You will be men of the new liberty.[32]

From this extract it is clear that Chénier possessed a striking ambition for the theatre as a site of civic instruction in morality. Nevertheless, the basis for this ambition was not entirely clear in his epistle, although Chénier left an important clue in his discussion of moral 'impressions' which may remind us of a similar vocabulary employed in the sensationist theories of his forebears. It was actually established in an earlier text by Chénier entitled *De la liberté du théâtre*, which was written the same year that the dispute over *Charles IX* erupted. In this text, Chénier drew explicit links between instruction in morality and theatrical sensation:

> The influence of the theatre on morals does not need to be proved, because it is indispensable… in a beautiful theatrical piece, pleasure brings the spectator to a state of learning without him noticing it or being able to resist it. Man is naturally sensitive. In painting the passions the dramatic poet directs those of the spectator. A smile which escapes from us when listening to a comic piece, or, in an eloquent tragedy, tears which we feel flowing from our eyes, suffice to make us feel a truth, as the author of a moral treatise could show us in considerable detail. Add to this that our sensitivity and even our understanding are infinitely augmented by those of a similar nature who surround us. A book passed around various studies slowly manages to make a multitude of different impressions, but these are isolated and almost always exempt of enthusiasm. The

---

[31] M.J. Chénier, "Epître dédicatoire à la Nation française," in M.J. Chénier, *Charles IX ou l'école des mœurs* (Paris: Bossange et compagnie, 1790), 7.
[32] Ibid, 7-8.

sensation which is experienced by two thousand people gathered together at the Théâtre Français, or the performance of an excellent dramatic work is rapid, intense, and unanimous.[33]

This particular extract can be read as a series of assertions. First, we note that the playwright similarly conceived of the exchange between author and spectator in sensationist terms with the former directing the 'passions' of the latter. Second, we note that this exchange depended upon the participation of the collective through mass assembly, with a spectator's individual *sensibilité* augmented by the effect of theatrical sensation upon their fellows. Third, it is made clear that the purpose of the sentimental exchange was the teaching of moral 'truth', which the theatre was empowered to impart through its influence over the emotions, and particularly joy (displayed through smiles) and despair (shown through weeping). This, argued Chénier, was an indisputable truth known to moral theorists.[34] Fourth, this exchange was both subtle and irresistible, with the emotions inevitably inculcating moral truths in such a way that it was not even noticed. Lastly, it was the power of performance that made the theatre such an important didactic tool. Chénier argued that without a performance, the textual object was virtually void of all ability to generate *enthousiasme*, which was therefore regarded as an important pre-condition for moral instruction.

Each of these points was also present in the work of Bailly, and Chénier similarly drew upon the rich tradition of theatrical theory which coalesced in the work of the eighteenth-century sensationists. It seems the eighteenth-century sensationist view of the theatre was so well entrenched that even authors with conflicting conclusions about censorship and theatrical policy could find consensus on the issue of theatrical sensation. The conflict simply concerned how said sensation should best be employed and regulated.

Having examined Chénier's sensationist aesthetics in *De la liberté du théâtre*, we might now nuance our analysis of his 'epistle' with a clearer understanding of his perspective on the interconnection between emotion and instruction in the theatre. What is perhaps most striking about Chénier's conception of the theatre as a 'school of virtue and liberty' is his apparent conviction in the power of nationalist sensations to have a transformative effect on French citizens. After all, in the first extract above, Chénier argued that regular attendance at patriotic theatres would ensure that the new generation of child-citizens would embody the values of revolution and make them 'nothing like' the subjects of France who had suffered under prejudice and slavery. For Chénier, then, the sensational power of the theatre was not only

---

[33] M. J. Chénier, *De la liberté du théâtre en France* (no publishing details), 4-5.
[34] Although he did not single out any moral theorist in particular, the general nature of his assertion was such that it could have been any one of the sensationists scrutinised in previous chapters. It is nevertheless aptly summed up by a single quote from Hume: "Morality, therefore, is more properly felt than judg'd of." See Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, vol. 3 (London: John Noon, 1739), 470.

important for teaching revolutionary values and encouraging participation. It was a vital means of ensuring the success of the revolution in the future by creating a new generation of citizens keen to participate in it.

To a great extent, Chénier's argument reflected a wider concern for the future of the Revolution in the hands of its youngest citizens. After all, in her monograph on the place of family in the Revolution Lynn Hunt demonstrated that the authorities were increasingly aware of the importance of children in this regard, aptly pointing out that they became valued so highly it was felt they could not be left entirely under the jurisdiction of their parents, as argued by Maximillien Robespierre and Georges Danton.[35]

On the other hand, it is striking that Chénier's argument predated Danton and Robespierre's political discussion on the matter by at least three years. Indeed, his account was published in 1790, whereas Danton and Robespierre were debating in 1793-1794. He was thus remarkably early – although by no means alone: most famously, there was also Madame de Genlis – in contending that the theatre should be employed in order to foster a new generation of revolutionary citizens which would guarantee the success, development and growth of the Revolution's values.[36]

Politicisation in this example happened in the broadest possible sense, without conforming to any one factional agenda. It encompassed the advance and growth of revolutionary values, certainly, but these values were not necessarily those of the dominant party, and this becomes especially clear with the coming of the Terror. After all, Chénier was no Jacobin, even if his ideas prefigured Jacobin ideals, and his values were certainly not those of Robespierre or Danton. We should remember that it was these very ideas and values which had made him a marked man by the end of the Terror, by which time he had earned the dangerous reputation of a moderate.[37] To speak of Chénier 'politicising' the perceived connection between theatrical sensation and civic instruction thus in no way suggests that revolutionary theorists saw the

[35] Lynn Hunt writes, "Under the National Convention, in contrast, most deputies believed that the state had to intervene to protect the rights of children against the potentially tyrannical actions of fathers, families, or churches. In many cases, such as education, the state actually took for itself the role of paternal authority… Danton proclaimed in the debate on whether primary schools should be obligatory, "Children belong to society before they belong to their family." Robespierre was even more forceful: "The country has the right to raise its children: it should not entrust this to the pride of families or to the prejudices of particular individuals, which always nourish aristocracy and domestic feudalism." See *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 67.
[36] Madame de Genlis (1746-1830) was the daughter of an impoverished but noble French family, and gained fame as a writer on education. She produced many innovative theories on the subject before, during, and after the Revolution.
[37] Alfred J. Bingham, "Marie-Joseph Chénier and French Culture during the French Revolution," *The Modern Language Review* 61 no. 4 (October 1966), 596.

theatre as a tool for indoctrination or coercion. The idea of the theatre as a site of encouragement to participation is a much more nuanced and sensitive proposition.

Moreover, it better fits the contemporary climate of developing group-consciousness amongst the Third Estate, which, as Timothy Tackett has demonstrated, was pervasive in 1789-1790. He shows that by refusing to meet with the commoners, the 'privileged orders' helped to create a cohesion amongst the Third's deputies which developed into a binding and mutually-reinforcing relationship between said deputies and the citizens they represented, within which the deputies believed that their legitimacy derived from the support of 'public opinion and the general will'.[38] In this sense, the participation of the public in the political life of the Nation through demonstrations of the 'general will' was a vital pre-requisite for political legitimacy and therefore the progress of the Revolution itself. Furthermore, even much later in the Revolution the significance of the political agency of the individual continued to be lauded. Joseph Zizek establishes this through the rather fascinating case study of revolutionary 'sacrifice', which he argues "became a crucial means to reveal personal identity and to imagine the possibilities of patriotic community", as acts of self-abnegation came to be interpreted as the individual's contribution to the corporate good.[39] The participation of citizens rather than their subjugation, then, is the context in which we should read Chénier's perspective.

With regard to a theory of theatrical sensation, Chénier's epistle certainly provided an ambitious project for the authorities to consider. His argument portrayed it as nothing less than the opportunity in the present to exploit the national past in order to shape and safeguard the future. Theatrical sensation was an essential component in this process, providing the indispensable *enthousiasme* capable of carrying moral truths to the hearts of French audiences.

### Nicolas de Condorcet and the author-custodian

Few had so clear a conception of nurturing virtue in the body of revolutionary citizens as Nicolas de Condorcet. A mathematician, philosopher, and political scientist, Condorcet had a starry start to the Revolution. Elected as a representative for Paris in the National Assembly in 1791, in 1792 he was charged with producing a plan for the reformation of national

---

[38] Timothy Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary: The Deputies of the French National Assembly and the Emergence of a Revolutionary Culture*, *(1789-1790)*, first paperback edn. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State Press, 2006),141-142. Tackett draws attention to a significant quantity of written correspondence in which deputies expressed their dependence on public opinion, including Laurent de Visme, who wrote: "Public opinion is our strength."

[39] Joseph Zizek, "Revolutionary Gifts: Sacrifice and the Challenge of Community during the French Revolution", *The Journal of Modern History* 88 no. 2 (2016), 311.

education and remained prominent in this sphere until his downfall at the hands of the Jacobins in 1794. The issue of national education appeared consistently across his many revolutionary works, including his *Cinq mémoires sur l'instruction publique* (1791).

In the third volume of his *Mémoires*, Condorcet took the opportunity to theorise on "indirect means of instruction": the performing arts and civic festivals. A striking feature of his argument in this volume was the emphasis he placed on commemoration as a tool of public instruction. To exploit the power of memory, he proposed that theatrical dramas constitute the heart of a new series of national festivals instituted to educate the public. These festivals would be devoted to extolling national triumph:

> We must establish national festivals on certain days of the year, and associate them with historical epochs. These would be both general and specific. A town whose citizens had distinguished themselves in some memorable event would celebrate the anniversary with a festival; the nation would celebrate those dates on which it had been able to act together. These would not have to date from the era of its liberty… A town would be able to celebrate the birth of an illustrious man conceived within its walls, or the generosity of its citizens. There are great men and great deeds under all constitutions. Turning back the enemy from the walls of one's town, devoting oneself to the salvation of one's land: even if one has no fatherland, such actions can still provide the models of heroism.[40]

The dramas he advocated for would constitute works in which simplicity allowed the memory of historical events to elicit strong passions from amongst the audience:

> Without doubt, an intricate tragedy full of ingenious maxims capable of developing every nuance, every finer point of sentimentality; demanding sustained attention, perfect understanding of every word… without doubt a tragedy in this genre would not be suitable for these festivals. But simple pieces with more action than words… where the ideas are strong, where the passions would be painted broadly, and could be understood there. The reunion of pantomime with drama would give birth to a new art destined for these noble divertissements.[41]

What was it about national memory that made it such a powerful means of moral instruction and thus a suitable focus for Condorcet's proposed dramas? On one hand, there was the opportunity to provide general models of virtue and heroism for imitation which citizens would feel an affinity for given their shared *patrimoine*.[42] More importantly, Condorcet theorised that national memory was an important catalyst for eliciting the very sort of emotional processes through spectators' *sensibilité* which his contemporaries and forebears proposed was the very basis for moral instruction. In other words, the primary power of memory was to provide a

[40] Condorcet, *Cinq mémoires sur l'instruction publique*, 141.
[41] Ibid, 141-142.
[42] Ibid, 132.

vehicle for an intense emotional reaction to theatrical sensation which was capable of making an 'indelible' impression, affecting both beliefs and behaviour.[43]

This familiar sensationist perspective, now adapted by a striking shift to focus on collective memory, was in keeping with wider conceptions of the power of national history as a moral and social tool which developed both before and during the French Revolution. In studies which trace the ways that historical subject matter was an important means by which authors and composers of *comique* works sought to legitimise their preferred genre, both Julia Doe and James Butler Kopp evince how, in the years preceding the Revolution, this material primarily took on a didactic role which was understood to be rooted in its appeal to spectatorial emotion. The aim was, for Kopp, to present compelling examples of virtue which were 'idealised and imitable', and Doe shows that these were most frequently realised in patriotic depictions of French heroism during the Seven Years War which predominantly took on the characteristics of sentimental romances in order to profoundly affect audience *sensibilité*. "The sentimental romance so often found within *opéra-comique*", she writes, "[served to] heighten rather than detract from the impact of a patriotic topic… placing grand, historical action within the generic frame of *opéra-comique* allowed audiences to identify more closely with heroic protagonists and internalize the emotional weight of their sacrifices."[44] Similarly, Anne Boës frames this within bonds of unity, pointing out that the didactic impetus of these works is always towards a strengthening of the national community.[45]

---

[43] Condorcet's understanding of human *sensibilité*, which he developed during the Revolution and was published posthumously, was detailed in his *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain*, in 1795. In his opinion, "the whole circle of the ideas results merely from the operations of our intellect upon the sensations we have received, or more accurately speaking, are compounded of sensations offering themselves simultaneously to the memory, and after such a manner that the attention is fixed and the perception bounded to a particular branch or view of the sensations themselves." As Ceri Crossley argued in her study on the emergence of French Romanticism, revolutionary *idéologues* such as Condorcet were entirely dependent on Enlightenment sensationism for their understanding of the progress of human history. This in turn was the intellectual basis of their attempts to refashion society: in Condorcet's case, culminating in his *Esquisse*. In the Revolution, refashioning society could never remain merely a theoretical task, given how intimately many of the ideologues, like Condorcet, were involved in (and, through their texts, shaped) the governance of the nation. See Antoine-Nicholas de Condorcet, *Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind* (Chicago: G. Langer, 2009), 268-269; and Ceri Crossley, *French Historians and Romanticism: Thierry, Guizot, the Saint-Simonians, Quinet, Michelet* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 11-12.

[44] Julia Doe, "Opéra-comique on the Eve of Revolution: Dalayrac's Sargines and the Development of "Heroic" Comedy," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 68 no. 2 (Summer 2015), 345; Kopp, "The Drame-lyrique", 109-111. The emergence of national history as a viable choice of subject in *opéra-comique* is contextualised throughout Clarence D. Brenner's monograph, *L'histoire nationale dans la tragédie française du XVIIIe siècle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1929).

[45] Though Boës does not directly address the importance of sensationism in this process, she nevertheless alludes to it in terms of 'enthousiasme patriotique' generated by patriotic works like Pierre Laurent Buirette de Belloy's *Le Siège de Calais* (1765). See Anne Boës, *La lanterne magique: essai sur le théâtre historique en France de 1750 à 1789*, SVEC no. 213 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1982), 3-7, 103, 123.

Doe later states that this patriotic, 'heroic' *opéra-comique* provided the blueprint for the patriotic *opéra-comiques* of the Revolution, thus indicating a strong element of continuity between the *ancien régime* and the Revolution in terms of genre.[46] Although Doe does not corroborate these claims by reference to specific revolutionary examples, Darlow's work on the lyric theatre of the Revolution provides ample evidence to substantiate the importance of sensationist procedure in revolutionary *pièces de circonstance*. Particularly in his study of revolutionary opera at the Académie royale de musique, Darlow outlines how the core of national history works achieved their morally didactic ambitions primarily through stirring up 'passionate emotional states' with an emphasis on 'enthusiasm', 'electrification', and 'contagion'.[47]

Condorcet's conception of national history in the theatre therefore exhibits striking continuities with the theatrical sensationism of the *ancien régime*, given how neatly it fits scholars' interpretation of the importance of national history in the theatrical sensationism of eighteenth-century playwrights and theorists. For Condorcet, as for his forebears, the power of memory elicited through it was primarily intended to offer didactic and imitable examples of social virtue which could be identified with and internalised by spectator-citizens, thereby working for strengthened communal bonds. Darlow's conclusions would indicate that he shared this perspective with a significant majority of his contemporaries.

But there is evidence of transformation through politicisation too. Gilbert Faccarello and Philippe Steiner have demonstrated how fundamentally Condorcet's sensationism relates to his conception of a revolutionary legislative government. They emphasise how, in texts like his *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (1795), sensationism establishes "fundamental natural rights that human beings can enjoy… [as well as] notions of justice and morality, which, with the effective realisation of free trade, must guide the political and administrative organisation of the country." It does this because it demonstrates, from the revolutionaries' perspective, 'cognitive links' between people, society and institutions which can be governed by wise legislators "without imposing upon [citizens] any normative rule of

[46] Doe, "Opéra-comique on the Eve of Revolution," 337.
[47] Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution*, 220. Even this strong example of continuity with Enlightenment sensationism provides evidence that transformation in, or even rupture with, dramatic praxis must be simultaneously held in tension, however. In a separate article on the 'meta-theatricality' of revolutionary aesthetics, Darlow shows how, in cultivating a strong influence over *sensibilité*, the revolutionaries broke with the traditional, Diderotian method of spectatorial absorption. Instead, to achieve the desired effect over *sensibilité*, a work of national history "explicitly presented itself as continuous with the world of a spectator's lived experience" by self-consciously emphasising its own fictive quality, but in so doing becoming 'referential' in a manner which would cause the spectator to identify parallels between theatrical experience and revolutionary life. The revolutionary aesthetics of national history in the theatre therefore conserved the traditional sensationist approach whilst significantly altering its procedures. See "History and (Meta-)Theatricality: the French Revolution's Paranoid Aesthetics," *The Modern Language Review* 105 no. 2 (April 2010), 394.

conduct and without hindering them from looking after their own interests."[48] And in the context of these *Mémoires* explicitly, in which his view of theatre and festival is presented, it should be recognised that the role of the legislator in relation to public instruction is of the highest importance. Condorcet returns to this theme throughout his project in order to fully develop the case for his conclusion: that the government are interpreters of the law which exists for the public good, and that a new system of public instruction is required in order that society can become truly free.[49] Theatrical sensationism is thus politicised because it becomes subsumed within Condorcet's overall ambition of instructing the public in civic virtue and encouraging them to invest in the corporate revolutionary project: as he put it 'diminishing inequality' and 'augmenting' the public's ability to contribute to revolutionary society.[50] It formed an ideological foundation on which a new, politicised vision of the Nation and its government could be developed, one in which the theatre was to play a central role in shaping and liberating citizens by offering them the means of participating on a socio-political level.

His perspective reinforces the point that the revolutionary desire to exploit national history in the theatre cannot be properly understood through the lens of propaganda. It was not, for example, an opportunistic hope of finding new means of coercing or persuading citizens to follow a political vision determined by those in government. Darlow helpfully shows that we can avoid the issues inherent in the propaganda label by understanding it in terms of a 'moral appeal' to spectators' judgement, which better fits with Condorcet's participative approach.[51] This approach is participative because it calls authors to harness the power of memory to empower citizens to make their own, productive contribution to the revolutionary project; it is generative rather than coercive or persuasive, arguing in sensationist terms that the theatre's

[48] Gilbert Faccarello and Philippe Steiner, "Interest, sensationism and the science of the legislator: French 'philosophie économique', 1695–1830," *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 15 no. 1 (March 2008), 15-16. This is corroborated in earlier studies by both authors. See P. Steiner, *La 'Science nouvelle' de l'économie politique* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1998); G. Faccarello, "Le legs de Turgot: aspects de l'économie politique sensualiste de Condorcet à Rœderer," in *La pensée économique pendant la Révolution française*, eds. G. Faccarello and P. Steiner (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1991), 67–107; G. Faccarello, "Turgot et l'économie politique sensualiste," in *Nouvelle histoire de la pensée économique*, vol. 1, eds. A. Béraud and G. Faccarello (Paris: La Découverte, 1992), 254–88; and G. Faccarello, "An 'exception culturelle'? French Sensationist political economy and the shaping of public economics," *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 13 no. 1, 1-38.

[49] This can be seen throughout the *Mémoires*: see for example, pp. 42-43, 116, and 141. In one passage where he considers the task of the legislator in relation to public institutions, Condorcet writes: "In the institutions of a free nation, everything must push towards equality, not only because it is also a right of man, but because the preservation of order and peace demands it imperiously." In short, the opportunities offered by the theatre's influence over *sensibilité* was to be guided by a legislator explicitly for the purpose of peace, order, and justice. See *Cinq mémoires sur l'instruction publique*, 50.

[50] Ibid, 16-17.

[51] Darlow, "History and (Meta-)Theatricality", 398.

sentimental power should be used to cultivate an enthusiasm which will then afford citizens the agency to act on behalf of their nation.

Moreover, context with regards to the revolutionary concept of the festival itself is illuminating in this context. The festivals Condorcet refers to were a staple of revolutionary life: communities could be expected to participate in them several times a year at least, and they ranged from smaller, local affairs to great national events (such as the Fête de la Fédération on the 14 July 1790). Several decades ago, studies tended to interpret these events primarily as opportunities for the mass dissemination of political propaganda. Jean-Louis Jam's chapter on Gossec and Chénier's musical contributions glossed over the significance of the strong participative elements of the celebrations (exhibited, for example, in the music by various melodic stresses which Jam thoroughly investigates) and argued that the music's comprehensibility was simply an expediency for disseminating a centrally-determined ideology (or ideologies): the apparent "chief function of poetry and music in Revolutionary festivals."[52] Even in Mona Ozouf's seminal study, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, the strong sensationist principles which underpinned the intellectual justification for these events apparently demonstrated a 'poisonous' faith in human plasticity which the authorities sought to exploit for their own agenda.[53]

Helpfully, this view has been challenged more recently, and James Livesey's monograph on revolutionary democracy has offered us a convincing, alternative view of the festivals as a means of self-education, or even self-construction, rather than a means of coercing or manipulating adherence to the government as a centralised arbiter of revolutionary ideology. He convincingly overturns this propaganda narrative by highlighting a breadth of textual evidence, featuring works by authors such as the Chevalier de Moy and Boissy d'Anglas, which indicates that the festival was regarded by the authorities as "an enactment of the collective life of a regenerated people… every festival was understood to be an instrument for the self-education of the French people into the new habits and assumptions, or mœurs, necessary for a free people."[54]

This has been corroborated by Sean M. Quinlan who argues that revolutionary conceptions of *sensibilité* were a little different from their forebears' in this regard. Citing contemporary medical studies, he shows that it was no longer understood in terms of a 'plasticity' which

---

[52] Jean-Louis Jam, "Marie-Joseph Chénier and François-Joseph Gossec: two artists in the service of Revolutionary propaganda," in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. Malcolm Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 221-235.
[53] Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (tr.) Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988), 197-216.
[54] James Livesey, *Making Democracy in the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 201.

could be manipulated, but rather as a personal quality which could be trained in order to develop 'emotional and corporal self-control' for the benefit of the community. This was realised in developing regimens for individuals and families who wished to become 'rejuvenated citizens', which were invitations rather than attempts at coercion or persuasion.[55]

This should guide how we interpret Condorcet's arguments concerning the means of spreading of revolutionary enthusiasm. For instance, he wrote of the festivals:

> We can use these means to powerfully recall eras upon which it is useful to fix the attention of the people in order to nourish them; to excite and create enthusiasm for sentiments of liberty, independence, and devotion to the fatherland up to the point of enthusiasm; and finally to engrave in their minds a small number of the principles which form the morals of nations and the politics of free men.[56]

We are by now familiar with many of these claims. For Condorcet, sensationism, represented here in the familiar guise of 'excitement' and 'enthusiasm', was key to unlocking the theatre's didactic power. The notion that exciting enthusiasm in the emotions was the means of 'engraving' moral principles in the mind demonstrated that Condorcet was invested in the very same physiological processes which had helped to shape sensationist aesthetics much earlier in the century. The influence of Montesquieu – a *philosophe* for whom Condorcet had a particular affinity, as Edward Goodell has shown – seems particularly clear given how closely the two authors' conception of taste align.[57] Montesquieu had argued that nurturing the connection between the emotions and reason was the primary means of cultivating taste:

> The broadest definition of taste… is that which attaches something to us by means of sentiment; [but] which does not prevent it from applying itself to intellectual things, the knowledge of which gives such great pleasure to the soul… The soul knows by means of its ideas and by its sentiments, because although we oppose idea to sentiment, when one sees a thing one feels it [also], and there is nothing so intellectual that the soul sees or believes that it sees which it does not also feel.[58]

---

[55] Sean M. Quinlan, "Physical and moral regeneration after the Terror: medical culture, sensibility and family politics in France, 1794-1804," *Social History* 29 no. 2 (May 2004), 139-164, 140-141. For further information on the didactic purpose of the festivals and the contribution of music in this regard, see Constant Pierre, *Musique des fêtes et des cérémonies de la révolution française* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1899).
[56] Condorcet, *Cinq mémoires sur l'instruction publique,* 140. It could be argued, of course, that the matter of 'engraving principles' in the minds of spectators is indicative of a more propagandist approach. Even here, however, the principle is primarily generative: after all, there is no suggestion of guiding or controlling behaviour once the principles are instilled. In terms of what actions should result from receiving the 'morals' of the nation, the initiative belonged firmly to the citizen in Condorcet's account.
[57] Edward Goodell, *The Noble Philosopher: Condorcet and the Enlightenment* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1994), 91-98.
[58] Montesquieu, *Essai sur le goût* (Geneva: Librarie Droz, 1967), 65.

Condorcet's concept of "the morals of nations and the politics of free men" – the ultimate objective of theatre being its formation – was strikingly similar to Montesquieu's notion of 'taste' as described here. Like 'taste', it required that the power of theatrical sensation over the emotions be employed in order to 'apply itself' to the mind, where it would deposit moral principles.[59]

It is important in the present context that 'taste' was very closely associated with morality during the eighteenth century. In Great Britain, Hume had been particularly clear that 'taste' was a form of 'higher judge' which enabled us to judge both aesthetic and moral value. Michael Frazer points out that for Hume moral judgement could be refined through sentimental training, a 'humanistic education', which would hone an individual's ability to imagine and feel in order that they might attain to this higher judgement in matters of both 'aesthetic and moral disagreement'.[60] And a similar understanding of the interconnection between taste and morality was shared in various guises by Henry Home (Lord Kame), Immanuel Kant, the Earl of Shaftesbury, Diderot, and Rousseau. In the public sphere, Julia Simon argues, Diderot had established a synonymity between the aesthetic and the moral worth of all art, whereby the value placed on the moral content of a work was the measure of a community's taste, and their taste was demonstrated if they exhibited a desire to move away from the connoisseur's inclination to buy art and display it as a commodity rather than to consume its moral worth.[61] And in the private sphere, both Rousseau and Kant argued that taste was a faculty which afforded individuals the capacity to recognise beauty. Beauty, they believed, equated directly with morality, and taste enabled a moral judgement which incorporated the rational faculties of humans, but also transcended it by engaging *sensibilité* (in Rousseau's case) or the faculty of recognising of what Janet McCracken terms 'phenomenological qualities' (Kant). Moreover, both believed that training this judgement through the emotions was the way to educate one's moral character.[62]

So given this context, in which taste was so widely understood not only in aesthetic terms but also as the basis for forming moral judgements according to the value or 'beauty' of an object or principle (and in which sentimental training was believed to be the precondition for

---

[59] Indeed, Condorcet acknowledged this connection explicitly in the third volume of his *Mémoires*, arguing that 'perfected taste' was the greatest influence on the morals of the people. See Condorcet, *Cinq mémoires sur l'instruction publique*, 144.
[60] Michael Frazer, *The Enlightenment of Sympathy: Justice and the Moral Sentiments in the Eighteenth Century and Today* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 46-49.
[61] Julia Simon, *Mass Enlightenment: Critical Studies in Rousseau and Diderot* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 150-168.
[62] See Janet McCracken, *Taste and the Household: The Domestic Aesthetic and Moral Reasoning* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 19-22; and Lieselotte Steinbrügge, *The Moral Sex: Woman's Nature in the French Enlightenment*, tr. Pamela E. Selwyn (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 56-60.

increased moral virtue), we might consider that Condorcet was not simply proposing a theatrical experience in which citizens learnt a series of isolated moral principles. Rather, he was far more ambitious in advocating that the revolutionaries use the theatre systematically in order to produce a fundamental change in the public's moral taste. In many ways this was a similar notion to Chénier's conception of a theatricalised public, which had been subjected to a discernable moral change under the power of sensation. If the theatre could not only teach moral lessons but actually shape the public taste to desire moral good, its impact would be far more beneficial to society at large in the long-term. The theatre could actually form a new public out of the old citizens.

But it is also noteworthy that in his argument for drama in national festivals, Condorcet was contending that memory (described as the power to 'recall') had a particular quality which could actually enhance the power of theatrical sensations.[63] Underpinning Condorcet's argument was a deep conviction in the influence of experience. Though French citizens could not have experienced many of the great epochs and events in their national history, the very act of commemoration would have engendered participation.[64] As Peter Carrier puts it, commemoration creates a state of "participation without participation", in which a kind of virtual experience acts as a compelling substitute for the original.[65] Condorcet clearly had something of this nature in mind or else he would not have so determinedly emphasised the unifying effect of community in which the identification between citizen and actor was so prominently a factor: citizens of a town commemorating *their* ancestors' deeds and *their* celebrities' virtue, the nation celebrating *its own* history. In isolating and celebrating the goodness of their own predecessors, the citizens of a community (whether a town or the entire nation) would be selecting the moments which they themselves hoped to experience and participate in, both vicariously and through future imitation.

The conceptualising of experience to incorporate memory in this way represents an interesting development of Enlightenment sensationism. After all, experience was vital in this earlier context too. Most fundamentally, it was the experience of sensation which the *philosophes* had established as the locus for emotional and physiological transformation; but in later theories (particularly by Chambaud, d'Apligny, and Rousseau) it provided the very object of expression itself: art's expressive function derived from the author's ability to imitate an

---

[63] As we have seen above, Condorcet believed that when the theatre was employed to 'recall' previous sentiments or emotions rather than simply generate new ones, it had a significant power to excite audiences to an intense state of 'enthusiasm' in which 'the generous sentiments of liberty, independence, and devotion to the fatherland' were instilled and evoked.
[64] Pierre Nora, "Le retour de l'événement," in *Faire de l'histoire*, eds. Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), 215.
[65] Peter Carrier, "Historical Traces of the Present: The Uses of Commemoration," *Historical Reflections /Réflexions Historiques* 22 no. 2 (Spring 1996), 439.

emotional experience in order to instil the same experience in the audience. However, Condorcet went beyond this model by proposing that memory offered an opportunity to enhance the sentimental impact of the theatre. It provided a phenomenon in which the germ of experience was already latent, and this experiential germ was particularly suited to the sort of moral education which would not only improve the individual, but unify and enthuse society as a collective whilst preserving their moral agency by leaving them with the initiative to act. All this was prompted by the urgencies of a new political reality, in which writers like Condorcet were compelled to adapt to an intense need for social cohesion.

Condorcet's *Mémoires* are therefore important not only because they provide evidence of a certain circularity of ideas regarding theatrical sensation (although they do), nor because they indicate that Revolutionary theories of the theatre were more sophisticated than is commonly assumed (although they are) in the ways that they politicised eighteenth-century sensationism. In fact, Condorcet's theories also bore rather original implications for the dramatic author, which (as we will see in the following chapter) were developed by the authors and composers themselves as they sought to redefine their social positionality.

The typical conception of the author, now and then, is of a creative individual. In the case of the sensationists, the author was tasked with creating works which communicated experience and elicited an emotional response. This implied a great deal of personal agency, because of the subjective and personal nature of experience. In Condorcet's model, the author was not tasked with inventing or creating patriotic passion for the benefit of their audience, but rather with acting as a custodian of the national heritage (which extended back beyond the start of the Revolution itself) in which suitable patriotic sensations lay latent.

Interpreting national history was still a creative act. There was no official consensus on what the national heritage actually constituted, and so any works which took this as their object would also inherently be contributing to its creation. But there was also a sense in which such a responsibility involved the curation of a *patrimoine* which belonged to the wider nation, and which would have to be crystallised by consensus and not simply by the authors themselves. On one level, this meant that the author had less personal agency in the matter of composition. Their duty was to the nation, represented by the collective body of citizens which constituted the state. But it also increased the importance of their political contribution to the Revolution, as they took on a representative role for the public in selecting and curating their common *patrimoine* for the moral improvement of the nation.

Of course, the concept of 'representation' is a complex issue. Keith M. Baker aptly pointed out some time ago that the collapse of the *ancien régime*, in which the person of the monarch represented the nation in every sense, resulted in a series of competing claims for

representative authority which proved difficult to resolve.[66] But he also highlighted an inherent tension in the revolutionary system of government, because they were compelled to reconcile their desire to abolish representation with their need to incorporate it in order to continue governing the nation. Their desire for the ideal, the abolition of representation, argues Baker, was the result of the revolutionaries' commitment to Rousseauian principles.[67]

The necessary compromise, Baker argues, was a 'social theory of representation', adapted from Mirabeau's early theories from the 1750s.[68] This model decentralised administration by "simplifying and rationalizing" government, entrusting local government to those directly concerned with its details whilst retaining the overall momentum of a central government.[69] Yet this model only existed during the early years of the Revolution, and the execution of the King in 1793 produced a problematic 'vacant, sacred center' of government which needed to be resolved, as Joan Landes indicates. Landes then goes on to demonstrate that Rousseau's opposition to representation continued to exert a powerful influence on the revolutionaries, though again they were required to compromise on their political ideal and continue representational government in order to respond to the practical exigencies of governing the nation. But at the same time, they managed to preserve their pursuit of the ideal by developing a 'symbolic system' which through signs and metaphors embodied the nation of individuals in abstract but binding ideals such as 'liberty'.[70] Similarly, following Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault (who, respectively, perceived the reasoning – *ratio* – and 'public opinion' of French citizenry as the recognised source of political legitimacy, and not the arbitrary will of the monarch or 'prince'), John Durham Peters makes a compelling case that the revolutionaries regarded the French public as the resolution to a 'legitimation crisis': "'the public' offered itself

---

[66] Baker highlights the claims of both the Estates General and the Parlement of Paris in 1789. The former believed themselves to be representatives of the Nation through their collective representation of individual communities, whereas the latter proclaimed its judiciary authority as representatives of the nation to the King, and the King to the Nation. Then of course there was still the authority of the King: an issue which was never fully resolved until the Republic was declared in September 1792, or, arguably, until his execution in January 1793. See Keith M. Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 226-235.

[67] Ibid, 235. Baker writes, "For Rousseau, as for Hobbes, a multiplicity of individuals is made one by absolute and irrevocable submission to a single, unitary person… that person was to be found not in the individual person of a monarch, but in the collective person of the body of the citizens as a whole. The independence of each individual from every other, Rousseau reasoned, could be accomplished only by the dependence of each on all. Since in giving oneself to all, one gives oneself to nobody, subjection to particular wills could be eliminated by subjection to a general will."

[68] See Victor Riqueti Mirabeau, *Mémoire concernant l'utilité des états provinciaux, relativement à l'autorité royale, aux finances, au bonheur, et à l'avantage des peuples* (Rome: Laurentem Carabioni, 1750).

[69] Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, 243.

[70] Joan B. Landes, *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 57, 74-78.

as a new source of legitimation, with governmental power being justified through contestation or discussion."[71]

Each of these writers identify the importance of the individual within the community as a collective source of political authority, which aligns with Rousseau's theory government. However, they also recognise that this was the ideal, and the reality of practically governing the nation necessitated some form of representation as a concession. This concessionary solution was to shift the basis of political legitimation from the person of the King into an abstract concept of a community, whereby the individual and the community became themselves representative of what Baker terms 'the general [or popular] will'.[72] The government therefore governed on behalf of, as members of, and in the best interests of, the public.

It is in these terms, I believe, that we can best understand Condorcet's conception of the dramatic author (with the same principles applying to the composer in the case of lyric drama). As custodian of national heritage Condorcet's author was not simply a peripheral pedagogue or a tool of the political elite, but a national figure at the heart of the revolutionary effort. They would need to shape a *patrimoine* on behalf of, as members of, and in the best interests of, the public: to embody the ideals of the revolution; to identify emotionally with the moments of virtuous glory which were the foundations of the French Nation; and then powerfully expressing them to a *sensible* audience through theatrical sensation, in turn putting their own *sensibilité* at the service of the *Patrie*. As Serge Bianchi puts it, the 'artiste-pédagogue' fulfilled his role when he "expresses the collective sensibility of a society which wishes to patriotise the universe."[73]

The aim, as Condorcet saw it, was therefore not to produce works of propaganda which made the public more acquiescent to a government who embodied the Revolution. Rather, the role of the dramatic author was to empower the individual citizen and the collective community to participation. This not only made their social position tremendously significant, but also explicitly politicised the nature of their work. I believe this is clearest in his description of Voltaire's *tragédies*, which offered his readers a compelling representation of his understanding of the power of theatre:

---

[71] John Durham Peters, "Habermas on the Public Sphere," *Media, Culture and Society* 15 (1993), 549; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* trans. T. Burger and F. Lawrence (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989), 53, 72; Michel Foucault, "The Eye of Power," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. C. Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 153-154.
[72] Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, 288.
[73] Serge Bianchi, *La Révolution culturelle de l'an II: Élites et peuple 1789-1799* (Paris: Aubier, 1982), 190.

> Those who have been able to observe almost a half-century of the progress of opinion have seen what an influence the tragedies of Voltaire have had on it. [They have seen] how this abundance of philosophical aphorisms spread throughout his pieces or expressed by touching [*pathétique*] and awesome [*terrible*] scenes, has contributed to unblocking the spirit of youth from the chains of a servile education, has made people who were formerly sacrificed to frivolity by fashion [able to] think. [They have seen] it has given philosophical ideas to people who were the furthest away from being thinkers. Therefore we have been able to say, for the first time, that a nation has learned to think, and the French – so long asleep under the yoke of a double despotism – have on their awakening been able to employ a [power of] reason which is purer, clearer, and stronger than all other free peoples'.[74]

References to Voltaire's *tragédies* aside, Condorcet's allusions to his generic preferences bear a striking resemblance to *comique* drama. After all, he was remarkably specific in his description of works he deemed suitable for public instruction in the national festivals: "simple pieces with more action than words… where the ideas are strong, where the passions would be painted broadly, and could be heard there. The reunion of pantomime with drama would give birth to a new art destined for these noble divertissements."[75]

Pantomime in particular was traditionally associated with popular, *comique* dramatic forms, especially those early lyric *comédies* performed in the *foire* theatres of the eighteenth century.[76] These consisted of spoken dialogue, song, dance, and pantomime, and as early as 1715 the term 'opéra-comique' was used to refer explicitly to works incorporating these elements.[77] Not only this, but it remained a distinctive feature of *opéra-comique* throughout the century. As Leavens has shown, it appeared consistently to shape specific sections of *opéras-comiques* (such as the orchestral overture) and was regarded to take an important aesthetic function in enhancing their expressive power, by offering the author an additional means of communication through gesture.[78] This notion of pantomime as a language of gesture, incidentally, seems to have been conceived of in explicitly sensationst terms, with gesture understood similarly to music as a primeval language of great affective power over *sensibilité*.[79]

---

[74] Condorcet, *Cinq mémoires sur l'instruction publique,* 140-141.
[75] Ibid, 141-142.
[76] See Gösta M. Bergman, "La Grande mode des pantomimes à Paris vers 1740," *Theatre Research/Recherches Théâtrales* 2 no. 2 (1960). See also Henri Lagrave, "La Pantomime à la foire, au Théâtre-Italien et aux boulevards (1700-1789). Première approche: historique du genre," *Romantische Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte* 3 (1979).
[77] Robert M. Isherwood, "Musical Entertainment in Eighteenth-Century Paris," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 9 no. 2 (December 1978), 306.
[78] Leavens, "Figures of sympathy in eighteenth-century Opéra comique", 21, 172-175.
[79] Sophia Rosenfeld points out that the eighteenth century witnessed a "widespread fascination with gestures and pantomime as means of communication and expression", and that gesture, not being

Although it was unusual for a commentator like Condorcet to deal with the issue of genre, he was by no means alone in pointing towards the particular utility of the *comique*. Michel Biard has indicated the subtle politicisation of discourses on the subject of *comique* theatre during the Revolution, particularly in political journals like *Le Père Duchesne* which offered "advice to good *sans-culottes* in order that they go to educate themselves at the *comédie*."[80]

According to Condorcet, then, simple dramatic forms with *comique* characteristics were therefore to be the mainstay of the composer's patriotic 'offering' to the nation, because of their expressive power, comprehensibility and potential for emotional participation. In offering the people such fare, the archetypal composer was at the service of the public rather than above it, becoming what Trahard terms an "artist putting his faculties of perception and emotion at [the Revolution's] disposal in order to render triumphant the common ideal."[81]

**Les citoyens Clozet et Baillet: Regenerating communities through performance**

1793 marked a turning point in the Revolution. In late 1792, the National Convention had replaced the Legislative Assembly, which resulted in a new mode of government and an increase in factionalism with particular division between the Jacobins (or Montagnards) on the left and the Girondins on the right. In January 1793, Louis XVI was guillotined. In the summer, Robespierre's so-called 'Reign of Terror' began. In short, France was experiencing what Lawrence D. Kritzman would term a national "identity crisis",[82] and the need for fostering unity was more pressing than ever.

On 14 October 1791, the Legislative Assembly had established the *Comité d'instruction publique* (CIP) which consisted of 24 members entrusted with devising a plan for public education. But in April 1793, the CIP was made a subsidiary of the newly formed *Comité de*

---

mediated through language, exerted a more powerful influence over the emotions for it. This is corroborated by Yann Robert, who shows how important pantomime was in the dramatic aesthetics of Diderot and Mercier. In the case of the latter, she quotes him saying: "Why does the perfection of the dramatic arts reside in pantomime? …It is because the spectator, ceaselessly moved, ceaselessly interrogated, composes the dialogue of these mute beings, whose slightest gesture he interprets, and the sensation that one creates for oneself is more pleasing and profound than the sensation that one receives." See Sophia Rosenfeld, *A Revolution in Language: The Problem of Signs in Late Eighteenth-Century France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 9; Yann Robert, "Mercier's revolutionary Theater: reimagining Pantomime, the Aesthetic of the Unfinished, and the Politics of the Stage," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 44 (2015), 187; and Denis Diderot, "Letter on the Deaf and Dumb," in *Diderot's Early Philosophical Works*, trans. Margaret Jourdain (London: Open Court Publishing, 1916), 167–8.

[80] Michel Biard, "De la critique théâtrale, ou la conquête de l'opinion," *AHRF* 302 (October-December 1995), 531.

[81] Trahard, *La Sensibilité révolutionnaire*, 233.

[82] Lawrence D. Kritzman, "Identity Crises: France, Culture and the Idea of the Nation," *SubStance* 24 no. 1/2, Special Issue: France's Identity Crises (1995).

*salut publique* (CSP) which had been instituted to safeguard the nation from foreign threats and internal rebellion. Given supervisory powers, it exerted significant influence over many branches of government. As such, the issue of public education had now become one of national importance: in practice as well as in theory.

On 25 December 1793, the CIP received a letter from the *Comité de petitions et de correspondance* (CPC), which was the organisation charged with facilitating communication between the CSP and their delegates 'on mission' in the *départements* of France. Two of these delegates, M. Baillet and M. Clozet, had been sent separately to the provinces to discern the state of the public's enthusiasm and its need for encouragement.[83] They subsequently wrote to the CPC with recommendations regarding measures to improve the state of public education and to stimulate patriotic enthusiasm. Clozet proposed:

> Let us establish theatres in the [ancient] Greek style in all the large towns of the republic. In this way, these theatres being prevailed over by the majority of the nation, the *muscadins* will be compelled to come in line with the majority of citizens.[84]

Baillet was even more specific in his demands:

> I must ask that the Convention decrees that a theatre will be raised in all towns of 4,000 inhabitants, where students of the public schools and others can put on performances, and where only sentimental pieces in the spirit of the Revolution can be given… I believe that nothing would be more suitable for educating the people, to make them forget the antics of priests, and finally to regenerate morality.[85]

What is remarkable about the two letters which reached the CSP is that both authors, tasked with the same problem of working out how best to unify and encourage a national but fractured body of citizens, proposed the same solution: theatre. This is an important indication of just how seriously the revolutionaries regarded the potential of the theatre to educate and encourage. Of all the possibilities – more festivals, special classes for students, military service, for example – it was the theatre which Baillet and Clozet had chosen to recommend after the experience of their postings. Evidently both delegates shared a familiar perspective on the theatre as a form of 'national school', in which audiences trained through the senses with 'sentimental pieces' in order to facilitate the 'regeneration of morality'.

---

[83] No reference is made to either a Baillet or a Clozet in the collections of CSP/CIP *procès-verbaux* compiled by Guillaume, Tuetey, or Aulard. This is not altogether surprising, given that the *Comité de pétitions et de correspondance* acted as an intermediary and did not record the identity of these delegates beyond providing their surnames.
[84] Adolphe Schmidt, *Tableaux de la Révolution française; publiés sur les papiers inédits du département et de la police secrète de Paris*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Veit & Comp., 1869), 135.
[85] Ibid, 135.

But where Clozet and Baillet's perspectives differed from the earlier revolutionary theories, discussed above, was in their conception of what constituted said 'regenerated morality'. Whereas Chénier had spoken in rather broad terms of abstract ideals such as 'liberty' and patriotic fervour, and Bailly had emphasised tolerance and constitutionalism, Clozet and Baillet quite explicitly conceived of 'morality' as synonymous with political unity in keeping with the will of the majority. To quote Clozet, a regenerated society was only possible when dissenters (represented here by the *muscadins*) were "compelled to come in line with the majority," whereas for Baillet this meant fostering a public imbued with the "spirit of the Revolution".[86]

To our modern ears, jaded by the totalitarianism of the twentieth century, there is perhaps something rather sinister in this discussion of compulsion and hegemony. This is a possibility. Certainly, we should not forget that both accounts were written to the CSP with the aim of advising the government on how it might consolidate the social objectives of revolution, and thus a specific, factional desire for control is very possibly an undercurrent in these perspectives of the theatre. But speaking strictly, both Clozet and Baillet were describing establishing a means of public instruction whose primary objective was to foster civic unity and eliminate the revolutionary factionalism which had proven so problematic to society, resulting as it did in significant violence and bloodshed.

Notably, this process of moral regeneration depended upon mobilising the popular will, and thus the participation of the public. Clozet argued that factionalism would only be eradicated if the theatres were given over to the interests of the public. To put this another way, the counter-revolutionaries would not be defeated by a tightening or concentration of political control, but only by the unequivocal expression of the popular will in the face of which no minority opposition could hope to stand. Baillet painted a similar picture of civic co-operation with citizens 'training together' in the theatre, growing in the spirit of the Revolution as a community.

In other words, the delegates' letters do not read as a Machiavellian ploy intended to consolidate Jacobin tyranny over the French public. A more accurate parallel would be Marmontel's understanding of the connection between state and the theatre, in which the latter was "free from the administration of state" but nevertheless managed responsibly in such a

---

[86] The term 'muscadin' is commonly used to refer to the royalist 'gilded youth' (*jeunesse dorée*) post-Thermidor, who caused a great deal of social discord after the fall of the Jacobins in 1794. However, it originates from before Thermidor, and was initially used — as it is here — in reference to counter-revolutionaries in a much broader sense. The term first appeared in Lyons during 1793, famous for its silk and luxury industries, but spread quickly to Paris where the connotations were of foppish, perfumed royalists, dressed ostentatiously and looking for trouble. See Elizabeth Amann, *Dandyism in the Age of Revolution: The Art of the Cut* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 9-10.

way as to uphold the national constitution.[87] These letters therefore represented a conception of the theatre which had the capacity to ensure, in a very utilitarian sense, the triumph of the popular will over the factional agendas which plagued French society. As Lynn Hunt has pointed out, even in the midst of sectarian division and infighting there remained throughout the Revolution a very real desire for unity under the progressive advance of the revolutionary project: "The symbolic framework of revolution gave the new political culture unity and continuity. The constant references to the new Nation, to the community, and to the general will helped bring into being a stronger sense of national purpose. Marianne, Hercules, the national cockade, and the festivals were conceived as appealing to all French people."[88] These symbols all superseded the sectarianism of the Revolution, even if some have subsequently become associated with one or other faction.

In this way, theatre represented an important means of bringing into being this 'stronger sense' of national purpose, just as did the idea of 'Nation', 'community', and 'national cockade', for example. However, theatre had a distinct advantage in that it was able to appropriate every single one of the symbols described by Hunt, and to intensify their effect by imbuing them with the power of theatrical sensation by making them an object of performance.

Indeed we must note that the vital importance of the emotions in this regard had not gone unnoticed, for even Baillet – a politician with no evident musical training or experience – had explicitly called for 'sentimental pieces'. These, he argued, were the most suitable for the brand of revolutionary instruction used to regenerate society. Why, precisely, did Baillet believe the sentimental genre was so powerful? Because it was communal. As Pierre Trahard has shown, the revolutionaries were deeply invested in what they understood as "the fraternal communion of souls" (*la communion fraternelle des âmes*),[89] just as their forebears had theorised the emotional power of assembly.

### Conclusion: Theatre and Revolution

The revolutionaries' conception of the theatre owed a great deal to the theories of the Enlightenment sensationists, as it inherently depended upon the very same model of theatrical sensation. In essence, it was contingent upon the notion that performed drama worked powerfully on the senses of the spectator, inducing a state of receptivity and eliciting an emotional response powerful enough to transform the spectator's will, beliefs, and behaviour. Crousaz had already described this effect in terms of the drama 'dominating', 'seizing control'

[87] Marmontel, "Apologie du Théâtre", 772.
[88] Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*, 123.
[89] Trahard, *La Sensibilité révolutionnaire*, 242.

and 'deciding fate',[90] which was echoed by the revolutionaries' descriptions of spectators given over to their emotions and ultimately transformed into new citizens utterly free of the shackles of tyranny. They, like the *philosophes*, emphasised the enduring effect of this transformation.

But the revolutionaries also transformed this cultural inheritance by politicising it. They firmly believed that the aim of drama was a regenerated society and developed original and creative new ways of putting their sensationism into practice, primarily in response to the socio-political challenges they faced in the daily business of governing the nation. In one sense this process of politicisation was strikingly diverse, as we recognise from the five perspectives examined here. Bailly, for example, politicised sensation by theorising its divisive power in a socio-political context, and by applying this theory in order to develop new methods of censorship and control which would benefit the public and redress imbalances in social relations between individuals; on the other hand, Chénier exclusively portrayed it as an invaluable means of fostering the very unity which the Nation so urgently required, predicated on the moral and political agency of the individual; Condorcet harnessed it to delineate a radically original programme of public instruction and to form the foundation of his theory of legislation and the social positionalities of legislator, public, and author; whilst Clozet and Baillet understood it explicitly in terms of increased public political involvement and social unity around a shared heritage of signs and symbols.

But at the same time, each theorist shared the same ambition of regenerating the nation through the use of theatrical sensation, and similarly a striking recognition of the importance of empowering the individual citizen in order to contribute to this regeneration. Even for Bailly, the individual – who admittedly was capable of causing great disruption – was not to be restrained, but rather guided into forming the nucleus of a cohesive community.[91] Similarly, the process of delineating what constituted 'virtue' or 'morals' consistently resolved itself in political categories which had not been present before 1789.

The simultaneous presence of continuity and rupture in dramatic theory of the *ancien régime* and the Revolution, evidenced in the texts considered here, problematise both the outright 'continuity' and 'rupture' positions discussed earlier in the study.  Like Darlow pointed out, we

[90] Crousaz, *Traité du beau*, 8.

[91] Bailly's anxieties about the dramatic performance and its contribution to division within society are reminiscent of Rousseau's own concerns. He had raised vociferous objections to the idea that the theatre could be used for the benefit of society after all, and spoke instead of the power of sensation to corrupt. These anxieties, although answered by d'Alembert and Marmontel in particular, had never fully been resolved, and remained an important consideration as French society adapted to the shifting social tensions of revolution. In this way, the debate between Bailly and Chénier represents a parallel of the dispute between Rousseau and d'Alembert: evidently continuities are present not only in the consensuses that the revolutionaries inherited.

have seen continuity and rupture existing in tension.[92] But what this chapter has shown is that continuity and rupture cannot neatly be separated by categories such as 'institutional' and 'legal' versus 'aesthetic' as Darlow has proposed. Rather, they must be understood as two sides of the very same coin.

Examining these theories of the theatre, particularly with the insight of modern scholarship on 'general will' and 'public opinion', has also further demonstrated why the traditional model of coercive theatrical propaganda is so problematic, as I have already posited. Rather than seeking to institute a top-down system of control and subservience through the theatre, each of the theorists discussed here placed significant emphasis on the people themselves participating with and contributing to the progress of the Revolution. Even during the days of the Terror, representatives of the republican government were arguing that the theatre should be used in such a way as to eliminate factionalism and foster unity according to the interests of the majority. This majority was represented by the idea of the Nation in whom the values of revolution were invested, and not by any political elite.

Lastly, all of these theories bore significant implications for the revolutionary author. No longer was it possible to conceive of them simply as artists providing the public with entertainment. They would also have to become national pedagogues, using their own experience and zeal to teach affectively powerful moral lessons which were capable of educating citizens and improving society; men of the people, writing repertoire with which the people could identify; engines of the Revolution, exciting enthusiasm for the cause; embodiments of the principles of the Revolution, living as earnest patriots; emotional guides for the Revolution as *hommes sensibles*; and lastly, custodians of a national *patrimoine*, curating and cultivating examples of national history which were appropriate as vehicles for eliciting patriotic enthusiasm. In the following chapter, we will consider how these individuals themselves responded to this call.

[92] Darlow, ed., "Revolutionary Culture: Continuity and Change", 2-4.

# Chapter IV. *Quel art plus que la musique influe sur les mœurs?* Conceptions of *Sensibilité* and Social Virtue in *Opéra-comique* during the Revolution

*France busies itself with regeneration, and instruction will be the work of the legislator. What art is better than music for influencing morals? Its well-directed influence gives nations the energy or the charm which they need. Already weakened by long studies, and by an illness for which I see no cure, I present this homage to France which has adopted me. Let this gift of a free soul prove my gratitude to her.* – André Ernest Modeste Grétry (1797)[1]

If revolutionary conceptions of didactic theatre were profoundly influenced by eighteenth-century sensationism, an important question remains to be answered: what about opera, and *opéra-comique* in particular? Did the revolutionaries share their forebears' faith in the sentimental power of opera to influence human *sensibilité* for the purposes of social moral instruction, and did they also recognise, as I have argued in Chapter II, that its unique expressive characteristics positioned *opéra-comique* to make a significant contribution in this regard? How did opera and *opéra-comique* fit with the revolutionaries' desire for instructing and unifying the nation?

In seeking an answer to these questions, I do not attempt to claim a primacy for *opéra-comique* distinct from the other genres of *comique* opera – some of which shared the stage at the Théâtre Favart – including melodrama and vaudeville. In fact, the conclusions drawn here about *comique* repertoire during this period may apply equally to these and stimulate further discussion on genre. Rather, because the aesthetic and moral suitability of *opéra-comique* was so disputed during the *ancien régime* (as established in Chapter II), it is important to consider whether (and why) it was vindicated or mistrusted during the Revolution, especially in comparison with the other principal genre of French opera *tragédie lyrique*. After all, in the disputes of the eighteenth century, it was *tragédie lyrique* which opponents of the *philosophes* lauded for its aesthetic and moral qualities, and a number of important studies have

[1] A.E.M. Grétry, *Mémoires, ou Essais sur la musique par le citoyen Grétry,* vol. 2, 'Introduction' (Paris: l'Imprimerie de la république, an V/1797), xvi-xviii.

demonstrated the importance of operatic *tragédie* to the didactic project of the Revolution.[2] How did *opéra-comique* compare?

The issue of genre, as we have discussed in the previous chapter, was one which several revolutionary writers alluded to but did not consider in great depth. To explore it further requires that we turn our attention now to its practitioners, which will additionally augment our understanding of the theatrical conceptions of the 'revolutionaries' by introducing the perspective of this 'second group' referred to in the previous chapter.

In the context of *opéra-comique*, only one full-time practitioner wrote at any length about the role of music, opera and *opéra-comique* with regards to public instruction: the composer André Ernest Modeste Grétry (1741-1813). Evaluating his writings on this subject in his three-volume *Mémoires* (1789/1797) will enable us to address these questions directly. However, to maintain a sense of breadth – a sense that Grétry's perspective was shared by his colleagues – we will also draw upon the work of Jean-François Lesueur (1760-1837) and Nicolas-Étienne Framery (1745-1810) where appropriate to nuance or expand our discussion, for both had involvement with *opéra-comique* and contributed aesthetic texts.[3]

Here, I will seek to demonstrate that composers of *opéra-comique* shared their political colleagues' didactic ambitions for the theatre, and that this was similarly rooted in an understanding of theatre based on the principles of eighteenth-century sensationism. But because reception always involves an appropriation which produces transformation,[4] I will also show that these composers transformed their aesthetic inheritance principally through offering greater clarity on the matter of the relationship between operatic sensation and compositional and institutional praxis, especially with regards to the use of musical and dramatic resources like the orchestra, the role and positionality of the composer, methods of training citizens, and

[2] In particular, see Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution*, and Johnson, *Backstage at the Revolution*.
[3] For various reasons, Framery's and Lesueur's perspectives must be handled more cautiously, which is why they will be adduced primarily to support our study of Grétry. Framery was historically a composer of *opéra-comique* (for example, his *La sorcière par hasard* was privately performed in 1768 and revived at the Comédie-Italienne in 1783, whilst *Nanette et Lucas*, a *comédie en prose mêlée d'ariettes* premiered there in 1764) and thus had practical experience with regards to genre which will prove useful here. However, by the time of the Revolution he had long given up on composition and devoted himself to making French versions of Italian operas, writing theoretical treatises, and pursuing a career in what would today be termed arts administration. Lesueur, on the other hand, was an active composer of *opéra-comique* during the Revolution, contributing several major works to the Théâtre Feydeau (originally the Théâtre de Monsieur) during this period. However, the only insight we have into his aesthetics of opera is his three-volume *Exposé d'une musique imitative et particulière à chaque solennité*, which was published before the Revolution in 1787 and before he had had any stage works performed. Moreover, the insights we glean from this text are partial because it was primarily written to justify his novel approach to sacred music; although it should be acknowledged that this novelty derived principally from his desire to theatricalise this music: a practice which resulted in the premature termination of his position as Director of Music at Notre-Dame de Paris in 1787. There are important parallels between his sacred and operatic aesthetics, therefore.
[4] Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, 19.

the way theatrical governance should be conducted. I consider this to represent a process of 'pragmatising' sensationism in parallel with the 'politicisation' discussed in the previous chapter.

By discussing Grétry's *Mémoires* in this context I seek also to address a general lacuna in modern scholarship. Several decades ago in his own monograph on the composer and his contribution to the growth of *opéra-comique*, David Charlton highlighted the need for scholarly attention to be devoted to Grétry.[5] Since then, as we have discussed, scholarship in the area of *opéra-comique* has grown steadily. Of this, a substantial portion takes into account Grétry's contributions specifically, including Charlton's monograph and Vendrix's two volumes. Additionally, Jean Duron's edited volume offers essay-length studies of the composer's career and compositions, Letellier's sourcebook provides a concise summary of each of Grétry's operas, and Arnold's recent study on Grétry and the French public seeks to establish that the composer's profound emotional connection with the citizens of France was due to his simple, 'sentimental' or *galant* style of melodic composition.[6]

In contrast, studies of his *Mémoires* have generally overlooked his aesthetic developments in favour of uncovering the ways Grétry sought to renew and redefine his career with the onset of Revolution. Manuel Couvreur, for example, focuses on the ways that Grétry sought to redefine himself as a *philosophe*, whilst Duron explores Grétry's *Mémoires* explicitly as an 'address to young composers' (following the composer's own dedication) and consequently interprets them as a means of self-fashioning into a 'humanist seeking to understand' the laws of physics and human nature, principally through the imitation of Rousseau's textual praxis (who Grétry regarded as the 'perfect model' of an artist).[7] More recently, Laurence Daubercies has contended that Grétry used his textual production in order to consolidate his public image, offering his audience a self-consciously modest rhetorical style or 'ethos' to 'credibilise' his work, whilst I have argued that Grétry's *Mémoires* demonstrate his desire to 'renegotiate' his authority, not only through their contents but also as a symbolic object representing a new authority in practice.[8]

---

[5] Charlton, Grétry and the Growth of *Opéra-comique*, ix.

[6] Jean Duron, ed., *Regards sur la musique: Grétry en société* (Wavre: Mardaga, 2009); Letellier, *Opéra-comique: a Sourcebook*, 367-391; Arnold, *Grétry's Operas and the French Public*, 209-212.

[7] See Manuel Couvreur, "Grétry, lecteur des philosophes," *Bulletin de la Société liégeoise de Musicologie* 77 (April 1992), 1-11; and Duron, "L'adresse aux jeunes compositeurs," in *Regards sur la musique: Grétry en société*, ed. Jean Duron (Wavre: Mardaga, 2009), 191-227.

[8] Laurence Daubercies, "Grétry mémorialiste ou *l'ethos du compromis,*" *Revue des historiens de l'art, des archéologues et des musicologues de l'Université de Liège* 32 (2013), 82, 85; and Jonathan Huff, "Renegotiating the composer's authority in A.E.M. Grétry's *Mémoires*," *Journal of Romance Studies* 10 no. 1 (Spring 2018), 48, 59-60.

The work on his aesthetics is more limited. There is an essay by Camille Bellaigue which appeared in 1917 and served only to introduce elements of Grétry's approach to composition, such as how he differentiated between sacred and secular pieces.[9] A more incisive study, mentioned already, is the basis of a chapter by Mongrédien, in which he argues that Grétry's aesthetics betray a conservatism more in keeping with the eighteenth century than the innovative ideas of the new era announced by progressive figures like Chabanon and Madame de Staël.[10] Arnold provides a thorough account of how Grétry's aesthetics explain the impact of his *opéras-comiques* on audiences in the second chapter of his monograph, arguing that he cultivated a complex 'variety' view of human nature which – though perceiving an almost infinite multitude of subjectivities amongst spectators – nevertheless offered the potential to communicate 'fundamental universal verities' in order to cultivate intersubjectivity between them all.[11]

My approach, however, will focus explicitly on his aesthetics as presented in the *Mémoires*, and examine (for the first time) how his sensationism relates to and transforms that of the *philosophes*. I will consider aspects of his aesthetics which have not yet been discussed, including his striking plan for French theatre. Unlike Mongrédien, I do not believe his aesthetics demonstrate an an intellectual conservatism; in fact, I argue there is a great deal which is strikingly innovative. Moreover, though Arnold covers a great deal of ground in his discussion – which includes pertinent subjects such Grétry's linguistic understanding of music, techniques of orchestral accompaniment, and even the sensationism of a 'secret connection' between body and music – he neglects to discuss what implications these elements have for Grétry's understanding of *opéra-comique's* didactic utility and the role of the composer in relation to the government and to the public.[12] This will be addressed in the present chapter.

### Music's 'irresistible empire': sensationism in Grétry's conception of music and moral instruction

The Liégeois Grétry was born to a family of very modest means. Although his father was a musician, limited funds prevented the young Grétry from receiving a prestigious education.

[9] Camille Bellaigue, "Les Mémoires ou "Essais sur la musique" de Grétry," *Revue des Deux Mondes* 37 no. 3 (February 1917), 663-682.
[10] Jean Mongrédien, "Les Mémoires ou essais sur la musique", 15-28.
[11] Arnold, *Grétry's Operas and the French Public*, 60-74.
[12] I have remarked elsewhere that this seems a strange omission given the author's ambition in a subsequent chapter: "Did the Revolution bring about some fundamental alteration in [Grétry's] ability to understand and communicate with his public?" Several interesting passages from the later volumes would seem illuminating in this regard, as we will explore. See ibid, 110; and Jonathan Huff, "R.J. Arnold, Grétry's Operas and the French Public From the Old Regime to the Restoration," Book Review, *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 16 (2019), 89-93.

This did not seem to hold him back as a composer, however, as he began writing music at a young age which was of sufficient quality to win him a place to study at the Collège Darchis in Rome. Once he had walked there on foot in 1759 and later finished his studies, he enjoyed success in Geneva before moving to Paris in 1767 and eventually gaining great renown as one of the foremost composers of *opéra-comique*, thanks to the large number of works he had performed at the Théâtre Favart. Although his best works were produced under the *ancien régime*, he was also highly active during the Revolution, contributing ten works to the repertoire of the Opéra Comique between 1789 and 1800.[13]

Fig. 2. Jean-Pierre Maurin (after Robert Lefèvre), *André Ernest Modeste Grétry*. 1820. Engraving, 26 x 25 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique. Accessed 20/02/18, available: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84205841.r=Grétry?rk=171674;4.

Grétry was on friendly terms with several of the *philosophes*, including Rousseau, Diderot and Voltaire.[14] As such, he was perhaps in a better position than any other to develop aesthetic

[13] Further biographical details of Grétry's life are available in several monographs. See Michel Brenet, *Grétry: sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1884); Suzanne Clercx, *Grétry: 1741-1813* (Brussels: La Renaissance du livre, 1944); Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-comique*; and Arnold, *Grétry's Operas and the French Public*.
[14] In fact, Diderot had a direct influence on Grétry's work. Grétry consulted him for advice when composing *Zémire et Azor* (1771). Patrick Taïeb and Judith Leblanc have unpacked this connection in

ideas pertaining to *opéra-comique* during this revolutionary epoch. Amidst a more general discussion of his life's experience, he did just this in three volumes of *Mémoires* (the first published in 1789 and last two at the expense of the Revolutionary *Comité d'instruction publique* in 1797). He also wrote a three-volume work entitled *De la vérité*, which, although published in 1801, was largely written between 1795 and 1800; and then his *Réflexions d'un solitaire,* which was written between 1801 and 1813.

Like many of his colleagues, Grétry was profoundly influenced by contemporary accounts of Greco-Roman cultures in Antiquity. His *Mémoires* are scattered with references to Classical subjects and particularly to mythology as representing a standard for contemporary art, but his *idée fixe* in this regard was undoubtedly the state of France's musical culture in comparison, which caused him significant consternation because he believed that it contrasted so unfavourably with those of the Ancients. Far from questioning the veracity of historical accounts which described the power of ancient music over spectators, Grétry instead felt prompted to challenge the decline of power in modern music:

> When the ancient histories tell us about the miracles worked by music, I would not doubt them. It must have had an absolute empire over uncorrupted hearts. The man of nature is as one; the character of today's man is a little of everything. The music of the ancients scrupulously applied and preserved a melody, and above all had a rhythm for everything.[15]

Quite which 'miracles' Grétry was referring to when he spoke of the influence of ancient music is unclear, but certainly the stories of Greek mythology were common currency in France at the time. Many in France were familiar with the story of Orpheus for example, whose talents singing and playing the lyre gave him control over nature itself. He was said to have been able to animate rocks, trees, and rivers; charm wild animals, influence the opinions and decisions of his fellow man, and even beguile Pluto himself in the underworld.[16] These events and others besides had been staple fare on the French stage for centuries, including in the French adaptation of Gluck's popular opera *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762), first performed in Grétry's lifetime at the Académie Royale de Musique in 1774.[17] There was also the story of Amphion, son of Zeus, whose music built the city walls of Thebes in such a way that the story seemed

---

some detail: see "Merveilleux et réalisme dans Zémire et Azor: un échange entre Diderot et Grétry," *Dix-huitième siècle* 43 no. 1 (2011), 185-201.

[15] Grétry, *Mémoires, ou Essais sur la musique par le citoyen Grétry,* vol. 1, livre deuxième (Paris: l'Auteur, Prault, et F.J. Desoer, 1789), 502-503.

[16] Patrick Zuk, "'Our songs are our laws…' –Music and the Republic (Part 1)," *The Republic: a journal of contemporary and historical debate* 3 (July 2003), 115.

[17] The Orphean tradition in French musical drama dated back further than Gluck, of course. Claudio Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* had been performed in Paris in 1647 alongside Luigi Rossi's own offering in the same year. Then there was Marc-Antoine Charpentier's cantata *La descente d'Orphée aux enfers* (1686), Louis Lully's *Orphée* (1690), and another cantata entitled *Orphée* (1721) by Jean-Philippe Rameau.

to embed itself in the eighteenth-century psyche;[18] the God Hermes whose playing induced wrathful Apollo into a state of forgiveness; and the Goddess Rhea, whose drumming compelled "man's attention to the oracle of the goddess".[19]

Whether Grétry was alluding to any one of these myths in particular or simply to the corpus of ancient mythology in general is unclear. But Dan Edelstein's work on the role of antique myth in the development of revolutionary republicanism would suggest that Grétry's frequent reference to the astounding effects of music in Antiquity, as a standard to be re-attained, indicates more than aesthetic nostalgia. Instead, it must be understood as analogous with his desire to use music explicitly for the purposes of socio-political unity and the 'regeneration' of the nation, indicated by the extract with which we commenced this chapter. By charting the development of mythological topoi in pre-revolutionary political theory by Montaigne, Hobbes, Voltaire and Bougainville (and pointing out the latter's influence on Diderot, Maréchal and Saint-Just), Edelstein is able to evince how, by the time of the Revolution, widespread faith in the republican 'ideal' was both extant and fundamentally contingent upon Greco-Roman myths of a 'golden age', to the extent that these myths had ceased to be mythical and became "the ideal and natural template on whose basis all of society could be reorganized."[20]

Taking this into account, I believe that Grétry's frequent references to Antiquity can be seen as a kind of symbolic shorthand for music's political and moral power, specifically to empower citizens to participate in the Revolution. Although scholars at one time would have interpreted the enduring revolutionary image of Antiquity – seen as a utopian era of great virtue and great art – as representing an opportunity for individual demagogues (such as Robespierre and Desmoulins) to further their own political agendas through ideological manipulation, this is no longer persuasive.[21]

---

[18] Charles Burney explicitly drew on both Orpheus and Amphion in his discussion of the state of music in France. See Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy: or, The Journal of a Tour through those Countries, undertaken to collect Materials for a General History of Music* (London: T. Becket and Co., 1771), 34.

[19] James Luchte, *Early Greek Thought: Before the Dawn* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 39.

[20] Dan Edelstein, *The Terror of Natural Right: Republicanism, the Cult of Nature, and the French Revolution* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 12-14, 87-124.

[21] This was the premise of Harold Talbot Parker's 1937 monograph, where he contended that the exclusive significance of the Cult of Antiquity in revolutionary France was as a vehicle for ideological coercion; he did not believe that it was of any importance to the general public in any political sense. For many decades this position was highly influential. Peter Gay, for example, described Antiquity as "a kind of attic, to be pillaged at will", once more conceiving of the revolutionary government as a central authority seeking to persuade citizens to align with their ideology. See Parker, *The Cult of Antiquity and the French Revolutionaries: A Study in the Development of the Revolutionary Spirit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937); and Gay, "Rhetoric and Politics in the French Revolution," *The American Historical Review* 66 no. 3 (April 1961), 670.

For example, by analysing various samples of revolutionary journalism, Marie-Hélène Guilbault has been able to show that the vision of Antiquity as political ideal was too widespread to be monopolised by the government; rather, it was most commonly used in order to empower citizens to envision a unified community founded on principles of mutual sacrifice.[22] Christine Dousset demonstrates that the task of delineating a concept of 'the Nation' prompted an unprecedentedly broad interest in the Greco-Roman models amongst diverse social strata, evidenced by their frequent invocation in varied discussions on the subject. Dousset describes the Revolution as the ultimate culmination of this process of delineation, with an II (September 1793 to September 1794) representing the apogee of the emergence of 'a radically new political culture' founded on antique models of participative citizenship.[23] Additionally, Keith M. Baker, citing the example of the Club des Cordeliers (a radical populist political club between 1791-1794, founded with extremely low membership fees making it accessible to even the poorest citizens), identifies how classical republicanism functioned primarily as a call for the vigilance of the masses, directed towards its representatives as a safeguard against despotism.[24]

The implication from context, therefore, is that Grétry's fascination with Antiquity was primarily didactic, and also indicates that his desire for regeneration depended upon political co-operation between legislator and citizen. His primary didactic conception of music was, in keeping with the writers of the previous chapter, of a tool of social unity capable of forging a new community of virtue. This is certainly in keeping with the way that Grétry himself deployed the antique in his own operas produced during the Revolution: Letellier points out that in *Callias, ou nature et patrie* (1794), for example, the Greeks of Marathon and Salamis function as a metaphor for the supposedly sacred achievements of Year II, depicting a nation gathered together in 'holy' unity; whilst in *Denys le Tyran* (1794) the liberated citizens of Corinth enact their own political agency on their former tyrant, Denys, by gathering to beat him with wooden switches before he is exiled for good (there is thus even a warning here for would-be tyrants).[25]

But to fully understand Grétry's didacticism (and indeed the influence of Antiquity) requires a recognition of the extent to which his understanding of the moral utility of music and opera

[22] Marie-Hélène Guilbault, "La régénération de la France par l'Antiquité:  les références antiques dans la presse révolutionnaire (1789-1794)," (PhD diss., Université d'Ottawa, 2012), 135-136.
[23] Christine Dousset, "La Nation française et l'Antiquité à l'époque napoléonienne," *Anabases: Traditions et réceptions de l'antiquité* (2005), 59-60.
[24] Baker, "Transformations of Classical Republicanism in Eighteenth-Century France," *The Journal of Modern History* 73 no.1 (March 2001), 33. "It insisted", he writes, "on the superiority of the general will of the person of the people, the mass of citizens . . . recognized as sovereign over the particular will of its mandators, whose decisions this sovereign had the right to revoke or ratify."
[25] Letellier, *Opéra-comique: a Sourcebook*, 389-390.

was contingent upon sensationist aesthetics.[26] For Grétry, after all, the state of human nature in these accounts was of even greater interest than the miracles themselves, and his understanding of this nature was unfalteringly sensationist. His *Mémoires* may even be regarded as a sensationist treatise: Couvreur has rightly described it as a kind of 'treaty on the passions' in keeping with his devotion to his predecessors, Rousseau and Diderot.[27] Grétry believed that the miracles which occurred in Ancient Greece were possible because its citizens were 'uncorrupted humans', and, as modern humans were no longer 'pure', they were less disposed to the effects of music. The situation could be reversed, but composers would have to find new ways of influencing spectators' *sensibilité*.

In many ways, this was a process of rediscovering the past. Because Grétry subscribed to the view of music as imitation of nature, he believed that the most powerful music was that which best represented reality. *Vraisemblance* was imperative in ensuring the sentimental power of a work: he compared a musical score with an artist's *tableau*, arguing that nature and simplicity went hand-in-hand, and that the most powerful works were operas which mounted simple, charming subjects like Rousseau's *Le Devin du village* to which audiences could relate.[28] In particular, he contended that human experience was the best subject for imitation, arguing: "Consult the great book of nature. Whether or not you are a philosopher, if you wish to be an artist, read the best authors who have treated passions and characters. They will teach you to understand the human heart, provided that you are predisposed towards this deep study."[29] Grétry's own conception of human nature was thus rooted firmly in the abstract sensations of human emotions advocated by Rousseau and Diderot. At the heart of the matter was the idea that musical expression was predicated on intense sensations which closely mimicked and therefore reproduced experience. Like Rousseau, he held that music was therefore a

---

[26] This was certainly the case in Grétry wider context: Edelstein's 'golden age' myths (of which the stories of Orpheus, Amphion, Hermes and Rhea are excellent examples), which proved pervasive in French culture, were themselves predicated on principles analogous with contemporary sensationism, after all. Orpheus' music and Rhea's drumming provided a neat parallel for the theory of sensation's influence over behaviour; the story of Hermes playing to induce forgiveness told of the power of music to influence the emotions (and in fact bore a strikingly close resemblance to Rousseau's account of the Phrygian mode); whilst Amphion's construction of Thebes was an excellent metaphor for the power of music to construct and unify society. See pp. 50-53 of the present study.

[27] Couvreur, 'Grétry, lecteur des philosophes', 1-11.

[28] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, livre deuxième, 125, 223.

[29] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, viii. It is worth noting that although Grétry's *Mémoires* are directly addressed to young composers, he frequently employs the more general term 'artist' when he describes their office. The two should be considered as interchangeable, and it might be argued that his preference for this term is an implicit contribution to his expansion if the composer's authority (which will be discussed later in the present chapter).

language which imitated not only speech itself, but the function of speech in communicating meaning.[30]

It follows, then, that Grétry devoted himself to the melodist school of aesthetics rather than the harmonists, discussed in Chapter II of this study, and was indebted to Rousseau and Diderot in this regard. As Arnold has shown, Grétry followed Rousseau specifically in conceiving of melody as a recreation of 'primeval' utterances which, independent of other musical elements, exerted an emotional tug upon the spectator's recognition of the utterance's meaning. But Grétry developed this by arguing that melodies possessed a symbolic power as well which evoked deeply-ingrained memories for the listener, communicating an intensely personal meaning rooted in their individual subjectivity. Moreover, he also offered detailed instructions on how to employ this musically through the use of motifs which imitated significant sounds from daily life.[31] Arnold therefore rightly points out that, for Grétry, musical experience depended upon a '*complicité*' between composer and listener, by which the two negotiated a vocabulary capable of mediating between the sensations intended by the composer, and the 'more complex, private set of personal resonances' which the listener contributed.[32]

Melody was thus vitally important, but Lesueur's insights into sacred dramatic composition show that, by this time, composers had been able to resolve the heated disputes between melodists and harmonists. Like Grétry he believed that the sentimental power of music resided primarily in melody, whose sensations were able to exert a strong physiological influence over spectators.[33] He compared the operatic union of text, music, melody and harmony with the Ancient Greek system of versification, in which the close relationship between text and rhythm fulfilled similar functions respectively. Lesueur recounted how the two combined to create distinctive affective influences which corresponded exactly to specific emotional states,

[30] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, livre deuxième, 285-286. Grétry wrote, "vocal music will never be good if it doesn't copy the true accents of speech… When I hear an opera which doesn't completely satisfy me, I say to myself that the composer doesn't understand its language; that is, the musical language… It is necessary that the composer knows the musical language well, in order that they might be able to adapt the words– which they must also understand perfectly. It is the union of these two idioms which produces good vocal music."
[31] In his later texts, the *Réflexions* and *De la vérité*, Grétry would go on to corroborate this position with anecdotes from personal experience: first, how he had been able to reduce the brother of the Duc de Chabot to tears with a monologue melody from *Le Huron*, and, second, how a mischievous friend of his from childhood had been cured of bad behaviour by an evening concert of 'lugubrious songs' so affecting that he fell to the floor, pulling out his hair. See Arnold, *Grétry's Operas and the French Public*, 58-61, 70-71.
[32] Ibid, 71.
[33] He wrote, "A pure and subtle tune… seems to cast a great tranquillity over one's soul, at the same time that it makes your body feel lighter, and seems to ease breathing." See Jean-François Lesueur, *Exposé d'une musique une, imitative et propre à chaque solennité... et le plan d'une musique particulière à la solennité de la Fête de l'Assomption* (Paris: Vve Hérissant, 1787), 76.

allowing Greek recitation to draw the audience into corresponding moods. He referred to this influence as an *allure*.[34]

In the French system, argued Lesueur, the same might be achieved through the union of harmony, melody (great progress having been made in these spheres since Antiquity), and text, along with rhythm, dynamics and all other musical devices. If a composer united all of these various devices in music, they could precisely and powerfully elicit specific emotional responses from the audience. In Lesueur's conception, a piece of music was thus something like a configuration of *allures*, "painting in the imagination" an array of passions and sensations bound up with the characters and events depicted on stage.[35]

Arnold suggests that the *complicité* between composer and listener fostered by the careful application of melody (and we might now add Lesueur's complementary devices) could reflect a "broader tendency to promote the individual and plurality of opinion" in a 'regenerated' society, though he refrains from interpreting Grétry's work as explicitly politicised.[36] However, in light of my conclusion (after Edelstein, Guilbault, Dousset and Baker) that his references to Antiquity represent an important, if subtle, politicisation with regards to unity and participation, I would argue that this is in fact the most convincing conclusion.[37]

Certainly, Grétry's conception of public instruction through music was political to the extent that it emphasised the importance of the individual, empowered to contribute to society. He posited that melody was a vital tool at the disposal of the composer to exercise a form of sentimental training, conceived in terms of a cathartic discipline:

---

[34] Jean-François Lesueur, *Exposé d'une musique une, imitative et propre à chaque solennité... et le plan d'une musique particulière à la solennité de la Noël* (Paris: Vve Hérissant, 1787), 40-41. For both Grétry and Lesueur, a pseudohistorical understanding of the Ancient Greek application of music to social ends encouraged them to seek new practical methods which would allow the composer to shape his praxis according to the theoretical framework for sentimental music which they had inherited from the Enlightenment.

[35] Framery also shared Grétry and Lesueur's sensationism, although unlike his colleagues he in fact rejected the imitation of nature thesis. He believed that it was only in freeing composition from the mimetic model that its sentimental power could be fully realised, because the correspondence between musical imitation and its model was always to weak. "But", he argued, "[music] is more: it is an art of sensation. It is therefore to exciting and defining sensations that [music] must employ its moral and physical capabilities." He adopted a harmonist perspective, arguing: "All types of noise act physically upon our organs, without the aid of any working of the mind. This noise, which grieves them when it is violent and disorganised, becomes altogether more agreeable when it is more harmonic. The sounds which result from it shake our taut harmonic fibres, just as the striking of a sonorous string makes all the neighbouring strings vibrate in unison. They cause in us more or less pleasurable sensations on account of their sweetness and of our sensitivity." See Framery, *Discours couronné par l'institut [etc]* (Paris: Pugens, an X/1802), 5.

[36] Arnold, *Grétry's Operas and the French Public*, 71.

[37] It would also seem to suit the sort of 'liberal' and non-sectarian, but also pluralist and 'democratic' politics which Arnold explicitly associates with Grétry. See ibid, 44.

> The mind, just like the body, has need of nourishment. All people who have a lively imagination feel a need to exercise it, and it is very important to offer them innocent subjects for fear that they exert their too-active power to their own detriment and to that of society. Music is the art which speaks to the imagination better than all others.[38]

In a chapter on the subject, Grétry proposed that the art of musical improvisation was best suited to sentimental training because of the physiological effect of melody on the body exerted through the senses. The improviser was free to express the fullest workings of their imagination through the 'metaphysical language' of melody, a process which incited a cathartic state of reverie and allowed the senses to momentarily escape the constant bombardment of external objects. Music thus became a means of purifying or correcting the senses which regularly became cluttered with the mixture of good and bad sensations that struck them each day, to ensure the correct functioning of the spectator's physiology and *sensible* disposition toward sensations useful for instilling moral values.[39]

Although it is not clear whether Grétry had read the work of the Montpellier vitalists or was simply 'in tune' with 'broader and less specific philosophical trends', the basis for this theory of improvisation – rooted in the idea that music directly affected the nervous system and exerted a corrective influence over it – certainly had a great deal in common with this mode of Enlightenment discourse.[40] Its congruence with Enlightenment concepts of sentimental training are particularly clear. Vila has shown how authors like Charles Bonnet developed systems in which pedagogues judiciously applied sensations in order to physically reorder individuals (described in terms of restoring the 'harmony' between 'fibres') towards right functioning, in all matters physiological, *sensible*, moral, and intellectual.[41] Others like Charles-Augustin Vandermonde recommended applying them to train the way an individual used their sense organs,  primarily to discern the truth of virtue and eschew the illusion of passing and

---

[38] Grétry, *Mémoires, ou Essais sur la musique par le citoyen Grétry,* vol. 3, livre cinquième (Paris: l'Imprimerie de la république, an V/1797), 109.

[39] Ibid, 109-110. For a summary of the technical features of Grétry's theory of improvisation, see Anne-Noelle Bouton, "L'Improvisation chez Grétry: A propos de la Méthode simple pour apprendre à préluder," *Bulletin de la société liègeoise de musicologie* 86 (1994), 5-13. Little has been written, however, on the aesthetic or didactic implications of improvisation as a moral discipline during the eighteenth century. Bouton simply acknowledges the sensationist origins of the theory, stating that Grétry believed it could be used to address maladies in the nervous system (p. 7).

[40] On the wide diffusion of philosophical trends (even musical ones) in the public sphere, see Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language*, 2. For their influence on Grétry, see Arnold, *Grétry's Operas and the French Public*, 47.

[41] Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology*, 30-35. Vila cites Bonnet's *Essai analytique sur les facultés de l'âme* (Copenhagen: Les freres Cl. and Ant. Philibert, 1760).

unhelpful sensations, thereby honing judgement and creating knowledge through experience.[42]

Grétry's account had a great deal in common with both perspectives: though less corporeally focused than Bonnet (Grétry preferred the exercise of the 'mind', though 'spirit' would work here too) he likewise spoke of correcting the passions to ensure the spectator engaged with appropriate sensations, and, like Vandermonde, he believed that it was in the repeated exercise of experience that effective judgement was formed. That there were political implications to Grétry's theory, which directly concerned the participation of the individual with the broader social collective, is not immediately obvious beyond his reference to the danger of 'detriment' to society, but the concept of sentimental training itself was essentially predicated on empowering individuals to contribute politically by training them in the sort of social virtue that strengthened intersubjective bonds and encouraged selfless actions on behalf of the community. Taking literature as an example, Ildiko Csengei demonstrates how texts like Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771) explicitly sought to create societies 'versed in sentiment' by depicting this process fictionally, appealing to the reader's emotions in order to foster an intense desire for imitation in a context of socio-political regeneration.[43] But this was not just limited to contexts outside of France and the Revolution: Denby has shown that sensationism in education was explicitly regarded by revolutionary *idéologues* as a means of fostering the sort of political liberalism which could support a participative 'social base' for a 'régime of moderate republicanism'.[44]

Furthermore, the political implications of Grétry's notion of sentimental training are more evident in his discussions of how melody could be integrated into the musical whole in such a way that music could perform a kind of popular censorship, if French citizens could be trained to desire only beneficial sensations and inoculated against those which corrupted. It was once again Antiquity which provided Grétry the means of mediating this approach to sensationism with the practical needs of state and society:

> Why did the ancient philosophers recommend the exercise of sound so frequently? Why did they perceive music as the mainstay of all morals? Why did they publicly reproach Themistocles for having no knowledge at all of music? Because they knew that making man sensitive to the

---

[42] Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology*, 90-91. It is also worth observing that Grétry's theory broadly corresponded to the type of *purgation* defended by d'Alembert and Marmontel and discussed in Chapter I of the present study (see p. 69), in which suitable and desirable passions could, as Lyons put it, "improve the moral disposition of the audience". See Lyons, *Kingdom of Disorder*, 49.

[43] Ildiko Csengei, *Sympathy, Sensibility and the Literature of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 122-123. Csengei argues that *The Man of Feeling* "tackles the limits of the novel's potential for changing the social sphere and for producing community… it shows how literature can realise its social and political agenda on the level of the individual's emotions."

[44] Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France*, 170.

harmony of sounds was to establish within him that order which results in general happiness. They seized hold of the cause to attain its effects. They said, "If we preach wisdom to you before your soul is disposed towards it, we will be wasting our time. But if through the harmony of sounds we establish harmony between your senses, you will yield without a fight."[45]

Of particular note here is Grétry's use of the term 'exercice des sons'. He does not define it explicitly, but from the context he provides in the following text it would appear that Grétry was referring to a modern parallel of the concept of *paideia*. In Ancient Greece, *paideia* was a pedagogical system which (in part) used musical training to inculcate the Greek civic ethos, and its constituent components, virtue, ethics and morality. It was perceived that a person who had been taught to imitate the good and virtuous in music (rendered through the process of mimesis) would be better aware of what is indeed 'good' in daily life. An educated person who had been exposed to (and participated in) the performance of good music would therefore be more socially responsible.[46]

Grétry explicitly equated 'good' music with good morals, agreeing with ancient authors that music was the mainstay of all morality. He also perceived that music's power was universal, affecting all people regardless of background.[47] But in terms we recognise from Condillac's emphasis on impression in his *Traité des sensations*, Grétry did not believe that a single performance would necessarily transform a rogue into a paragon of virtue. It would be regular and systematic exposure to good music in order to render them more sensitive to themes of civic and personal virtue: in essence, to gradually break down the wicked man in order to reconstruct him as a good citizen, as suggested by Marmontel's theory of *habitude*.

In short, although Grétry was by no means politically partisan, but, as Arnold has rightly suggested, rather more generally invested in the liberalism of the early Revolution and the years after Thermidor, there is much in his *Mémoires* of an explicitly political significance which did indeed represent a "broader tendency to promote the individual and plurality of opinion" in a 'regenerated' society.[48] In part, then, Grétry's *Mémoires* also represent the process of politicising sensationism which we discussed in the previous chapter of this study, and this is the context in which we should read and understand his aesthetics.

However, his theory of musical expression also exhibits transformation in the way that the composer pragmatised sensationism by conceiving of creative means with which to exploit music's sentimental power, particularly with regard to opera and the union of vocal and

---

[45] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, livre sixième, 274-275.
[46] Edward Lippman sums up the system of *paideia* in terms of cultural values being 'transmitted' through music, becoming embodied in words, dance and melody. See *Musical Thought in Ancient Greece* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1964), 51.
[47] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, livre troisième, 21.
[48] Arnold, *Grétry's Operas and the French Public*, 71.

instrumental music. Grétry was clear that the most expressive form of music was music which included text: the aria, for example. The combination of fixed meaning (text) and sentimental meaning (music) allowed a work to speak to both the mind and the heart. When music and text were designed to complement each other, the composer was able to exploit a more sophisticated dramatic language, which made opera all the more potent as an art form. Grétry provided an excellent example of music and text co-operating in opera to create a 'double meaning':

> A girl, for example, assures her mother that she had not known love, but whilst she feigns indifference with a simple monotonous song, the orchestra expresses the torment of her love-stricken heart. Does a simpleton wish to express his love, or his courage? If he is to be truly realistic, he must have accents of passion; but the orchestra, by its monotony, will show us a little bit of his true self.[49]

Even in this short extract, the extent of opera's expressive potential was abundantly clear. Constituting two separate 'languages', its sophistication derived from its ability to use both simultaneously in order to communicate a great deal of conflicting information very quickly: in this instance, that which the character wants the spectator to hear, but simultaneously also the truth of their human experience through the sentimental musical language of the orchestra.[50]

The innovative element of this approach was in his rather sophisticated conception of the role of the orchestra, which transcended its traditional accompanying function in order to play an invaluable expressive role and contribute to the dramatic meaning of a scene. In fact, throughout Grétry's *Mémoires* the orchestra was described as an integral part of the drama, possessing its own unique expressive function without which the opera could not fully exploit its full dramatic potential. For example, he wrote:

> in accompanying, in sustaining, in strengthening, often even in contrasting with the singing of an actor, the orchestra speaks for the multitude who take part in the event. And if the actor is alone in a prison, in a forest, and must not be heard, what then does the orchestra do? It represents you to yourself, spectators, who must say everything that it says, if the music is well composed. I know that you will respond that you yourselves are not supposed to be present in a work of theatre, but nor is the orchestra any more than you, seeing as we conceal it. Moreover, the orchestra only speaks in order to strengthen the expression and you, spectators, you often stymie it with your whispering or applause. An encore demanded from the parterre often destroys the illusion throughout the fifteen minutes which follow it.[51]

---

[49] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, livre deuxième, 195-196.
[50] Ibid, 275.
[51] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, livre sixième, 249-250.

This was a striking aspect of his theory. Not only did he perceive that the orchestra played a unique expressive function alongside the character singing (both in the traditional accompanist function and more unusually as an independent voice which contrasted or conflicted with the actor) but he also argued that the uniqueness of this role necessitated that it took on a vital psychological function in representing the audience itself in the action onstage. The implications for the orchestra were profound. It gave it the primacy in terms of creating and preserving *intérêt*, as well as a symbolic power of expression which far exceeded the fixed meaning of the text. In short, without the orchestra's integration into the dramatic fabric of the opera, Grétry envisaged that the meaning and power of the work could never reach its fullest potential to exercise its 'absolute empire' over the human heart.

Of course, Grétry was by no means alone in emancipating the orchestra, nor in conceiving of it as exerting a powerful sentimental influence over audiences. Although eighteenth-century thinkers often rejected instrumental music as incoherent, protesting that its expression was too vague and abstract to communicate anything meaningfully specific to audiences,[52] Mark Evan Bonds has shown that from 1769 there was a growing sense that music without text could possess self-referential meaning through the concept of a musical 'idea', which came to be interpreted more programmatically over time.[53]

Charlton has illuminated this further, exploring how eighteenth-century sensationism provided a framework within which non-textual music could be understood as communicating explicit meaning through the manipulation of the passions. Music was thus a kind of symbolic language which spoke through 'metaphors', allowing instruments to 'embody narrative capacity' and function almost as extra-dramatic characters. Charlton traces this back to 1754, with the publication of the anonymous *Réflexions sur la musique en général*, which describes music as a symbolic or memory language, arousing powerful emotions when it imitates sounds with which spectators have linked memories. This was cemented by Diderot who described instruments metaphorically as 'voices',[54] a term which can only be understood in the context of his concept of the hieroglyph. As Waeber has pointed out, he argued that all imitative arts (including non-textual music) produced meaning through 'hieroglyphs' by fostering a

---

[52] See p. 80.
[53] Mark Evans Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric. Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 163-64. Although it does not appear in French treatises and is more frequently associated with German instrumental music, the notion of the musical 'topic' is perhaps helpful here in helping us to understand how these 'ideas' communicated meaning: V. Kofi Aguwa describes them as 'signs' bound up in an audience's ability to discern meaning derived from a shared symbolic vocabulary. See *Playing with Signs: a Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 49.
[54] David Charlton, "Envoicing the Orchestra: Enlightenment Metaphors in Theory and Practice," in *French Opera 1730-1830: Meaning and Media*, ed. David Charlton (Aldershot and Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2000), 1-32.

complicitous, 'poetic' significance of meaning with the spectator.[55] From here, Charlton shows, we have Morellet's 'associative perception', Chastellux's theory of the orchestra as 'metaphorical voice', Marmontel's as 'voice of nature', Chabanon's 'metaphorical language', and Suard's revolutionary conception of 'pictorial representation'. In short, the later eighteenth century was rich with theories 'envoicing' the orchestra.[56]

Grétry's perspective is evidently situated in this developing conception.[57] The influence of sensationism on his musical aesthetics produced an important aesthetic transformation which resulted in the emancipation of the orchestra as a vehicle for affective expression. It went beyond established sensationist conventions and necessitated audiences acquiring a new vocabulary which would allow them to understand the expressivity of the orchestra (to be determined by education and aptitude, no doubt, thereby increasing the importance of musical and aesthetic pedagogy, recommended by Grétry in the *Mémoires*).

But Grétry went beyond even these forebears and contemporaries, however, in the practical specificity of his discussion. Not only does he emancipate the orchestra, but, as seen above (and throughout the *Mémoires* as he reflects on both the merits of his own techniques in the past and the possibilities for the future), he provides careful consideration on how composers should exploit new instrumental potentials in order to maximise the sentimental impact of operatic scenes on spectators. For example, he reflects in detail on the character of specific wind instruments, their impact on the emotions, and accordingly the best ways of employing their influence;[58] on how dramatic composers might learn from the symphonic music of Haydn, and treat it as a vast dictionary offering insight into the affective impact of instruments, tonalities, and motivic gestures;[59] on using instruments which produce a sustained sound versus those which do not;[60] on the suitability of certain instruments to certain keys and the

[55] Jacqueline Waeber argues that a hieroglyph is a symbol or 'emblem' which can be described as "la qualité poétique qu'on trouverait entre signifiant et signifié". See *En musique dans le texte: le mélodrame de Rousseau à Schoenberg* (Paris: Van Dieren, 2005), 42.
[56] These theories are discussed in full by Charlton in "Envoicing the Orchestra", 5-30. He concludes: "Musical writers adopt metaphorical strategies in discussing both symphony and opera from the 1760s; there is evidently a public acceptance that orchestras and instruments embodied narrative capacity, even within instrumental movements; and an expectation that the interior life of operatic figures would be complexly symbolised by orchestral means (in opera as well as opéra-comique), to the extent that their consciousness, inner contradictions and imaginations might be depicted from moment to moment so clearly that we might envision them as separable characters" (see pp. 31-32).
[57] For an example, consider how Grétry explicitly described certain instruments as functioning as 'voices' (after Diderot and Marmontel): "Instruments which produce sustained sound, especially wind instruments, are the most perfect inasmuch as they draw close to the voice of nature… In listening to a bassoon or a clarinet, we believe we hear the cries of a man or a woman [to the extent that] we are almost humbled to find their voice in an instrument." See Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, livre sixième, 246.
[58] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, livre deuxième, 277-280.
[59] Ibid, 286-287.
[60] Ibid, 315-316.

sentimental power of their union;[61] and on how to exploit instrumental gestures which communicate specific sentimental ideas to spectators.[62]

An excellent case study is the comparison between his theory of the orchestra's psychological significance with that of François-Jean de Chastellux, who pre-empted him on this point by two decades. Chastellux wrote: "[in the lyric theatre] music takes responsibility for expressing all the nuances of our feelings. As one passes from joy to sorrow, hope to despair, hatred to tenderness, the animate orchestra borrows the voice of the passions; it unveils to the hearer their indeterminate stages, it follows them in their wanderings, and its affecting yet inarticulate sounds are the sole language that can make them understood."[63] Where Chastellux confined himself to a discussion of what the orchestra should do and the philosophical implications, Grétry discussed how it should do so, considering the multiple roles of the orchestra and its relation to the characters (accompanying, sustaining, strengthening, contrasting), the possibilities of application in context (forest, prison), the orchestra's complicité with the spectator, and even the exigencies of how audiences should behave. Unlike Chastellux, he devoted himself to total control of the emotional impact of a musical performance. And in context, namely Grétry's chapter on 'imitation', this is even clearer. He provides detailed information on the qualities of instruments, their influence on the imagination, and the sorts of gestures which are expressively powerful, all in order to demonstrate to young composers how to represent the audience with the affective tools at their disposal.[64]

In short, Grétry provides a level of detail and professional insight into the sentimental power of the orchestra which is not seen in his predecessors' theoretical treatises. It is also clear the extent to which he saw the orchestra as a vital contributor to musical expression, especially in an operatic context. This is one reason that we should reassess Mongrédien's labelling of Grétry as a conservative on the grounds of a rejection of instrumental music; though he was indeed a 'fervent adept' of the theory of imitation in music, he cannot accurately be described as exhibiting a 'mistrust' (*méfiance*) of the orchestra.[65] He certainly believed that the 'science of the orchestra' required careful and judicious handling in order that it didn't overwhelm the more subtle sensations of operatic expression, as Arnold highlights, but this was by no means a rejection.[66]

---

[61] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, livre troisième, 358-363.
[62] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, livre sixième, 268-272.
[63] Charlton, "Envoicing the Orchestra", 12. Charlton quotes François-Jean de Chastellux, *Essai sur l'union de la poésie et de la musique* (La Haye etc: Merlin, 1765), 88-89.
[64] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, livre sixième, 244-268.
[65] Mongrédien, "Les Mémoires ou essais sur la musique", 26.
[66] Arnold, *Grétry's Operas and the French Public*, 69.

Furthermore, I believe that Grétry's theory of the orchestra is important evidence for transformation because it represents an important development towards Romanticism. Sarah Hibberd and Nanette Nielsen have argued that the emergence of exactly this sort of conception of the orchestra – as fulfilling a psychologically or symbolically meaningful function – was a hallmark of Romantic melodrama, which shared many of the characteristics of *opéra-comique*. Under Romanticism, "the music would have helped the actors to create the drama" rather than simply act as "an accompaniment for the benefit of the audience."[67] To be precise, the idea of the orchestra's function as integrated in terms of symbolic and dramatic weight is the logical first step of operatic Romanticism, in which the expressive integration of all forces is taken to be its culmination.[68] And as Bonds has established with regards to the emancipation of instrumental music through to its Romantic apogee as a 'transcendental language', the concept of a musical 'idea' (inherent here in Grétry's own mode of metaphorical expression), heard and interpreted programmatically by the spectator, is explicitly indicative of the arrival of Romanticism.[69]

We must be a little cautious here, because Bonds' conclusions primarily concern modes of listening related to early German Romanticism (Wackenroder, Tieck, Novalis, the Schlegels and E.T.A. Hoffmann) which do not automatically translate into the French context; there is, after all, no single Romanticism, but rather many different expressions in which national distinctions are of the highest significance.[70] But as several commentators have pointed out in the context of the *Mémoires* as a text, Grétry's writing does indeed seem to fit many of the characteristics which we typically associate with Romanticism. Couvreur, for example, points out that the style of the text is conspicuously Romantic, whilst Arnold argues that its diverse contents and fixations are an 'indicator' of its "location on the threshold of Romanticism". More specifically, Thomas Grey's conclusions about the function of the metaphor in Romantic musical expression are more generally applicable and would seem to encompass Grétry's position effectively: Grey argues that such expression, in which the orchestra was understood

---

[67] Sarah Hibberd and Nanette Nielsen, "Music in Melodrama: 'the Burden of Ineffable Expression'?," *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film* 29 no. 2 (2002), 32.

[68] This is the case specifically in Wagner's notion of *Gesamtkunstwerk* – the total work of art – but also, in a more embryonic context, in works like Weber's 1821 work *Der Freischütz*, in which the orchestra is treated as uniquely important, expressively speaking, for embodying a higher, 'transcendental language'. See Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric*, 163.

[69] Ibid, 163-164.

[70] The importance of national distinctions and chronologies is particularly clear in Simon Haines, ed., *European Romanticism: a Reader* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), where numerous examples are discussed at length. Haines writes that the book's principle objective is to draw parallels between multiple Romanticisms, because such a project has proven so difficult in the past; not least, as Stephen Prickett points out, because 'European' Romanticism was essentially contingent upon "a new nationalism… the collective imaginations of different communities." See Stephen Prickett, "General Introduction: Of Fragments, Monsters and Translations," in *European Romanticism: a Reader*, ed. Simon Haines (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 4.

to offer audiences visual or verbal (narrative) 'events' (interpreted programmatically by the audience) was quintessentially Romantic, breaking with more traditional modes of expression in favour of 'sensual manifestations' of 'spiritual-intellectual essence' which offered audiences the 'idea' or 'truth' of a work.[71]

Grétry's aesthetic perspective of the orchestra matches this description, not only in the general sense of offering the audience 'ideas' (especially narrative- as in the infatuated young woman), but also in the detail of fundamentally Romantic expressive 'categories' which Grey identifies as striving for specific ideas. An example, already alluded to, is the metaphorical way Grétry perceived instruments speaking characteristically to create affective categories corresponding to three 'genres': *le pathétique*, *le genre gai*, and *le mixte ou demi-caractère*. Within each of these, the orchestra was indispensable in expressing the necessary sensations which included *joie*, *douleur*, and the *lugubre*.[72] Though the concept of orchestration did not yet exist, it is undoubtedly present embryonically in the *Mémoires*.

I conclude from this that, rather than dismissing Grétry as an aesthetic conservative, we can identify him contributing to the burgeoning musical Romanticism in France. This process of transformation had its roots in eighteenth-century sensationism, but developed well beyond it with the construction of a newly-conceived language of expression in which instrumental metaphor, narrative, and image were essential. Grétry was preceded in this by the *philosophes*, especially Diderot, Morellet, Chastellux, Marmontel, and Chabanon, but his own pragmatic insights represent a further development of the highest significance. In his innovations Grétry was undoubtedly influenced by the past, both antique and eighteenth-century. With regards to the latter, Charlton is right to point out that any study of Grétry should acknowledge that his propensities were essential to any proper account of the eighteenth century's achievement,[73] but this hardly means that he alienated himself from early Romanticism as Mongrédien has claimed.[74]

There is also something profoundly Romantic about Grétry's conception of the role or positionality of the composers. After all, in formulating an aesthetics of music which were inherently didactic, socially in particular, Grétry's *Mémoires* had profound implications for the composer as a direct contributor to the national good. His theory of sentimental training ultimately made them responsible not only for instructing citizens in lessons of civic virtue, but also ensuring, through exposure to helpful musical sensations, their long-term disposal

[71] Thomas Grey, "Metaphorical modes in nineteenth-century music criticism: image, narrative, and idea," in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries,* ed. Steven Paul Scher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 97-98.
[72] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, livre sixième, 252-266.
[73] Charlton, "Envoicing the Orchestra", 31-32.
[74] Mongrédien, "Les Mémoires ou essais sur la musique", 26.

towards good morals and a wisdom in keeping with the values of the Revolution. Unlike Greek *paideia*, however, where music was combined with other disciplines to cultivate good citizens, Grétry believed that that music's unique sentimental power made it the singular art most suited to fulfilling this purpose.[75] This meant that, of all artists, the composer had the greatest duty to society. But if national instruction was fully within their remit and their foremost duty was to contribute to the good of society by helping to shape its citizens, how might they go about their task?

Grétry had two practical suggestions which derived from his aesthetic theory. First, he argued, by choosing good and noble material with which to work, the right examples should be available for the public. Second, it was also necessary that the composer presented the material in such a manner that it appeared sublime and beautiful. Grétry argued that the practical issue of compositional craft was just as important as the aesthetic conception. The more beautiful the musical offering, the greater impact it would have on the audience didactically speaking.[76] "Pleasure", he argued, "is the goal of the fine arts; and instruction, mixed with pleasure, is their common purpose."[77] Just as Aristotle had argued in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, humanity must learn virtue habitually by being taught to associate pleasure with beauty and pain with its absence.[78] If moral themes were associated with beautiful music which delighted the senses, then the audience would learn that these were admirable concepts worthy of pursuit. And if the composer wished to present ignoble ideals, then their duty was to make these ugly and unattractive to repel the audience. This was a simple but practical application of the eighteenth-century theory of taste.[79]

Grétry was very clear that music's power was not simply important for personal virtue, but explicitly concerned society as a collective:

> France busies itself with regeneration, and instruction will be the work of the legislator. What art is better than music for influencing morals? Its well-directed influence gives nations the energy or the cordiality which they need. Already weakened by long studies, and by an illness for which I see no cure, I present this homage to France which has adopted me. Let this gift of a free soul prove my gratitude to her.[80]

---

[75] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, livre septième, 413-414. He wrote: "Music has advantages which the other arts do not. It works more directly upon morals. Its energetic accents enliven souls which are too placid; its tender melody calms the savagery of all the passions born of pride."
[76] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, livre troisième, 169.
[77] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, livre cinquième, 141-142.
[78] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, tr. Susan D. Collins and Robert C. Bartlett (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 30.
[79] See p. 48.
[80] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, xvi-xviii.

Having made such an explicit connection between music and the success of the Revolution, it is unfortunate that Grétry omitted to explore the relationship between the composer and the legislator more fully. However, his evident belief that this relationship was important is clear from his statement in the extract above in which he invited the 'legislator' (tasked with overseeing national instruction) into partnership with those whose craft was the art best placed to shape France's citizens. Indeed, this partnership was one which Grétry himself believed to be participating by offering his *Mémoires* as a 'gift' to the authorities.

He did, however, provide a clear insight into the didactic role of the artist, within which we can situate the composer's specific role. In a chapter devoted to 'liberty' in the third volume, Grétry described the artist's role as one of 'genius' (*génie*) and stated that they should always be 'the most fervent friend of liberty' (*l'ami le plus chaud de la liberté*). It was an explicitly political role, daring to challenge despots.[81] In this way they functioned as an intermediary between the people and their politicians, representing the rights and liberty of French citizens by providing them with material appropriate for fostering republican values specifically and demolishing the evil of tyranny:

> There is no artistic masterpiece in which despots do not find terrible lessons. When a painting depicts a king on his throne to us, surrounded by his court who celebrate him for having won a victory over his enemies, the king knows well that we will search everywhere in this same painting for the general who has vanquished the enemy for him, and that next we will ask which artist recounted his triumph. There is no good book of science, good piece of theatre, or good painting without a moral... Virtue being conceived to fight against vice, so too does art emerge from luxury, never ceasing to ridicule its abuse.[82]

Art was to be one of the means by which the artist undermined the tyranny of monarchy and prompted citizens to question the traditional hierarchies which had been a part of its expression for so many centuries. The notion of art 'emerging' (extricating) from 'luxury' is particularly telling. As John Shovlin points out, the critique of luxury in France had for a long time been associated with moral renewal because it advocated for art which would draw citizens' attention away from selfish interests and towards the needs of the nation.[83] In this way, an important duty of Grétry's composer was thus to employ the sentimental power of their art in order to ensure that citizens were fully invested in the progress of the Revolution,

---

[81] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, livre quatrième, 4. He wrote: "Of all people the artist must always be the most fervent friend of liberty. The continual study of nature makes them such. The person of genius dares, even in the presence of despots, to declare the liberty of their existence; they dare to confront their politics, their prejudices, and received customs. "They're an elevated thinker", "they're mad" they might say, but they have a great talent."

[82] Ibid, 4-5.

[83] John Shovlin, *The Political Economy of Virtue: Luxury, Patriotism, and the Origins of the French Revolution* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 18.

but simultaneously protected from the abuses of corrupt government. Ultimately, he emphasised the importance of a participative relationship between composer and citizen.

Framery shared Grétry's views regarding the social and political significance of the composer, but expressed them another way. His sensationist understanding, coupled with the evidence of controversies which often erupted (as we have seen in the previous chapter), caused him some anxiety with regards to the social ills which could befall a nation whose composers and dramatists were not, as Grétry termed it, 'fervent friends' of liberty. Taking the theatre, where music and drama combined to exert a powerful effect, he warned:

> Suppose that a piece with an appealing subject and situations suitable for moving the emotions, were sown with seditious remarks, with inflammatory principles, but presented with talent, heat, and energy (because without these characteristics it is no longer dangerous). Suppose that an antipatriotic author, possessing the art of touching hearts and training minds, had the objective of rousing the assembled citizens against the sacred laws of state. You who know the effect of the delirium of an instant and how easy it is to mislead the masses, fear the effect of this first performance. It alone is dangerous; the impression of others soften upon reflection. But if the explosion is produced just once, what will your judges do? Will they return the calm of reason to souls seduced, blinded, enthused? Will they stop the violence which could be incited by people who have lost their minds? Could it be time to say: this misfortune will no longer happen; the performances of this fatal piece will be banned?[84]

In terms of the politicisation of sensation which we discussed previously, this is perhaps the clearest example, but this time from the perspective of an artist rather than a legislator. Not only did Framery believe that the power of sensation worked up passions which would exert a profound behavioural influence over the spectator, but he explicitly conceived that this influence was of socio-political significance and bore serious implications for the progress of the Revolution.

The solution, as Framery saw it, was to regulate the use of sensation by means of a participative relationship between legislator, artist (whether author or composer) and the public. In a short discourse which he addressed to the Lycée des Arts in 1798, Framery described each participant regulating the other in a state of symbiotic balance. The legislator was needed to direct public opinion and nurture an environment in which artists could create their best work, most suited for moral instruction and civic unity;[85] the artists would take

[84] Nicolas-Étienne Framery, *De l'organisation des spectacles de Paris, ou essai sur leur forme actuelle* (Paris: Buisson and Debray, 1790), 242-243.

[85] Nicolas-Étienne Framery, *Sur les théâtres: discours lu à la séance du lycée des Arts, du 9 pluviôse an 6* (no publishing details, 1798), 4. Framery wrote: "It is for the legislator to review, reform, to complete its legislation concerning the theatres, and to entrust its supervision to the Government, giving it the power to necessary to enact [this supervision and the enactment of legislation]. In overturning the

responsibility for producing works suited to the task of nurturing a society of virtuous republicans, dedicating themselves to a didactic 'ministry' of civic morality;[86] and the power of public opinion would guard the nation against the danger of despotism in government and corruption in art.[87] As such, we can observe that the participative relationship – which I argued in the previous chapter characterised the revolutionary approach to the theatre – was shared also by those who made the theatre their profession.

Though they expressed it very differently, both Framery and Grétry shared a significantly more developed understanding of the role of the composer than had been common in the eighteenth century. We might note that by 1798, Framery was describing the role of the artist as a *ministère*: a 'ministry' or an 'office'. This is a remarkable use of terminology which reflected both a significantly expanded perspective of the artists' task and of the socio-political potential of theatre in terms of public instruction.[88] Yet it was the cultural inheritance of eighteenth-century sensationism which provided the means for them to outline this perspective. As I have argued elsewhere, Grétry's *Mémoires* themselves, as a textual object, are testament to this development.[89] Lesueur's *Exposé* is similarly, although in a very different, sacred context, and Framery's corpus would be also (had he not largely abandoned composition).

The *Mémoires* in particular are representative of the composer seizing the initiative offered by the change in the social hierarchy, in order to claim authority over all aspects of their own art and others besides which pertained to it. We will shortly consider, for example, how in the *Mémoires* we see Grétry taking on the roles of musical theorist, psychologist, theatre director, architect, moralist, and sociologist. Traditionally, such subjects and the prerogative to move between them were within the remit of the men-of-letters, not the practitioners of art. But

despotism which was weighing on the theatres, the legislator wanted to grant them the gift of competition, so useful to dramatic authors, which shelters them from injustice and harassment… so advantageous to the public itself, which enjoyed the efforts of each theatre to seize its rights at the expense of its rival."

[86] Ibid, 13. "Finally, we desire that the artists, considered to be teachers of morality, can be well soaked by the greatness of their office, and can be assured of always being in a position to uphold it. This is the task which awaits the Government. This is what they will hurry themselves to undertake, as soon as the legislative body has given them the means."

[87] Ibid, 13-14. "It is you, citizens, it is the clamour of public opinion which alone can articulate grievances and make danger known. More than once the first cry of alarm has been sounded from within the midst of this bastion; more than once the legislators, alert to the voice of the Lycée des Arts, have accorded honourable attention to its views. It speaks in the interests of all France: you yourselves will hurry to express your desires to its representatives."

[88] According to Rousseau, for example, this earlier conception of the composer's role was simply 'composing music or making the rules of composition during the eighteenth century'. See "Compositeur," in *Dictionnaire de musique*, ed. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, (Paris: Duchesne, 1748), vol. 1, 108.

[89] Huff, "Renegotiating the Composer's Authority in A.E.M. Grétry's Mémoires", 48-60.

according to Grétry's formulation, the composer's practical expertise endowed him with an invaluable authority with which to participate in the revolutionary project.[90]

That this radical expansion of the composer's role is representative of a Romantic weltanschauung is attested to by a compelling corpus of scholarship which identifies the establishment of the composer's 'authority' and emerging notions of 'genius' or 'greatness' in the nineteenth century. Certainly, in a Germanic context, both Richard Taruskin and Jane F. Fulcher have shown that the Romantic cult of 'genius' – a word which Grétry himself invoked in reference to the composer's role and their potential to contribute to the political health of the nation – was bound up with a rapid and profound augmentation of their authority over their art and in society generally, whilst Frederick C. Beiser explicitly identifies this period with the growing importance of the composer's contribution to the wellbeing of society.[91] The *Mémoires* are an example of a composer exercising this authority, and of putting said newfound social responsibility into practice in exactly this way. If the conclusions of Taruskin, Fulcher and Beiser might be regarded as general – rather than exclusively Germanic – principles of Romanticism, then, the *Mémoires* are testament to Grétry's contribution to the emergence of the literary Romantic movement in France before the turn of the century.

Of course, it cannot be assumed that these characteristics are generally indicative of Romanticism beyond Germany. However, there is considerable evidence to suggest that they are. Jim Samson emphasises that Romanticism as a nineteenth-century phenomenon intrinsically 'fostered and nurtured' a 'fetishism of greatness' which inescapably propelled the composer into a position of authority which simply had not existed before. "In an age of revolution", he writes, "the composer, no less than the poet, would have his word for mankind, and in formulation it would stretch the existing boundaries of taste and convention, spearheading a notionally unified (and often reluctant) musical culture into unknown territory."[92] Samson cites the French *philosophes* as the originators of this emergent perspective, pointing out how the *Encyclopédie* in particular created 'specialised categories' of knowledge over which the composer claimed expertise, contributing to their conceived greatness.[93] Given Grétry's personal connection and direct intellectual debt to the very *philosophes* who produced the *Encyclopédie*, we might regard this form of Romanticism as

[90] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, livre quatrième, 54.
[91] See Richard Taruskin, "Tradition and Authority," *Early Music* 20 no. 2 (May 1992), 317; Jane F. Fulcher, *The Composer as Intellectual: Music and Ideology in France, 1914-1940* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 8-9; and Frederick C. Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2006), 47-48. For Grétry's conception of 'genius', see *Mémoires*, vol. 3, livre quatrième, 4.
[92] Jim Samson "The Great Composer," in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 260.
[93] Ibid, 259-260.

not only 'generally' applicable but specifically so, in his case, especially given Grétry's intentions for the *Mémoires* as a pedagogical treatise: his own 'word' for mankind, so to speak.

Moreover, the conception of the composer which these scholars describe as Romantic – as a genius, speaking 'his word' of profound truth to humanity – directly fits Donald G. Charlton's conclusion concerning the positionality of the author during the emergence of Romanticism in France. In problematising the process of delineating what, in France, constituted Romanticism according to purely chronological or geographical parameters, he argues that the most effective methodology must take into account the broad categorical hallmarks of a French Romantic text, whether fiction or treatise, produced by the author's 'aims and intentions'.[94]

Citing numerous primary treatises, he shows that, despite evident and important individual idiosyncrasies, there are at least six common authorial 'intentions' which might function as markers of a Romantic text: first the valuation of emotion and imagination; second, a conviction that a work should be both an expression of and a influence on the culture, society and institutions of its time; third, that it should have a philosophical significance ('expressing our religion' and 'recalling our history', as de Staël put it); fourth, a rejection of eighteenth-century rationalism which nevertheless held the importance of the intellect (and particularly of science) in tension with "the rights of intuition, feeling, and the individual conscience"; fifth, a political liberalism defending the rights of the individual which, however, subsumed said individual within an emphasis on the good of the general public; and, lastly, a central quest for 'truth', which functioned as "an appeal to every human faculty of knowledge and through a painstaking attention to past history and thought… concerned with the whole range of human life – political and social, religious and philosophical, personal and moral."[95]

Grétry's literary corpus exhibits all of these elements to an extensive degree. We have already considered in detail (first) the importance of emotion in the context of sensationism, (second) Grétry's commitment to moral pedagogy, (third) a philosophical basis in Antique history (which indeed seems to function as 'national' history, given the connections Grétry draws between it and contemporary France as the place for recovering music's 'irresistible empire'), and (fifth) a clear, fairly liberal politicisation which empowers the individual to participate in the national interest. But there is also (fourth) an evident emphasis on the primacy of intuition and feeling

---

[94] Donald G. Charlton, "The French Romantic Movement," in *The French Romantics*, 2 vols., ed. Donald G. Charlton (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 10-13. Charlton argues that if we must press a chronological or 'generational' understanding of Romanticism, we can identify its earliest children at the turn of the century by virtue of the fact that they explicitly challenged older, eighteenth-century views, and simultaneously brought forth the 'first formulations' of ideas which which the Romantics of the 1820s would 'adopt and develop'. On these grounds, Grétry's *Mémoires* would sit well with the work of his contemporaries who Charlton expressly identifies, including Chateaubriand, Mme de Staël, Constant, Ballanche and Senancour.
[95] Ibid, 22-29.

over and against rationalism held in tension with the need for the intellect (Grétry consistently exhibited a fascination in 'speculative and classificatory science, as Arnold points out).[96] Likewise (lastly), Grétry indeed covered the 'whole range of human life' in the search of truth, to the extent that he even devoted himself to it outright in a treatise published only four years after the *Mémoires* (*De la verité,* 1801).

We conclude, then, that the notion of 'genius' (or, equally, Samson's 'great composer'), so intrinsic to the Romantic conception of the composer, is equally intrinsic to Grétry's *Mémoires*. His view of the composer as professional and social pedagogue (evinced in the *Mémoires*), his attempt to demonstrate this role in practice by publishing the *Mémoires*, and the style and content of this text should be regarded as a exhibiting a strikingly Romantic position, though his work was founded on principles which characterised classic eighteenth-century sensationism. This is evidence, therefore, of Grétry's transformation of his intellectual inheritance, which produced an innovative and creative aesthetic rather than a conservatism of which Grétry has mistakenly been accused.

### Opera and *Opéra-comique*

We have seen, then, the extent to which Grétry's didactic plans for music during the Revolution depended upon his sensationist aesthetic principles, and how his emphasis on pragmatising said principles resulted in innovative developments which progressed towards a Romantic aesthetic. We have also seen that, when theorising on music in the broadest possible sense, he turned frequently to opera in order to illuminate his discussion, which is an indication of its perceived importance in terms of moral instruction and its potential to the pedagogical project of the Revolution.

Moreover, Grétry hoped to recover the astonishing power of ancient music in the opera house rather than anywhere else. After all, it was opera that he described as the basis of a composer's expressive power. He wrote:

> It is [in the theatre] that the musician learns to examine the passions, to scrutinise the human heart, to acquaint himself with all the movements of the soul. It is this school in which he learns to recognise and to recover their authentic accents, to mark out their nuances and their boundaries. It is therefore useless, I repeat, to describe here the sentiments with which the action has struck us; if sensitivity does not preserve them in the heart of our soul, if it does not whip up storms or restore calm to them, all description is in vain. The cold composer, the man without passion, will

[96] Arnold, *Grétry's Operas and the French Public*, 46.

> only ever be a servile echo which repeats sounds, and someone of true sensitivity who listens to it will never be touched.[97]

Accordingly, and in light of his pragmatic approach to sensationism, it is unsurprising that he also devoted significant attention to the practical concerns of running an opera house which could produce a powerful repertoire of use to the nation. In fact, after a short discourse explicitly concerned with public moral instruction, he opened the third volume of his *Mémoires* (1797) with a plan for a new 'theatre' to be named the École dramatique, which should provide France with a "nursery" for cultivating the perfect drama.[98]

Grétry's propositions can be distilled into eleven points:

1. The opera house should be run by a board consisting of six artist-directors (three librettists and three composers), whose administrative decisions will be (in part) informed by their desire to mount their own pioneering new works and to educate young artists.

2. The auditorium should not be too big, with capacity for around 1000 spectators. There should be no privileged seats. It should have only one box, for the authors of the work being mounted. This is so that they might make notes during the performance which will help with future improvements.

3. The orchestra should be completely hidden from sight, along with all other potential distractions such as lights. The only lights permitted will be those used to illuminate the stage, and the walls will be painted plain brown, except for a few frescos. The effect will be to preserve the 'magic' of the operatic experience.

4. The auditorium should be round and tiered, with each place clearly demarcated and providing comfortable seating.

5. The prompter/conductor should be a musician reading from a score and directing without a baton or staff.

6. The troupe of actors/singers should consist of and primarily feature young men and women, with a core of veterans to take the role of older characters. In this way, the theatre will not only rejuvenate itself, but train up new talent for the future.

---

[97] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, livre deuxième, 194-195.
[98] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, livre quatrième, 30.

7. The opera house administration should employ specialists in coaching roles, for the same reason as above. The requirement is for musicians rehearsing the orchestra, dancers coaching the dancers, etc.
8. The opera house should engage a body of young students to study there, who will be appointed by the directors into suitable roles at the appropriate time.
9. Great pains should be taken to ensure that the performance is given to a full audience every time, with access granted by subscription. Revenues will permit all members of the troupe and administration to take an honest salary commensurate with their contribution and reputation.
10. All artists (including the directors) should primarily concern themselves with the practice and progress of their art. Each of the directors will take it in turns to take on the more administrative and financial role of *régisseur*, so as to free the others for their artistic duty.
11. From time to time the theatre should mount a concert of excerpts from young musicians aspiring to a career as an opera composer. The best will receive a libretto to set to music, producing a work for the theatre. This will prevent talented young composers from stagnating as they spend the best part of their prime waiting for something to treat.[99]

Grétry's plan for a 'new theatre' was not a theatre at all; or at least not a theatre producing spoken works. It was an opera house. His conception of the theatre was inherently operatic, and he specifically recommended *spectacles lyriques* rather than spoken drama.[100] In outlining his plan for opera Grétry remained faithful to the principle that it should contribute to the wellbeing of society. He reiterated that the primary purpose of the opera house was the education of the new generation ("it is there that good mothers of families will wish to bring their children for them to learn lessons in civic duty and good morals."[101]) and contended that the perfection of state and art were inseparable processes ("The theatre becoming the primary school of morality, the nation cannot hasten too greatly to turn its attention toward the perfection of the dramatic art."[102]).

It is interesting how Grétry conflated the role of the artist with the role of the administrator, tasking both the daily running of the theatre and its artistic development to a board of six artists. This reflected a desire to expand the influence of those with practical expertise by

[99] Ibid, 30-45.
[100] Ibid, 35-36.
[101] Ibid, 35-36.
[102] Ibid, 45.

entrusting them with the governance of the institution as well as the material produced. It is also important to note that his expansion of the artist's role was not limited to the control of the auditorium: Grétry proposed a new paradigm in which practical experience was the pre-requisite for authority in and over music.

Another of Grétry's emphases was education. The opera house which he imagined was in many ways more like a conservatoire than an opera house, with unique possibilities for instructing and developing young artists in their art as well as those children in the audience brought by their mothers for the purpose of moral education. Indeed, its proposed title was the "School of Drama".

Grétry was likely influenced by the recently opened Conservatoire de musique (3 August 1795) and may well have envisaged a kind of operatic parallel; certainly the idea of mixing study with practical experience on a systematic institutional basis reflected his understanding of the national need for operatic institutions which could benefit revolutionary society.[103] In this case, we might note that the provision of moral education for France was a fundamental ambition of those who helped found and shape the Conservatoire itself.[104] The provision of education at the opera house was not simply a means of guaranteeing the aesthetic progress of opera, but also of ensuring that its didactic potential continued to be fulfilled in the future. The Revolution required artists to nurture a generation of virtuous revolutionary artists capable of producing morally educative operas for the safeguarding of its own future.

In many ways, then, Grétry's theory of opera is best understood as a compelling model for the practical application of his didactic ambitions for theatrical sensation. Indeed, although he was less explicit in this chapter regarding the importance of sensation than he was in his general musical arguments, the evidence of its continued relevance is clear from the propositions he made about the design of the auditorium in particular. For example, the decision to completely hide the orchestra from sight along with all other distractions, such as lights (see point 3). In

[103] Ibid, 40-41.

[104] Cynthia M. Gessele has highlighted the importance of moral education to Jean-Baptiste Leclerc (1756-1826), for example, a politician throughout the Revolution and member of the Council of Five-Hundred from 1795-1799. In 1796 he published a plan which drew the recently established Conservatoire into contributing to the system of national festivals, which were intended to unite the nation and educate them in revolutionary values. As Gessele puts it, "Leclerc proposed a complete stylistic and pedagogical strategy… He first stressed that the opportunity for the enforcement of 'a national music' had arrived and that the central government should make use of this propitious moment… As a substitute for religious education and institutions, Leclerc suggested that music schools be established in each major city where a state functionary (resembling a priest) would oversee elementary education and the performance of the festivals. As for music education on more advanced levels, he concluded that compositional training, which could be provided only at the level of the central Conservatoire also needed to be regulated." She concludes that "Leclerc's plan stressed the more abstract issue of civic and moral education of the masses through Revolutionary music". See "The Conservatoire de Musique and national music education in France, 1795-1801," in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. Malcolm Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 201-204.

fact, Grétry went into some detail on what aspects of theatrical tradition could be considered suitable and which 'distracting', and ultimately concluded that everything should be subordinated to the 'magic' of the operatic experience.

Grétry's new approach to the orchestra after 1788 should also be considered in this light. Charlton has shown that, from *Raoul Barbe-bleue* (1789) onwards, Grétry's orchestra was more completely subordinated to the overall dramatic unity of his operas. Whereas before, its primary importance was to lend support to the sort of light, melodic writing which earnt Grétry his reputation, after this point it offered audiences all manner of new musical 'colours' (exploiting the frequently bold instrumental and harmonic gestures which had proven so successful for his competitors, Dalayrac and Dezède) complementing a more "fluid concurrence of music and drama". Particular examples include the symbolic function of structures and gestures alike: Charlton highlights the way that Grétry uses an extended rondo in the final duet of Act I to represent conflict between the eternal nature of Raoul and Isaure's love and their resignation to the failure of their vows to preserve it; and stressed seventh chords suggesting Isaure's vulnerability, if not suggestibility.[105]

The overtures are also more symbolically loaded, and therein we can identify the sort of motivic symbolism we would expect from Beethoven (or even Weber)[106] which serve to tauten the psychological richness and dramatic unity of his works from this point.[107] Given the relevance to Grétry's praxis in the overture of Lacépède's recent codification of overtures (though intended primarily for *tragédie-lyrique*, it had multi-generic signifcance) – in which he offered an analysis of the various compositional approaches and their effect on the dramatic unity of an opera, detailing four methods expressly intended to prepare the audience  and engage them emotionally for the drama to come – we have an insight into Grétry's commitment to dramatic unity as a means of cultivating sensationally powerful opera, fully subordinated to

---

[105] Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique*, 294.

[106] Weber himself identified Grétry as introducing a mode of musical expression which in turn shaped his own compositional praxis. He wrote: "Indeed Grétry has inaugurated a new musical era in France, and his melodic forms and the treatment of the musical numbers in his works have provided a kind of accepted model for all other composers who have wished to catch the public ear." Carl Maria von Weber, *Writings on Music*, trans. Martin Cooper, edited and introduced by John Warrack (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 222-225. Quoted from Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique,* 294.

[107] Charlton points out that the overture to *Raoul* seeks to capture the full breadth of the opera instrumentally. He writes, "[it] contains (a) a second subject reproducing Ofman's cringing dotted-note music from (8) [a duet in Act 2]; (b) seventeen bars in the development section taken (except for instrumental details) from the mime in (19) [a scene in Act 3] depicting the violent rescue of Isaure; (c) a tutti theme in its recapitulation that occurs twice in the final chorus, to the words 'Mais ce tyran abominable'; and (d) a coda theme taken from the 'Fanfare' [in the entr'acte], a trumpet-like idea ending the opera… [The overture attempts] a synthetic drama given form, if not symphonic coherence, by the exterior design of the sonata." See Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique,* 312.

the 'magic' he described.[108] Charlton has also demonstrated that the various gestures which would contribute to this unity can explicitly be tied to specific emotions, which demonstrates a level of control over the sensational power of an opera for this purpose even in the minutiae of instrumental writing.[109]

A close reading of the *Mémoires* as a complete text reveals that this so-called 'magic' actually referred to theatrical illusion, or, to put it another way, an atmospheric condition conducive to creating a state in which, the *philosophes* had argued, spectators were fully open to the influence of sensation. For example, in an earlier chapter on imitation in visual art, Grétry made this connection explicit by referring to the power of illusion as creating a *magique tableau*;[110] whilst in a later chapter on 'illusion' he spoke of the pantomime as a *spectacle magique* because it possessed illusion as a defining characteristic.[111]

Many of the other practical measures which he recommended would also seem to have been designed to prevent illusion-breaking distractions, such as keeping the auditorium at a reasonable size with uniform conditions for spectators and no privileged boxes (point 2), with a round auditorium (point 4) to keep everybody's attention on the stage and not on distracting influences like one's fellow spectators, or the sounds of the conductor calling out directions or thumping his staff. Several of the reform measures which Grétry proposed, therefore, were clearly designed to preserve a state of attentiveness and openness which would ensure that the power of operatic sensation could work its effect undisrupted.

Underlining this all was Grétry's conviction that the purpose of illusion (and all operatic sensation) was inseparable from the composer's goal of moral education. He wrote: "There [in the opera house], where there are no charms in the arts… the artist has failed in his objectives. Pleasure is the goal of the fine arts and instruction, mixed with pleasure, are its constituent elements." [112] His proposed aesthetic reform of the opera house was therefore of substantial socio-didactic significance, in keeping with the values of the Revolution. That the

---

108 Basil Deane, "The French Operatic Overture from Grétry to Berlioz," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 99 (1972-1973), 68-69.

109 Charlton does so by tracing the appearance of one particular 'expressive medium' in Grétry's operas – which he defines as a 'textural and harmonic configuration', consisting of "a slow or moderate tempo; sustained tone, often heard as a pedal point; a rocking or oscillating string figuration; and stable harmony, using either a tonic pedal or steady alternation of tonic and dominant… [which] acts as the accompaniment to expressive melodies whose nature varies with the general context" – and therein showing how it quite clearly and specifically comes to represent 'mutual affection or love, untroubled by irony or premonition'. The implication is that instrumental techniques in his work serve the very sort of 'metaphorical' function he details in his chapter, "Envoicing the Orchestra", discussed above. See David Charlton, "Orchestra and Image in the Late Eighteenth Century," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 102 no. 1 (1975), 1.

110 Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, livre troisième, 91-92.

111 Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, livre cinquième, 156.

112 Ibid, 141.

architectural design of the circular auditorium encouraged an attenuated sense of social equality, with everyone having more or less equal access to the performance, is a particularly revealing example. From Grétry's perspective, therefore, the sentimental power of opera meant that it had a vital pedagogical function to play in terms of revolutionary moral instruction.

With regards to *opéra-comique*, it is particularly striking that the chapter which followed Grétry's plan for a new theatre was entitled 'De la nécessité de la scène comique' (On the Necessity of the *Comique* Stage), which would suggest that he held *opéra-comique* in especial regard as a genre. Indeed, he presented this genre as the logical fulfilment of the principles outlined in the 'plan' suited to the theatre's didactic function. To do so he employed familiar arguments which did not deviate from the traditional eighteenth-century logic, largely dependent upon the concept of *ridicule*.[113] For example, he wrote: "since vices and absurdities reproduce without ceasing under new guises, comedy is therefore essential to morality: in ridiculing vices it forces them into retreat, often, I confess, into hiding; but we can be sure that the hypocrite who has been made to blush too often makes some effort to correct himself".[114]

Furthermore, Grétry provided other arguments for the superiority of the genre, particularly over *tragédie lyrique*, which largely focussed on the sentimental expressive qualities of *opéra-comique*. For example, he echoed his predecessors in contending that it was more realistic and relatable than *tragédie lyrique* (thus more conducive to *intérêt*), as well as better suited to depicting human emotions which were the basis of artistic expression.[115] Similarly, his conception of *opéra-comique* was of a hybrid genre characterised by unparalleled sentimental breadth, capable of imitating the full range of human emotions from misery to joy. In his words, *opéra-comique* had the mercurial quality of being able to depict "la mobilitié naturelle de tous les sentimens humains", in contrast with the *tragédie* which featured only stock noble and villainous archetypes of the sort one never encountered in real life.[116]

One wonders how Grétry's own *tragédie lyrique*, entitled *Andromaque* (1780), might fit these criticisms of the genre. Pierre Zimmer's description of the work aptly identifies its more unusual qualities, and we must conclude that its uniqueness is in no small part due to the composer's practical application of many of the techniques he recommended. Zimmer points out the psychological intensity of the drama in particular: augmented by the clever use of orchestral forces (a point emphasised by Charlton, whose description of Grétry's orchestration in *Andromaque* indicates its strong resemblance to the more experimental, 'colouristic' style we have seen was favoured by the composer in his later years), the role of the chorus as

[113] See pp. 89-90.
[114] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, livre quatrième, 48.
[115] Ibid, 47.
[116] Ibid, 47. See also vol. 1, livre premier, 135-136.

confidants for the audience, and a reduced number of psychologically rich characters more in keeping with *comique* repertoire.[117] Even such a general description seems to suggest a disparity between Grétry's conception of *tragédie* and his own praxis in this genre. Then again, perhaps Grétry's unique approach to composing a *tragédie lyrique* is itself indicative of his general feelings towards the traditional form; likewise, it is possible that the work's failure only served to intensify the negative perspective presented in the *Mémoires*.

Regardless, it is clear that although Grétry believed that *tragédie* had its place, in general he felt that its formulaic nature and concrete dramaturgical rules made it less suitable for emphasising the human dimension of a work, its meticulous rigidity distancing the work from the emotional experience of an audience. Framery shared this conviction in *opéra-comique*'s unparalleled suitability as a vehicle for *intérêt* and influence over *sensibilité*. As early as 1770 (after de Noinville and Diderot) he defended the ideal of a more serious, hybrid form of *opéra-comique*, written for the purpose of exploring more sober themes of greater dramatic weight which one might traditionally have regarded as the territory of *tragédie lyrique*.[118] This was not to suggest that Framery considered *comique* themes too frivolous for the stage — in fact he went to some length to explain that even comedic operas were of great significance — but only that *opéra-comique* had far greater sentimental potential where an expressive breadth had been developed. Above all, the affective power of sensation was Framery's greatest ambition for a hybrid *opéra-comique*. Whether it made you laugh or weep was of little consequence. What mattered to Framery was that it was freed to impact the senses and affect the mind eliciting powerful emotional responses from the audience:

> We wish to press your heart, to move your soul, we engage it and sometimes wrest tears from it, but we do not use any heroic techniques to obtain this. We content ourselves within the boundaries of ordinary society. We present you with moving situations and everyday characters, the middle-class, villagers even… If you are concerned for your own innocence, if you have cried at your misfortune… if this piece and the others of this genre do not fail to attain the goal for which they are proposed, if they have offered us lifelike and poignant situations; if they have presented scenes of violent and varied passions, I see everything there that this genre demands, and we have critically triumphed again by reason.[119]

---

[117] See Pierre Zimmer, "Grétry," *Raison présente* 175 (2010), 121; and David Charlton, "Grétry instaurateur de l'opéra moderne," in *Regards sur la musique: Grétry en société*, ed. Jean Duron (Wavre: Mardaga, 2009), 37. Citing Grétry's use of the flutes in particular, Charlton concludes that the composer is exceptionally sensitive to the 'colouring' (*coloris*) of his instruments. The combination of techniques Charlton describes (orchestration, tonality or modality, the intimate relationship between music and words) point towards Grétry's later practice in *Raoul Barbe-bleue*.

[118] Nicolas-Étienne Framery, "Sur le genre larmoyant dans les Drames en Musique," in *Journal de Musique*, ed. François Lesure, vol. 1 (Geneva: Minkoff Reprints, no date of publication), 697-707.

[119] Ibid, 703.

From Framery's account we gather that there was a heightened sense amongst composers of *opéra-comique* that *comique* and comic were not identical. This genre of opera offered instead touching situations and expressive intensity, as well as the unparalleled breadth of expression offered by *vraisemblable* scenes and quotidian characters. The power of this genre was above all to intensify *intérêt* beyond the bounds offered by the *tragédie.* The spectator should not feel as if they were spectating, but as if they themselves were experiencing the events alongside the characters themselves. Only through hybridity would this be possible. This perspective was also borne out in Framery's later tracts, especially in the 1791 *Encyclopédie méthodique* article 'Bouffon', in which he ardently advanced the case of *comique* forms over the more sober *tragédie*. Though this argument was intended to have broad implications (*comédie* versus *tragédie*) and referred to Italian forms (*opéra bouffon* versus *opéra sérieux*), he drew explicit links with *opéra-comique* and *tragédie lyrique* in order to establish these as the subject of his discussion.[120]

First, he argued that *tragédie lyrique* had a more limited range of expressive possibilities than *opéra-comique*. Tradition and convention had limited it to a relatively small range of passions suitable for the serious dramatic stage, which included tenderness, grief and anger (*tendresse, douleur, colère*) but excluded other fertile passions like gaiety (*gaîté*) and expressive techniques which were used in *opéra-comique* to enhance them. *Opéra-comique* could encompass the entire range of passions and had a broader repertoire of expressive devices, including the *tableaux* and a greater emphasis on *vraisemblance*.[121]

Second, Framery believed that the ability of the great singers who flocked to the more prestigious tragic stage was actually damaging to the drama. Their focus was entirely upon the technical perfection of their musical performance, and were "not in the least capable of sacrificing anything for the sake of the dramatic action."[122] The result was that composers of *tragédie* were required to settle for stilted, less *vraisemblable* scenes, because the imperfections of reality were not attainable for highly skilled performers. This was not the case in *opéra-comique*, where a greater submission to the composer and to the dramatic unity of

[120] Nicolas-Étienne Framery "Bouffon," in *Encyclopédie méthodique*. *Musique. Publiée par MM. Framery et Ginguené*, eds. Nicolas-Étienne Framery and Pierre-Louis Ginguené, vol. 1 (Paris: Panckoucke, 1791), 174-175. "[*Opéra bouffon*] is the title which we give to a certain genre of lyric drama, in contrast with the serious genre. This terminology is used particularly in Italy, or given to Italian works. French dramas in this genre are most commonly called *opéras-comiques*."

[121] Ibid, 175. "We dare to suggest, without fear of being contradicted, that *opéra bouffon* is the genre which has been most perfected by Italian composers. The reason for this is clear. Noble expression [found in *tragédie*] is much less varied than *comique* expression. *Opera bouffon* can treat the same passions as serious opera, [including] tenderness, grief, and anger; but gaiety, so fertile a passion, [as well as] *tableaux*, *situations*, and the caricatures which they bring, are forbidden to the latter.

[122] Ibid, 175.

the work also meant that the orchestra was free to take on a more expressive role rather than submit itself to accompanying celebrity singers.[123]

Grétry concurred with Framery's perspective. For exactly the same reasons, he argued that *opéra-comique* had fewer aesthetic limitations than *tragédie lyrique* which might restrict its potential for dramaturgical experimentation and musical expression, and in his discussion of his own *tragédie Andromaque* concluded that a composer of *tragédie* must sooner or later resort to other forms if they wished to avoid their work stagnating and 'wearing out'. The greatest issue, it seemed, was in the limited expressive possibilities offered by *tragédie-lyrique*; a problem not arising in *opéra-comique*, whose more malleable character could be employed to treat a far greater range of situations and in turn depict any number of passions.[124]

In fact, Grétry argued that one of the greatest advantages of *opéra-comique* was not only its diversity, but also its ability to change rapidly between different expressive emphases and contextual situations. He argued that all sorts of *comique* moments were to be treated by the genre, and categorised them as the "comique moral, comique de situation, comique dans les paroles, comique décent, doux et tendre, comique fin, bas comique."[125] Each was defined by different characteristics. The *comique moral*, for example, was hardly comical at all. In fact, because it primarily depicted moral justice it would be rather dour in character (*traité sévèrement*). On the other hand, the *comique décent, doux et tendre* would be defined by the accents of love, provoking smiles of satisfaction from its earnest sentimentality.

Despite their clear categorisation, Grétry did not mean to suggest that these characteristics delineated subgenres of *opéra-comique*. In fact, they referred to different types of *comique* situations which could occur in any given work and would need to be treated carefully by the composer. This is testament to the breadth of Grétry's conception of the genre which, as he stated, had more pronounced and varied 'accents' of sentimental expression.[126] It also helps us to understand his claim that *opéras-comiques* were more sophisticated than *tragedies lyriques* and more difficult to compose, but offered much greater affective potential for an experienced librettist or composer with a keen eye for identifying all the nuances of human

---

[123] Ibid, 175. Framery wrote: "In the comic genre, to the contrary, the singers – who are less skilful, less celebrated, and consequently less insolent – submit themselves more fully to the subordination they owe to the composer." By consequence, the orchestra was able to employ all manner of effects and contrasts which would enhance the dramatic expression.

[124] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, livre deuxième, 407. "The most skilful musician, after having composed two or three tragedies, will be forced, if they wish to vary their songs, to abandon large and noble forms which wear out quickly, in order to employ an unexaggerated form of nature. This, on the other hand, is inexhaustible, because it can capture the true accents of the passions without risk. We see that it will cease to be tragedy if it wishes to become natural, or the composer will otherwise repeat themselves without cessation if they wish to have a long career."

[125] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, livre quatrième, 57.

[126] Ibid, livre cinquième, 155.

nature and a unique flair for bringing it to life onstage: "*Comique* music will always be more difficult to write than *pathétique*, in the same way that an excellent comedy is perceived as superior to a tragedy because of its difficulty. There is nothing so difficult as to make men of taste laugh."[127] This difficulty arose because *opéra-comique* required a composer to understand the subtleties of human nature as much as their own art.

It could seem surprising that Grétry and Framery were such strong advocates for the changeability of *opéra-comique* when throughout the eighteenth century so many theorists had stressed the importance of a taut unity which kept audiences continuously absorbed, in which continual or significant change was considered detrimental. Indeed, Rousseau and Grimm had criticised *opéra-comique* on the grounds that its mixing of sung and spoken media were a distraction and therefore detrimental in this way, and Collé had rejected the changeability of hybrid expression; so how could it be that Grétry in particular could advocate for *opéra-comique* aesthetically given his evident debt to the *philosophes* and similar commitment to dramatic unity and illusion?

In fact, Darlow has presented a compelling case that by the time of the Revolution the Diderotian mode of absorbed illusion was no longer a convincing mode of spectatorship, but, though owing its origins to the Diderotian theory, had developed; therefore, we should nuance our understanding Grétry's conception of it accordingly. As we have seen, the Diderotian concept of absorbed illusion required a total subordination of every device to the work of preserving a *vraisemblance* which supported an 'ontological separation' between actor and spectator, and caused the spectator to perceive the illusion as reality. But revolutionary spectatorship, Darlow argues, seems to have more in common with rococo *papillotage*, in which the spectator experiences a 'flickering awareness of illusion' that Marian Hobson describes in terms of an 'oscillating movement' between the beholder and the beholden.[128] He demonstrates this by pointing towards a large repertoire of compositional and dramatic techniques (such as the wide inclusion of familiar popular songs) in revolutionary operas (including *opéras-comiques*) which periodically broke the illusion by striking spectators with a sense of '*déjà entendu*', in order to foster amongst spectators a 'heightened emotional investment' in the work performed as the illusion momentarily collapses and the connections with reality are more readily identifiable.[129] This nuances previous work that Susan Maslan has conducted on revolutionary theatricality, in which – following Huet's insistence on the revolutionary desire for transparency and suspicion of representation – she contends that the

[127] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, livre troisième, 327.
[128] See Darlow, 'History and (Meta-)Theatricality", 388-389; and Marian Hobson, *The Object of Art: The Theory of Illusion in Eighteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 47-61.
[129] Darlow, 'History and (Meta-)Theatricality', 392.

revolutionaries rejected all theatricality (especially of the absorbed kind as encouraging an intensely fictive mode of spectatorship).[130] Darlow helps us to understand that the revolutionaries had not rejected illusion, but rather moved away from a total absorption in the fictive nature of a drama.

We must be careful of applying this too comprehensively to Grétry, for it is clear from his plan for a theatre, his orchestral praxis, and his general desire for attentive spectatorship that Grétry was deeply committed to theatrical illusion. Nevertheless, this very helpfully establishes the intellectual parameters within which Grétry developed his sensationist aesthetics of spectatorship, and Darlow's proposed mode in no way contradicts Grétry's arguments. In fact, it helps explain how he could be so content with such a changeable genre which, by virtue of its defining characteristics (not least the continual alternation of media) risked damaging spectatorial absorption if it was conceived of in traditional eighteenth-century terms.

In fact, according to the revolutionary theatricality that Darlow proposes, this malleability was advantageous. Periodic (but limited) breaks in the illusion which *opéra-comique* could accordingly produce would support the flickering awareness offered by the *papillotage* of revolutionary spectatorship. In this regard, the hybrid character of *opéra-comique* was actually beneficial. We have already established that hybridity most often meant incorporating a wide breadth of 'passions' and alternating between them within a single work. In *opéra-comique*, not least through the developments of Sedaine, it came to rest on a 'discourse of opposition' which depended upon the juxtaposition of expressive extremes in order to produce an opera which was "more culturally and socially alert… not a dangerous transgression but a necessary artistic process."[131] And for Diderot, it also required the mediation of them both in order to produce "the truthful depiction" of internal subjectivities such as feelings and experience.[132] That this was perceived as having the potential to damage the absorbed illusion experienced by spectators is attested to by the fact that such hybridity was considered to be dangerous,

---

[130] Susan Maslan, *Revolutionary Acts: Theater, Democracy, and the French Revolution* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 74-124. For Huet's discussion of transparency and representation, see *Rehearsing the Revolution: The Staging of Marat's Death, 1793-1797*, trans. Robert Hurley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); "The Revolutionary Sublime," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28 (1994), 51-64; and "Performing Arts: Theatricality and the Terror," in *Representing the French Revolution: Literature, Historiography and Art*, ed. James Heffernan (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1992), 135-49.

[131] Ledbury, "Sedaine and the Question of Genre," in *Michel-Jean Sedaine (1719-1797): Theatre, Opera and Art*, eds. David Charlton and Mark Ledbury (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2000), 15-20.

[132] Peter Szondi, "Tableau and Coup de Théâtre: On the Social Psychology of Diderot's Bourgeois Tragedy," *New Literary History* 11 no. 2 (Winter 1980), 324. The correlation between the *genre sérieux'*s sentimental basis and its functional utility has been explored by Sophie Marchand, who points out that in rectifying the 'degeneration' of the contemporary stage, Diderot saw that it was right to establish a theatre given over to a sentimental 'energy' which could harness the passions of the audience. See Marchand, "Diderot et l'histoire du théâtre: passé, présent(s) et avenir des spectacles dans la théorie diderotienne," *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie* 47 (2012), 10-11.

even by those who advocated it, like Diderot, who feared that it would produce incoherent 'monsters'. For those who welcomed such damage (in a controlled sense) in order to facilitate a less absorbed mode of spectatorship, *opéra-comique* had striking potential.

For Grétry, it was also the moral potential of *opéra-comique*'s hybridity which made it so attractive. Following Diderot and Sedaine, he argued that didactic opera required such a capacity for breadth and contrast because it had to be able to transition from ridiculing the moral absurdities of society to depicting the sincere truths of moral virtue. The expression of one would be quite different from the other. If the former might employ the 'accents' of satirical irony or criticism in relation to scenes of debauched excess, the latter would depend upon 'austere respect'.[133]

**Conclusion**

We have seen, then, that opera was considered by its revolutionary composers to offer a powerful opportunity to exert a positive moral influence over society. For Grétry in particular, the opera house was the very locus of a moral instruction which depended on the power of sensation to affect spectator's *sensibilité* in order to foster personal virtue and collective unity. *Opéra-comique* presented especial potential, above *tragédie lyrique,* to synchronise the expressive power of operatic sensation with the didactic necessities of moral instruction. This was in no small part due to its unique and hybrid characteristics which prompted composers like Grétry and Framery to envisage a form of *opéra-comique* which employed both the power of comedy (*ridicule*) and the *pathétique* to act upon the *sensibilité* of the spectator. Unlike in *tragédie-lyrique*, a composer's powers of expression would not stagnate in *opéra-comique*, which offered them an unprecedented breadth of options to exploit for the sake of variety and creativity; or, to put it another way, its inherent expressive breadth and use of striking contrast was particularly well-aligned with a revolutionary mode of spectatorship rooted in *papillotage*.

The foundation for this perspective was the sensationist conception of the theatre and music, indicating the continued influence of eighteenth-century theatrical aesthetics into the Revolution. Grétry's didactic theory of *opéra-comique* was, in essence, contingent upon the idea that the union of music with theatrical experience exerted a significant emotional effect

[133] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, livre troisième, 324-325. Once again, though, it was Grétry's practical concerns which defined his conception of *opéra-comique*'s hybridity. Offering practical instruction to young composers, he wrote: "What must we do to perfect Italian opera? Shorten those scenes which are too long; strengthen the action by trimming down the pointless *ritornelli* and repetitions which become so boring, above all when the action is rushed. Make the choruses more dramatic, more harmonious, with more modulation; follow the French and the Germans for the instrumental sections like the overtures, the marches and the dances; in this way *intérêt* will be born from out of the heart of the poem, and the singer, despite himself, will become an actor." See also vol. 1, livre premier, 138.

over the audience, and that this effect was capable of producing profound behavioural changes and instilling new and powerful moral convictions through the emotions.

In this regard, Antiquity was a significant influence on Grétry's conception of operatic moral instruction. I have argued that it can be perceived as a 'symbolic shorthand' for his convictions concerning the political implications of music, representing an important aspect of his argument in favour of empowering citizens to participate in the Revolution. This is further evidence against the propaganda narrative, which I have also problematised in the previous chapter by directing our attention towards the participative emphasis of revolutionary texts concerning the theatre.

Though they have not often been regarded as such, Grétry's *Mémoires* are implicitly political and help to illuminate the perceived political implications of opera and *opéra-comique*, as well as the shifting social positionalities which particularly concerned the role of the composer. I do not mean to suggest, of course, that Grétry regarded *opéra-comique* as a fixed object simply to be used for socio-political ends. Rather, I would suggest there was a more symbiotic relationship between composers and genre in which socio-political necessities corresponded with aesthetic objectives, both of which had their roots in the eighteenth century but helped to influence the nineteenth.

After all, I have demonstrated important continuities between Grétry's aesthetics and those of the *philosophes*, but also that Grétry transformed his intellectual inheritance in a striking manner which would further corroborate the claims I made in the previous chapter concerning the simultaneous presence of continuity and rupture in revolutionary aesthetics. Grétry took a sophisticated and creative approach to the application of sensationism in the opera house which in turn bore the hallmarks of operatic Romanticism, and as such it is problematic to label him as a 'conservative'. In particular, his powerfully psychological, symbolic emancipation of the orchestra – though owing a great deal to his contemporaries – produced a newly conceived language of expression in which instrumental metaphor, narrative, and image were essential, and this owed much to the pragmatism which characterises Grétry's particular aesthetic approach. His reconfiguration of the role of the composer is also intriguingly Romantic, with a great deal in keeping with the nineteenth-century notions of genius, greatness, and authority.

Of course, it remains a possibility that there was a discrepancy between what our composers conceptualised and what was composed during this period. In order to demonstrate that there was not, it is necessary now to direct our attention to the practical results of revolutionary theory of *opéra-comique*.

## Chapter V. *L'instruction se trouve à côté du plaisir* : *Opéra-comique* at the Salle Favart during the Revolution

*My good friend, my dear children, and you too, honourable Antoine, let us live forever reunited; let us serve the fatherland in fulfilling the duties that nature has imposed on us. It is only, I sense, in exercising domestic virtues that we can prepare ourselves for practising public virtues.* – Merval in *L'École en vacances* (1794)[1]

Having examined how opéra-comique was theorised during the Revolution and the perceived didactic significance of theatrical sensation more broadly, we must now determine whether what was theorised was also borne out in praxis. In order to do so, we will turn our attention to the repertory and institutional life of the Opéra Comique. In the present chapter I will seek to demonstrate that praxis and theory did indeed align at the Opéra Comique (situated at the Salle Favart during the Revolution), showing that sensationist procedures and techniques were vital tools in producing a didactic repertoire suitable for the social exigencies of the Revolution.[2]

Thus far the significance of *opéra-comique* at the Salle Favart as a moral and social pedagogical influence during the Revolution has not been studied, which is why I have chosen to focus on this particular institution rather than the Théâtre Feydeau. The Feydeau has already been evaluated in this way by McClellan, though I will nevertheless refer to scholarship on the Feydeau where appropriate: in part because I disagree with McClellan's conclusions concerning the propagandist function of the repertoire, but also because events and

---

[1] Louis-Benoît Picard and Claude-François Fillette-Loraux, *L'écolier en vacances, comédie en 1 acte et en prose, mêlée d'ariettes* (Paris: Huet, 1795), 36.

[2] A comprehensive list of new works premiered at the Opéra Comique between 1789-1799 can be found in Appendix A, omitting pieces which did not contain any significant music. The information presented in the appendix is collected from my own research in the library of La Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra, where the Opéra Comique's *registres* for the period are kept. They can be consulted on microfilm, and the daily receipts (*recettes journalières*) from 1789-1800 are catalogued under TH OC- 73 through 83. At the time of writing, these are currently in the process of digitalisation and should be accessible for online consultation soon. In addition, relevant information can be found in the minutes (*déliberations*) of meetings of the Opéra Comique's Comité (which was responsible for administrating the Opéra Comique's daily activites). These are catalogued under TH OC- 122 through 124. All of my figures were cross-referenced against unpublished data provided by David Charlton, to whom I am extremely grateful. Other helpful sources include André Tissier, *Les Spectacles à Paris pendant la Révolution*, 2 vols. (Genève: Droz, 1992; 2002); and Wild and Charlton, *Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique: Répertoire 1762-1972*.

developments at this institution naturally bear significance for our assessment of *opéra-comique* in general.[3]

We saw in the previous chapter that composers believed that the sentimental power of *opéra-comique* offered a significant opportunity to exert a positive moral influence on society; here, we will explore how this was worked out practically when socio-political necessities were aligned with aesthetic objectives. It included the introduction of new-style works into the repertoire (some of which were of a hybrid nature that would not have been permitted before the Revolution), but also the adaptation of established subgenres (like the *comédie mêlée d'ariettes*) in diverse and striking ways, both of which contributed to the demands of moral instruction in civic virtue. This argument therefore develops, as in Chapter III, on Feilla's assertion that revolutionary theatre sentimentalised the political, by demonstrating also that *opéra-comique* politicised the sentimental.[4]

Because these creators of *opéra-comique* innovated new ways of applying the power of operatic sensation to politico-didactic ends, my argument also bears implications for the continuity versus rupture debate; once more I contend that rupture and continuity can be regarded as existing simultaneously on various levels, and are not separated into the categories of institutional experience and aesthetic developments respectively.[5] However, any conception of rupture must be understood in terms of development and transformation, and not in terms of the iconoclastic 'explosion' described by Buckley.[6] Continuity is, therefore, the the most apt description for the context in which these changes happened.

At the same time, I also interpret the use of sensationist procedures for didactic ends as composers and librettists contributing to homogenising the revolutionary community and attempting to facilitate widespread participation in the Revolution's political project. This, I believe, is in keeping with what we have seen of the authorities' desires to harness theatre (seen in Chapter III) and composers' approach to *opéra-comique* particularly (Chapter IV). It contradicts the propaganda narrative, contributing to the corpus of scholarship on revolutionary opera which offers an alternative interpretation of the relationship between government and opera house. Whereas McClellan, for example, regards revolutionary *opéra-comique* ultimately as a tool of the state which became politicised in response to the government's 'propagandist needs' (an idea which he inherits more broadly from James Leith, and recapitulates without problematisation),[7] I propose that – in light of conclusions

[3] McClellan, "Battling over the Lyric Muse", 116-117, 120.
[4] Feilla, *The Sentimental Theatre of the French Revolution*, 10, 14-15.
[5] Darlow, ed., "Revolutionary Culture: Continuity and Change", 2-4.
[6] Buckley, *Tragedy Walks the Streets*, 6, 149.
[7] McClellan, "Battling over the Lyric Muse", 116-117, 120.

established about the revolutionary authorities and composers in the previous two chapters, and also of what we will see here in terms of audience behaviour in asserting their own feelings at the Salle Favart – sensationism functioned as a channel through which composers and librettists, the authorities, and spectators conducted a trialogue on virtue and mutually established the affective significance of national events.

Of course, what constituted revolutionary 'virtue' in one sense shifted throughout the Revolution. For example, it would hardly have been considered virtuous for a citizen to expend their effort and liberties in service of a monarch in 1793, whereas before the Terror this particular way of serving the nation was largely celebrated. Here again, though, I believe that rupture and continuity must be held in tension. Localised ruptures were indeed produced by the need for fairly frequent renegotiations of citizens' political loyalties; not only to leaders or governments, but ultimately to large-scale systems such as monarchism or republicanism (and derivatives of each). But I believe that we should situate these within a broader framework of continuity, for, as we will explore, the moral principles espoused by *opéras-comiques* are largely similar throughout 1789-1799: the necessity for resistance to tyranny (often bound up in criticism of the *ancien régime*); loyalty and devotion to one's family and friends; the value of love; and, perhaps most importantly, the collapsing of private and public morality, and the necessary subjection of an individual's rights and liberties in service of the collective community.

### ***Opéra-comique* at the Salle Favart, 1789-1799**

Perhaps the most striking feature of the Opéra Comique's revolutionary repertoire is the sheer diversity of the works on offer, both in terms of the subject matter and also the expressive style. In particular, many of the sub-genres of *opéra-comique* which appeared in the repertoire between 1789-1799 (see Appendix A) contrasted with more common types which had been in the repertoire for many decades, such as the 'comédie mêlée d'ariettes' and the 'comédie mise en musique'. These included, for example, the 'drame-lyrique mêlée d'ariettes' and the 'scène patriotique mêle de chants'. Many of these works were aesthetic hybrids exploiting a range of expressive themes and procedures collected from both lyric *comédies* and lyric *tragédies* (as we have seen in previous chapters).

Under the *ancien régime*, theatres had been governed through a system of *privilège*, in which certain established institutions were awarded the exclusive rights to the performance of specific genres. Theatres which flouted the system either by performing works of a genre protected by *privilège* or (more often) incorporated elements which traditionally belonged to

protected genres were liable to face judicial punishment (although this was not always enforced).

The system of *privilège* meant that, before the Revolution, the Opéra Comique was legally prohibited from producing and performing dramas in French set to through-composed music, because this was the prerogative of the Académie Royale de Musique. As Darlow has shown, the Académie (also known as the Opéra) increased their control during the 1780s by obtaining the exclusive right to perform 'music drama', making it more difficult for the Opéra Comique to perform anything which was not an *opéra-comique en vaudeville*. This would naturally include anything hybrid, if it incorporated both *comique* and *tragique* elements.[8] It was only legally possible for the Opéra Comique to do so after 13 January 1791, when a bill proposed by Isaac-René-Gui Le Chapelier was ratified which brought about the end of the system of *privilège* and afforded all theatres equal rights to perform any type of work they wished.[9]

Consequently, after 1791 composers and librettists offered hybrid *opéras-comiques* more frequently. They produced works which pushed the expressive boundaries of the medium, offering both *comique* (such as *ridicule*, domestic settings, and comic relief) and *tragique* elements (such as extreme pathos and spectacular staging). These included Méhul and Hoffman's *Stratonice* (3 May 1792); Grétry and Hoffman's *Callias ou Nature et Patrie* (19 September 1794); and Grétry and de Favières' *Lisbeth* (10 January 1797).

The first notable instance of such a work was Grétry and Sedaine's *Guillaume Tell* (9 April 1791), which was styled a 'drame tragique mise en musique'. Based on a traditional fable first transcribed by Hans Schreiber in 1475 (and more recently turned into a play by Antoine-Marin Lemierre at the Comédie Française in 1766),[10] it tells the story of the fictional Tell becoming a Swiss national hero by standing up to the tyranny of a Habsburg viceroy. Although this narrative preceded the Revolution, it was exceedingly well suited to revolutionary interpretation, and Sedaine and Grétry's version must be perceived in this light.[11] It was

---

[8] Darlow, "Staging the French Revolution: the *fait historique*," *Nottingham French Studies* 45 no. 1 (Spring 2006), 36-39. See also Mark Darlow, "Le vaudeville à la Comédie-Italienne, 1767-1789," in *Carlo Goldoni et la France: un Dialogue dramaturgique de la modernité (Revue des études Italiennes)* no. 53 (2007), ed. A. Fabiano, 87-95.

[9] However, the Opéra Comique had several non-legal methods of flouting the system before this date, as we shall discuss below in relation to Julia Doe's work on the institution and its repertoire.

[10] Jean-François Bergier, *Wilhelm Tell: Realität und Mythos* (Munich: Paul List Verlag, 1990), 63.

[11] See Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique*, 317. Charlton describe Sedaine and Grétry's collaboration as "powerful and filled with revolutionary fervour." Likewise, Albert Gier argues that their Tell "embodies not only the triumphant revolution, but also the moral basis of the new order: the system of middle class values… Guillaume Tell celebrates the achievements of the Revolution, but does not incite the populace to further change." See Albert Gier, "Guillaume Tell in French Opera: from Grétry to Rossini," in *Essays in Honor of Steven Paul Scher and on Cultural Identity and the Musical Stage*, eds. Suzanne M. Lodato, Suzanne Aspden, and Walter Bernhart (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002), 233-234.

typically sentimental with a great emphasis on domestic examples of filial affection and romantic love, employed to construct a didactic example of moral propriety which blended personal morality with civic virtue, as Albert Gier rightly indicates:

> As for Tell, he fights against injustice like a knight in shining armor, but at the same time he is a family man who loves his wife, his adult daughter Marie and his little son Guillaume. He stands for the values of the eighteenth-century bourgeoisie, and shows that a common man may overcome aristocratic arrogance. It is for this reason that he becomes the exemplary hero of the revolution.[12]

It is not difficult to comprehend how a plot in which a representative of the people stands up to absolutist tyranny could so quickly take on revolutionary connotations, and thus also a didactic role in offering the French public an example of patriotic virtue and devotion. That a hero of Swiss origin provided this example might seem surprising, however; after all, Swiss troops had a poor reputation amongst the French public in 1791 (Swiss troops had fired on Parisian citizens in 1789 – see fig. 3 – and mutinied in Nancy in August 1790), and had even been demonised in an earlier work at the Opéra Comique entitled *Le Nouveau d'Assas* (15 October 1790).

It is worth pointing out, however, that whilst Swiss troops in French service had a dubious record from a revolutionary perspective, the Swiss people had developed quite a reputation for themselves in France because of their continual acts of open or furtive rebellion against the ruling Diet and the Swiss Confederation's other aristocratic governors. The two nations also shared a common traditional enemy in Austria, against whose despotic power Tell rallies the people, and so a Swiss example in this instance offered a particularly apposite political message to unite French spectators against a powerful external threat.

From an aesthetic point of view also, Switzerland offered composers and librettists a unique opportunity to intensify the power of sensation in their *opéras-comiques*. Taking Cherubini's *Eliza ou le Voyage aux glaciers du Mont St Bernard* (premiered at the Feydeau on 13 December 1794) as a case study, Fend has shown that composers exploited Switzerland's reputation for extreme natural beauty (and particularly the Alps, which, as Andrew Beattle points out, are an important backdrop for the Tell legend in Swiss culture) in order to cultivate an expressive 'sublime' in their work.[13] This sublimity in relation to Switzerland had long been a trope in the aesthetic work of de la Tour, de Jaucourt, Marmontel, and Sulzer, for example, where it was theorised as an 'aesthetic justification' to seek the "'greatest possible effect' by musical means and to arouse feelings of 'terror and awe'." Composers like Cherubini responded, Fend shows, by depicting this sublimity in *opéra-comique* through techniques

---

[12] Gier, "Guillaume Tell in French Opera: from Grétry to Rossini", 232.
[13] Andrew Beattle, *The Alps: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 59-64.

which explicitly sought an intense emotional response from audiences, conveying an '*élan terrible*' with uncompromising force.[14] To use Switzerland as both a backdrop and a centrepiece (as the locus of an *opéra-comique*'s expressive procedures) in an *opéra-comique* like *Eliza* (or, equally, *Guillaume Tell*) was therefore perceived as a powerful way of exploiting the power of operatic sensation over the *sensibilité* of its spectators.[15]

Fig. 3. Claude Niquet, J. Pélicier, Abraham Girardet, and M. Vény, *Fusilade au Fauxbourg Saint-Antoine, le 28 avril 1789*. 1802. Engraving, 26 x 34 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France. Accessed 20/02/18, available: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6942716v.r=Fusilade%20au%20Fauxbourg%20Saint-Antoine?rk=21459;2.

[14] Michael Fend, "Literary motifs, musical form and the quest for the 'Sublime': Cherubini's Eliza ou le Voyage aux glaciers du Mont St Bernard," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 5 no. 1 (1993), 37.

[15] Spectators of the sublime in *opéras-comiques* certainly described their response to it in terms which were characteristic of a sensationist aesthetic. For example, Hibberd shows audiences of Cherubini's earlier *Lodoïska* (18 July 1791, also at the Feydeau) 'overwhelmed' by musical and visual effects, "barely able to speak after the 'enthusiasm' excited by music's 'sublime beauties'." See "Cherubini and the Revolutionary Sublime", 295. Here, the sublime evoked not only an emotional response but a physiological one too, very much in keeping with the way eighteenth-century sensationists spoke about the power of sensation over *sensibilité* (see Chapter I of the present study).

That the use of sublime Switzerland also had didactic significance is clear if we consider how the sublime had become synonymous with 'the unrepresentable idea of moral progress', as Hibberd argues. She explores how early classical conceptions of the sublime derived from Boileau's 1674 'translation' of Longinus sparked a century-long fascination with its moral charge, which in the Revolution culminated in a mode of compositional praxis employing sublime beauty in order to 'foreground' the themes of "human fear, courage and fraternity in the face of mighty, unpredictable, uncontrollable forces, and thus gesture to the opera's moral message of good triumphing over evil, the people's defeat of a tyrant."[16] In this sense, Grétry and Sedaine's decision to situate the contest of France and its enemies within the parameters of Swiss legend can be interpreted as a means of intensifying the very sort of sentimental expressivity which would offer a moral and political lesson to its spectators. It is, so to speak, a politicisation of the sentimental, not forgetting that Switzerland was the birthplace of Rousseau, whose own political theory depended upon the sorts of sentimental bonds between citizens which fostered an intersubjective morality as the basis of civic virtue.[17]

Certainly Sedaine saw the political significance of the sentimental power invested in the legend of Guillaume Tell. He wrote in his foreword:

> You scorned error on the banks of the Tiber,
> In order to re-enact the deeds of a people truly free;
> The Romans, busy defending their rights
> Or a debased throne hastening the collapse of Kings.
> But your art, more lethal to the power of despotism,
> Did better by depicting the greatness of the Swiss.
> In a striking image, in your lofty poem,
> You showed France to be a whole people
> Who rise up to the sounds of proud liberty,
> Who turn their pipes into trumpets of war;
> And, leaving their plough mid-furrow
> Run, sword in hand, to muster the battalions.[18]

For Sedaine, then, the Swiss setting of Guillaume Tell was the perfect symbol for the burgeoning liberty of the French people. The semi-factual legend of Swiss defiance in the face

---

[16] Ibid, 309.
[17] Roger D. Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), 50.
[18] Michel-Jean Sedaine, "Avertissement," in Michel-Jean Sedaine and A.E.M. Grétry, *Guillaume Tell* (Paris : Chez Maradan, 1794), ii-iii.

of Habsburg oppression was a helpful historical intermediary by which the librettist and composer could elucidate a selection of virtues which were now to be perceived as belonging to the French people. In Sedaine's foreword alone we might identify several of these: liberty, the stoic defence of the rights of the citizen, and a martial zeal against despotism and tyranny.

Importantly, the composition of this work was conducted in such a way that the isolation of these themes was contingent upon sentimental processes such as experiential imitation, which in turn relied upon the impressions of intense emotions working upon the spectator. As the playwright Jean-Nicholas Bouilly – also Grétry's would-be son-in-law – recounted in his memoires, the composer felt it his duty to write a score which transformed Sedaine's patriotic message into something that acted powerfully upon the hearts and minds of the audience:

> He proposed… to fill the score of *Guillaume Tell* with this local colour, this civic urge, this cry for the Fatherland and these songs so quintessentially Swiss; all likely to create the greatest effects and the strongest impressions on the stage. To achieve this ambition, he planned to get to Geneva and to spend, in the mountains of Helvetia, the time necessary to realise these lofty inspirations.[19]

It would appear, therefore, that Grétry intended to reinforce Sedaine's patriotic message through *vraisemblance* – in this instance the realistic representation of national and geographical elements – and emotional impression, which was an interesting pedagogical application of the traditional imitation-of-nature thesis from a composer whose very own writings reveal his subscription to it. The hybrid character of the work is evident: it offers the full range of expression, from moments of comic relief to tragedy, satirical *ridicule* to pathos; and functions both in terms of Marmontel's definition of the *comique* as a natural imitation of *mœurs and* customs, and in terms of *tragédie*'s ability to transcend these *mœurs and* customs through archetypes in order to offer general and profound comment on the state of humanity as a whole (for example, the relationship between government and citizenry, the state of political virtue, the need for national heroism etc).

As David Charlton has rightly pointed out, this was an innovative opera both musically and dramatically which in many ways pioneered the new developing modes of expression in *opéra-comique*. It experimented with moving emotional *tableaux* of profound emotional depth; imitated the fabular mystique of Swiss traditional song and story-telling; cultivated complex choral material in which the chorus functioned as a character in its own right; incorporated proto-Romantic orchestration rich with symbolic meaning; and pursued similarly symbolic motivic and tonal schemes.[20]

---

[19] Jean-Nicholas Bouilly, *Mes recapitulations*, vol. 1 (Paris: Louis Janet, 1836-7), 349.
[20] Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique*, 319-324.

Julia Doe has explored these developments in the praxis of *opéra-comique* in some detail, providing evidence that during this period the Opéra Comique (from its management to its composers and librettists) sought a new aesthetic legitimacy, made possible by institutional developments such as a new, expanded auditorium and a dramatically improved financial situation. This produced distinctive changes in the repertoire, characterised by the very sort of hybridity we have discussed: *opéras-comiques* on a far greater scale rivalling that of *tragédie lyrique*, but resisting any attempt to emulate the latter's content or style which was perceived as having become 'dull and monotonous'.[21] Above all, what distinguished this form of *opéra-comique*, which she terms *comedie heroïque*, was how it "challenged many of the traditional distinctions between serious and comic opera… [by incorporating] stylistic variety… developing a genre that included high drama and increasingly spectacular effects but also a healthy dose of comic relief."[22]

In the context of the rupture versus continuity debate, Doe's findings are particularly striking. She rightly points out that – although these aesthetic developments were only legally possible after 1791 – the Opéra Comique had been flouting the system of *privilège* well before the Revolution, and increasingly so since the opening of the Salle Favart in 1783.[23] Citing Winton Dean's 'Opera under the French Revolution', Doe concludes that we should revisit and correct the previous assumptions about the Revolution as a moment of rupture.[24] The Revolution did not produce a 'rejection' of 'the elite realm of tragedy' and an embracing of more 'popular' *opéra-comique* as a 'legitimate, national art', but rather the 'popular' *opéra-comique* gradually became legitimised as a French national art form, producing what I term a process of hybridisation. This process predated the Revolution.[25]

I concur with these conclusions concerning both the transformation of the repertoire and what this indicates about continuity. However, the reasons for this were not solely financial and logistical, as Doe suggests, but also rooted in aesthetic objectives which dated back to the Enlightenment. The new institutional situation simply made these objectives viable, practically speaking, and increasingly so after the abolition of *privilège* in 1791. Hybridity, as in *Guillaume Tell*, but also more broadly, therefore provides evidence of revolutionary artists contributing to an evolving culture of practice, with its roots in sensationist aesthetics, in order to respond to the political and didactic necessities of a very different, revolutionary social context. As had been theorised before the Revolution, a hybrid *opéra-comique* was a useful vehicle for a far broader range of sensations; but during the Revolution, these could be applied to exert a

[21] Doe, "French Opera at the Italian Theater (1762-93)", 143-196.
[22] Ibid, 150-151, 160-161.
[23] Ibid, 156-157.
[24] Dean, "Opera under the French Revolution", 81-82.
[25] Doe, "French Opera at the Italian Theater", 144.

powerful effect on audiences which would offer lessons in political virtue. In other words, contemporary socio-political necessity (moral instruction for the sake of civic unity) had aligned with pre-exisiting aesthetic objectives.

The didactic purpose of such works is particularly clear in patriotic operas which appeared with the express purpose of educating audiences in revolutionary values. They were not unique in the repertoire of *opéras-comiques*, however: similar operas appeared at the Opéra, for example, where they took on characteristics of the *tragédies lyriques* which formed its operatic corpus. At the Opéra Comique, though, *pièces de circonstance* were new creations which marked new sub-genres, often styled 'faits historiques' or 'tableaux patriotiques'. Like *Guillaume Tell* they were hybrid pieces in the sense that they mixed *comique* and *tragique* devices, but unlike *Guillaume Tell* they were based on famous scenes from national history or even contemporary events.[26] Composers and librettists achieved their pedagogical objectives in these works, as Charlton shows, by emphasising their allegorical function, with characters representing historical figures and narrative developments mirroring historical events in such a way that the parallels were clear to the audience, leaving them to draw moral conclusions steered by the principles espoused in the drama. These works therefore relied on what Charlton terms a 'coded' significance, in which the dramatis personae (and their actors), language, music, staging took on a symbolic weight to be interpreted by the spectator.[27]

The term 'pièce de circonstance' often referred to an opera of this nature which was based on contemporary events. *Le Prise de Toulon par les Français* (21 January 1794) by Jean-Frédéric-Auguste Lemière de Corvey and Alexandre-Vincent Pineu-Duval is an excellent example, for although it was styled a 'comédie en ariettes' it nevertheless performed the function of a *pièce de circonstance* by depicting the recapture of the port of Toulon by French troops in 1793.[28] It celebrated the bravery and patriotism of French troops and citizens with bold theatrical splendour.

---

[26] They were still representative of Doe's hybrid moniker, '*comédie heroïque*', however. She argues that their composers and librettists "drew on French history to enhance the prestige of lyric comedy, transforming it into a substantive genre capable of representing the nation on domestic and international stages." Ibid, 145.

[27] David Charlton, "The French theatrical origins of *Fidelio*," in *French Opera 1730-1830: Meaning and Media*, ed. David Charlton (Aldershot and Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2000), 67.

[28] The Siege of Toulon (September-December 1793) was the result of a royalist rebellion, the Jacobin authorities having been expelled earlier in the year and eventually replaced by a royalist administration. This rebellion was one of several uprisings that year in southern France: similar events transpired in Lyon, Avignon, Nîmes and Marseille. The brutality with which Marseille was subdued prompted the citizens of Toulon to call upon the Anglo-Spanish fleet for aid, which drew coalition troops into the affair. After several months, however, Revolutionary troops were able to gain the upper-hand (thanks in no small part to the efforts of a young Captain Bonaparte and his artillery), and the royalists were forced to evacuate the city with the help of their allies.

Fig. 4. Siméon Jean Antoine Fort, *Siège de Toulon. Investissement de la place.* 1824. Oil on canvas, 212 x 117 cm. Histoire par l'image (online). Accessed 20/02/18, available: http://www.histoire-image.org/etudes/siege-toulon-septembre-decembre-1793. The idea of this siege as a sublime event is captured well here, with Fort's piece characterised by striking natural beauty and the sprawling evidence of significant human activity in such a surrounding.

Although the libretto for *La Prise* is unfortunately lost, the narrative was described in a contemporary journal:

An English officer, commander of a fortification, falls in love with the niece of an innkeeper… however, the fearful anticipation of a siege soon-to-occur causes the Englishman to get his

mistress out [of Toulon]. Meanwhile, the armies of the Republic attack Toulon, and the forts and square are taken in the assault. The conclusion has a great effect. [29]

Raphaëlle Legrand points out that before composing these *pièces de circonstance*, librettists consulted readily available reports of the event in newspapers and liked to isolate heroic vignettes in particular. In the case of *La Prise*, Duval depicted the moment a soldier named Fréron heroically rallied French troops around the tricolour. Such *tableaux* were to form the patriotic heart of these sorts of operas, representing intense examples of devotion to the *patrie* in order to instruct citizens in revolutionary virtue.[30]

These *tableaux* were sentimental devices, originally conceived of in eighteenth-century sensationist aesthetics. Diderot, for example, had theorised the *tableau* as a dramatic means of exciting audiences to impassioned emotional states. In his conception, it was a poignant pause in the dramatic action, making an affective impact on spectators in order to encourage them to contemplate the meaning of the presented scene.[31] More recently it has been analysed by Leavens, who defines it as "a moving, emotionally heightened scene frequently presented in a naturalistic style… [often] accompanied by the presence of an intradiagetic spectator who is shown to be moved, thus indirectly testifying to the tableau's affective efficacy."[32] The progress of the dramatic narrative stops for a period of time, perhaps the length of a scene, allowing a character with whom the audience has forged a strong degree of identification (hence the term 'intradiagetic spectator') to become the locus of an event's sentimental impact, signalling to (and evoking in) the spectator the appropriate degree of emotional response. Diderot most frequently associated it with "scenes of pathos, scenes where sighs, sobs, and inarticulate cries along with pantomime (expressive postures, gestures and movements) both represent a suffering heroine's (or hero's) emotional turmoil and produce a similarly violent emotional response in the spectator."[33] The result, as Elisabeth Le Guin puts it, is a "mysterious, ideal synoptic moment, where narrative and indeed any temporality at all give way to an insuperably intense impression, a brand seared upon the mind of the observer."[34]

---

[29] *Mercure* universel, 7 Pluviôse an II/26 January 1794, 112.
[30] Legrand, "L'information politique par l'opéra: l'exemple de la prise de Toulon", 117.
[31] Denis Diderot, "Troisième entretien sur Le Fils naturel", 134-169.
[32] Leavens, *Figures of sympathy in eighteenth-century opéra-comique*, 8.
[33] Ibid, 8.
[34] Elisabeth Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2006), 80. Pierre Frantz distinguishes between two types of *tableau*: the 'tableau-stase' (appearing at the beginning of of a work or of an act), loaded with signs and information which help set the scene; and the 'tableau-comble', which is a finale emphasising the *pathétique* or the *sublime*. Both can be defined by their distinctive topoi, which he discusses in some detail, but Frantz points out that the emphasis of both is without doubt the act of rupturing both time and place (*temps* and *lieu*). The aim of this rupture was to blur drama and reality. See Pierre Frantz,

An excellent example of the use of *tableaux* is provided by Pierre Gaveaux and Jean-Nicolas Bouilly's *Leonore, ou l'amour conjugal* which premiered at the Théâtre Feydeau on 19 February 1798. The *Leonore* narrative – on which Beethoven would later base his only opera, *Fidelio* – tells how Leonore, a faithful wife, adopts a disguise to become a prison guard named Fidelio in order to rescue her husband, Florestan. Florestan initially faces an unpleasant demise at the hands of a corrupt prison governor, Dom Pizarre, whose crimes he had threatened to expose. Bouilly explicitly intended that the work make a political statement against Jacobin tyrrany, with the corrupt powers standing for the government of the terror who were seen as 'an image of the excesses of 1793-4'.[35]

The opening scene of Act II functions as a *tableau*. The curtain rises on Florestan, imprisoned, suffering, and alone. This is, in essence, a pause in the dramatic narrative, allowing Florestan time and space to lament the injustice of his fate. As Charlton points out, the music is essentially subordinated to producing an extraordinarily intense representation of suffering: "C minor tonality, horn tones, extreme orchestral dynamics and texture… [which] provides the fullest musical metaphor for the condition of suffering."[36] This affective scene of pathos plays upon the identification and the sympathy that the spectator has developed with Florestan, whose "sighs, sobs, and… cries [both inarticulate and articulate, in this instance]" create le Guin's 'mysterious, ideal synoptic moment' in which narrative and temporality indeed 'give way' to intense impression. It is for all intents and purposes, therefore, a Diderotian *tableau*, employed in order to prompt the audience to contemplate the abuses of tyranny and the suffering that corrupt authorities produce amongst virtuous citizens (not least because the singer performing the role of Florestan, Gaveaux himself, was known to Parisians as a political reactionary and an opponent of Jacobinism). This scene is politically didactic in its very essence, offering a lesson in liberalism in keeping with the new political climate established post-Thermidor in the wake of the Terror's collapse.[37]

In the *tableaux* offered in *pièces de circonstance* and *faits historiques* at the Opéra Comique, the impact of music was of the greatest significance. Composers worked to incorporate elements which would impact the emotions of patriotic audiences, including, for example, patriotic songs performed as solos by key characters: quintessential revolutionary airs like the *Carmagnole* and the *Marseillaise* which celebrated victory or represented the heat of the

*L'Esthétique du tableau dans le théâtre du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998), passim.

[35] David Charlton points out that "The text… is replete with the coded language ordinarily employed by the Right to refer to Jacobins and their allies: 'brigands', 'monstres', 'buveurs de sang humains', 'agents du crime', 'égorgeurs'." See "The French theatrical origins of *Fidelio*", 67.

[36] For Charlton's analysis of this scene and its political meaning, see ibid, 63-67.

[37] Ibid, 64.

battle. These sometimes alternated with grand choral moments, heard before, after and even during the combat which was depicted viscerally onstage. Lastly, there were long, programmatic orchestral passages intended only to accompany the on-stage action: very simple, tonally static, and constructed around gestural techniques like sudden dynamics and harmonic surprise. Simple but profound emotional impression was always favoured over dramatic or musical complexity.

An excellent example can be observed in Berton and Dejaure's *Le Nouveau d'Assas* (15 October 1790), a *Trait civique mêlé de chants* which portrayed a recent mutiny of a Swiss regiment in military service and the subsequent heroism of a French officer named Désilles. Berton and Dejaure relied on musical *tableaux* to romanticise self-sacrifice on behalf of the *patrie*: in one of Désilles' solos, for example, '*Amour sacré de patrie*' (Scene IX), time freezes, and from this place of stasis Désilles sings of the glory of military devotion accompanied with an arpeggiated melody, mimicking the sound of bugles. It follows a simple and functional tonal plan, rooted in the traditionally 'pure' key of C major with only brief and predictable movements to closely related keys; it is characterised by a martially homophonic yet unobtrusive texture, carefully constructed so as not to obscure the melody; functional harmony with very little chromaticism; and terraced dynamics to provide contrast.

Returning to the performance of *La Prise de Toulon,* reviews suggest that the combined efforts of its librettist and composer to employ the power of sensation for emotional effect had a significant effect on the public. One journalist wrote: "All French people, filled with regret at not having been actors in this sublime drama, could only console themselves by becoming spectators of a performance which retraced reality for them."[38] The journalist's account indicates a rather unusual expectation of the *pièce de circonstance*. From a purely functional perspective, of course, there was the expectation that *La Prise* would bring to life the events of Toulon's recapture. But according to this journalist, the affective power of this opera had fulfilled its purpose so well that it had essentially dissolved the line of demarcation between drama and reality.

Of course, whether the audience's response was indeed the same as reported cannot be verified. It is quite possible that in the political climate of the Terror, the journalist exaggerated the audience's reaction in order to earn the favour of the authorities. But even in this case, we must still acknowledge that there was an expectation and a desire that *opéras-comiques* of this nature should be able to harness the sentimental power of *vraisemblance* and allow the audience to experience — literally 'retrace' — the event itself, not merely observe it from afar.

---

[38] Legrand, "L'information politique par l'opéra: l'exemple de la prise de Toulon", 112.

Attesting to this blurring of drama and reality is the journalist's inversion of the two: the historical military action itself was described as the 'sublime drama', not the opera. In this climate of ambiguity where drama and event were so intertwined, the definition of participation was vague. As William H. Sewell points out, this was something which the revolutionaries had deliberately cultivated after 1789: they emphasised collective effort through association in such a way that the agency of the individual was subsumed within the will of the multitude.[39] In this theatrical context, such an ambiguity allowed the audience of *La Prise* to celebrate their own participation in the collective effort as much as the troops who actually fought in the engagement (regardless of whether they indeed availed themselves of this opportunity). Collective association entitled the French people to collective glory. All the spectator lacked was a projected experience of the event itself, which the opera provided and rendered emotionally powerful through the application of sensationist aesthetics. Its performance was perceived, therefore, as a means of fostering civic unity around a great triumph of the collective revolutionary experience.[40]

In this respect, Darlow's reading of how the *fait historique* (including other works which fit under the appellation '*pièce de circonstance*') achieved its political work is particularly helpful. Citing Herbert Lindenberger's claims that history plays, whatever their provenance and date, are "generally concerned with a continuity between past and present, that they express a national identity, whatever their subject, and that they are frequently inspired by moments of crisis in the real world", Darlow highlights how the past functions as a representation of the present in such works in order to foster community in the face of external threats, primarily through the identification fostered by depictions of communal cohesion which serve to represent the nation.[41]

For example, in Claude-François Fillette-Loraux and Henri Montan Berton's *opéra-comique* entitled *Agricol Viala* (premiered at the Feydeau on 9 October 1794), the nation is represented by a small and idyllic rural village community, threatened by rebels and enemies of the Revolution. A very young man (Agricol Viala), recently married, gives his life when he refuses to renounce his republican values, but comforts his mother by reassuring her that his sacrifice for the *patrie* is a noble and beautiful thing.[42] Viala's sacrifice (a real event) did not historically

---

[39] William H. Sewell Jr., "Collective Violence and Collective Loyalties in France: Why the French Revolution Made a Difference," *Politics and Society* 18 no. 4 (1990), 538-540.
[40] Pierre Frantz's conclusions about the *tableau* are a helpful parallel in this regard: he argued that their purpose was to produce a blurring of drama and reality (a 'rupture' in his terms) which acted powerfully upon the spectator in order to emphasise the present significance of the events which unfolded onstage. See Frantz, *L'Esthétique du tableau dans le théâtre du XVIIIe siècle*, 153-195.
[41] Herbert Lindenberger, *Historical Drama: The Relation of Literature and Reality* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1975), passim.
[42] Allan Forrest, *The Legacy of the French Revolutionary Wars: The Nation in Arms in French Republican Memory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 34-35.

save the Revolution, but in the drama it restores the community to what Darlow terms a 'moment of [moral] plenitude', thereby ensuring the triumph of political virtue and legitimising the project of Revolution. Political unity is encouraged through its apotheosis as the highest communal goal, worthy even of martyrdom. It fictionalises "the moment of constitution or reconstitution of the social fabric, central to senses of Nation and Revolution", in order to encourage the desire to imitate this virtue amongst spectators.[43] As such, the historical past functions as what Lynne Hunt has termed a 'mythic present', enabling a re-enactment of events which supposedly created the new revolutionary community in order to consolidate social bonds.[44]

The didactic function of these works, then, was primarily to forge bonds between spectators in the interests of national unity. Darlow does not consider the importance of sentimental aesthetics in facilitating this work, however, beyond describing it as a 'pedagogy of sentiment': a term which he unfortunately does not unpack, leaving us to conclude from context that he refers to the importance of personal, 'private' virtue rather than the grandeur of collective military action. I believe, however, that the sentimental is vital to the didactic work of the *pièces de circonstance* for reasons I have already alluded to: *tableaux*, patriotic songs, and programmatic orchestration were all employed to act powerfully on the spectator's *sensibilité* in order to foster the sort of connection, and identification, which would encourage imitation. In addition, the dramatic mechanism which Darlow identifies as the primary means through which Fillette-Loraux and Berton achieve their didactic objectives is essentially a politicised sentimental procedure, incorporating characteristic devices which were prized by eighteenth-century sensationists for their affective power over *sensibilité*. This is, as Darlow puts it, "the conjunction of domestic setting, love or marriage plot, and political or military allusion".[45] The conjunction functions as such:

> the plot is quite unusual from what one might expect… in that [Viala's sacrifice], and the subsequent celebration of it, displace the marriage from its usual place (the end of the work) to an imaginary time just before the beginning of the action. Hence in contradistinction with those plots which contain, intrinsic to them, a plan for marriage, normally opposed by a figure of authority, only for such obstacles to be overturned and the final reconciliation celebrated in the final scene,

[43] Mark Darlow, "Staging the Revolution: the *fait historique*", 79.
[44] Hunt describes this process in the context of festivals (preferred by Rousseau as a participative dramatic alternative to the theatre) which enabled a re-enactment of "the instant of creation of the new community, the sacred moment of the new consensus. The ritual oaths of loyalty taken around a liberty tree or sworn en masse during the many revolutionary festivals commemorated and re-created the moment of social contract; the ritual words made the mythic present come alive, again and again." See *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution*, 26-27.
[45] Darlow, "Staging the Revolution: the *fait historique*", 85.

instead the union is the starting point of the work, reinforcing an idyllic conception of the village (as microcosm of the Nation which external threats will endanger.[46]

This is, in essence, a politicised version of the sentimental procedures which characterised Diderot's hybrid *genre sérieux*. It contains all the elements which Diderot had theorised would act on the emotions in order to achieve its moral objectives: depicting with *vraisemblance* those situations which are "the most common" in life (especially the domestic); an absence of *comique* and *tragique* extremes (there is no burlesque farce, and yet the grandiose notion of national virtue is purposefully collapsed into the metaphor offered by intimate depictions of personal, private virtue); it is simple and accessibly written, with a straightforward narrative containing little 'intrigue'; and the characters, as discussed, perform an allegorical function by representing society as it was to be found. *Agricol Viala* effectively depends upon the same dramatic blueprint (though inverted, as Darlow points out) as Diderot's sketch for an *opéra-comique*, in which the marriage of two young characters produces a triumph of virtue within a small and *vraisemblable* community.[47]

Moreover, the theme of love (which will be discussed below) is central in making a powerful emotional impression and depicting intersubjective bonds which hold the community together, especially in this political context in which romantic love contributes and is ultimately subordinated to the love of one's community, as it is given up in a sacrifice to the nation. This is also the case in *La Prise de Toulon*, when a romance between a British officer and a young patriot woman leads to a difficult choice in which the woman's love the *patrie* triumphs. Romance is thereby used to demonstrate that the love of a virtuous republican can conquer the prejudices of absolutism. We should not forget that Leavens has shown how this depiction of relational 'intersubjective bonds' was fundamental to the process of strengthening those same bonds between citizens through sentimental *opéra-comique* under the *ancien régime*: eliciting experiences of 'sympathy' intended to emphasise "connections between self and other… between collectively imagined present, past and future."[48]

Finally, Darlow concludes that the result of the 'conjunction' in *Agricol Viala* (which I argue is outworked through the devices discussed) is ultimately a 'divine enthusiasm' amongst spectators.[49] And *enthousiasme*, as we have already discussed, was the sensationists' key to moral instruction. It intensified the impact of didactic lessons and excited a reciprocal desire for and commitment to the values depicted onstage.[50]

---

[46] Ibid, 85.
[47] See pp. 96-98.
[48] Leavens, "Figures of Sympathy in Eighteenth-Century Opéra-Comique", 225-226.
[49] Darlow, "Staging the Revolution: the *fait historique*", 87.
[50] For a discussion of Diderot's theory of *enthousiasme,* see pp. 85-86.

In short, *Agricol Viala* and other *pièces de circonstance* produced a politicisation of the sentimental in such a way that a striking manipulation of temporality was perceived to offer citizens the opportunity to participate in the great events of the Revolution. I would regard this as a dramatic parallel to the use of festivals described by Béatrice Didier: "the festivals permitted commemoration, a representation in the second degree in which time is no longer exactly history but becomes mythical".[51] As Hibberd has shown in her analysis of Cherubini's revolutionary *opéras-comiques*, "contemporaries understood the value of drama in terms of its extrinsic accuracy, and judged the story as if it were real experience, or at least a faithful mirror of real events."[52]

These techniques were not limited to *La Prise,* but applied equally to the multitude of similar *pièces de circonstance* composed in the Revolution, including *Le Plaisir et la gloire*, *Le Congrès des rois*, *Joseph Barra*, and others besides. They combined a taste for aesthetic revolution with the functional requirements of pedagogical concerns. But this was not limited to historical works only; lessons of political significance which depended upon *comique* processes, employed in order to impact on the emotions, could also appear in *opéras-comiques* which only drew connections with national historical events through allegory.

An excellent example is *Arabelle et Vascos ou les Jacobins de Goa* (7 September 1794) by François Marc and Jean Antoine Lebrun-Tossa. *Ridicule* directed against the enemies of social harmony was in this opera turned against those who had formerly encouraged the use of opera in service of the state: the Jacobins. What is most remarkable about *Arabelle* is that it was premiered only a little over a month after Robespierre and his regime had fallen from power, which is testament to the ability of librettists and composers to respond with astonishing rapidity to the shifting exigencies of revolutionary life. Indeed, Lebrun-Tossa explained in his preface to the libretto that the work was explicitly intended to be a political criticism of the reign of the Jacobins, and compared them to the tyrants of the Catholic Inquisition: "To depict onstage the Jacobins of the Inquisition is [the same as] to depict the Jacobins of Paris, since the two resemble each other most perfectly."[53] His bold remarks certainly seem justified by the events which unfold onstage. The *Annales dramatique* summarised the narrative:

[51] Béatrice Didier, "Sylvain Maréchal et le Jugement dernier des rois", in *Saint-Denis ou Le Jugement dernier des rois,* dir. Roger Bouderon (Paris : Editions Paris-Saint-Denis, 1993), 129.
[52] Sarah Hibberd, "Cherubini and the Revolutionary Sublime", 315.
[53] Jean Antoine Lebrun-Tossa, "Avertissement," in *Arabelle et Vascos, ou les Jacobins de Goa, drame-lyrique en trois actes* (Paris : Citoyen Toubon, 1795), 1. The Goa Inquisition was a Portuguese religious institution established in 1560 to combat heresy in colonial India. Like its European counterpart, it was responsible for the persecution and death of many individuals. See Antonio Jose Saraiva *The Marrano Factory: The Portuguese Inquisition and Its New Christians, 1536–1765*, tr. H.P. Salomon and I.S.D Sassoon (Leiden, Boston and Köln: Brill, 2001).

> D. Philippe, governor of Goa, and Vascos, his son, are in competition for the hand of Arabelle. The authority of the father wins it, and he is on the brink of marrying the young Indian. The day before this marriage will be celebrated, some Indian deputies come to complain to Philippe about the brutality that is practised in their fatherland by the tribunal of the Inquisition. Vascos' attempts to use his reputation had been in vain when pleading the cause of these poor wretches; their just complaints are not heard at all. Generous protector of the oppresed, Vascos decides to follow them into their fatherland, but his plan is uncovered. Suddenly he is arrested, and condemned to death by the tribunal of the Inquisition. Finally a courageous citizen, tired from labouring under the authorities' yoke, informs the people, who in an instant overturn the authority of the Inquisition, and Philippe with them. The piece concludes with the union of Arabelle and Vascos.[54]

The moral lesson derived from the allegory was clear and familiar (even if those ridiculed in the course of its impartation – a corrupt republican government – made an unfamiliar target for audiences): those in power should rule in partnership with and for the good of their people, for this is where true sovereignty lies. Political fanaticism is denounced as 'odious', and justice and humanity are apotheosised.[55] Though of course there was an historical element to the work in its setting, it differed significantly from the *fait historique* in that it offered no direct correspondence to any specific historical event, and, being set in Portuguese-occupied Goa, nor did it have any national ties to France.

The sentimental function of *Arabelle* was a vital foundation for the process of *ridicule* which Lebrun-Tossa employed to satirise the Jacobins. We note even from the synopsis of the plot that it is not only the popular will which the Inquisition are set against, but the timeless institution of true love and the unity and harmony of the family. After all, the father Philippe seeks to foil the blossoming and pure relationship between Arabelle and Vascos, but in doing so he also seeks to triumph over his son in a kind of inverse-Oedipal conflict. He is thus guilty of violating the equilibrium of the domestic family unity through his selfishness, undermining the symbiotic balance between paternal duty and filial devotion. Arguably, this aspect of his crime was more abhorrent to the revolutionary psyche than was his opposition to virtuous love. Simon Schama has demonstrated that the revolutionary concept of citizenship was, in essence, the public expression of the "idealized family",[56] and so any kind of parental tyranny was an abuse against the Nation. As Lynn Hunt points out, the revolutionaries conceived of

---

[54] Babault, ed., *Annales dramatiques, ou dictionnaire général des théâtres*, vol. 1 (Paris : Imprimerie de Hénée, 1808), 311.
[55] As Arabelle, the young daughter of an Indian chief, cries out: "Some Portuguese priests have sworn ruin. Their fanaticism sacrifices new victims every day. A dagger in one hand, the gospel in the other, they force the children of Vishnu to embrace a religion which is odious to them… let us defend the cause of justice and humanity." See Sophie Delahaye, "Le théâtre n'existe pas, ou comment réconcilier le passé, le présent et l'avenir de la Révolution française sur scène?," *The French Review* 85 no. 6, Les Lumières, au passé et à présent (May 2012), 1109.
[56] Schama, *Citizens: a Chronicle of the French Revolution*, xv.

their Revolution in part as a reaction to the abuses of absolutism-as-paternal-power;[57] to this end, excessive parental authority was seen as anathematic to revolutionary virtue.

Reading *Arabelle* through this lens, we must interpret Philippe's actions not only as crimes against his son but also against the nation. Indeed, his actions might even be read as contradicting the natural order. In keeping a young and fertile woman for his own pleasure, Philippe – a tired old man well past his prime – was denying his healthy and virtuous son the opportunity to procreate and thus renew the nation with a new generation of citizens. This too was considered a crime against the state, for procreation was seen as a national responsibility necessary in order to safeguard the future prosperity of the French republic.[58] As such, the proliferation of domestic and sentimental themes in *Arabelle* (especially the significance of family and of romantic love) provided vital components from which the didactic processes of the work were constructed, and they thus underpinned the very character of this particular iteration of revolutionary virtue – supporting one's family as an act of sacrifice for the nation – rather than being ancillary to it.

The compositional context of *Arabelle* also indicates an important problem in the traditional propaganda narrative: who had control of the repertoire? That Marc and Lebrun-Tossa were able to turn *opéra-comique* against the government within a month of their fall should at least cause us to question the idea that revolutionary opera could be wielded by the state to further their own agenda without this being mediated by other parties. In fact, here we have a situation which conforms better to the participatory pattern I have argued for in the previous two chapters of this study, in which the revolutionaries (both authorities and artists) sought to establish a 'symbiotic' relationship between artists and citizens (with the authorities in this instance more limited in their contribution) in which mutual participation was key to the success of the revolutionary project.

The artists (Marc and Lebrun-Tossa) offered a work criticising the abuses of tyranny and extolling the virtue of revolutionary values which they depicted as transcending the control of government, and the audience affirmed their convictions by continuing to attend performances (exercising the power of public opinion, which, as we have seen from Tackett,[59] had become an important component in the struggle for political legitimacy) between 7 October 1794 and 31 May 1795, demonstrating what Sophie Delahaye terms a 'sustained interest' – *un intérêt soutenu* – in the work's values and themes. She also points out that the reception was extremely positive, with audiences vigorously applauding allegorical references to both

[57] Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, 40.
[58] Carol Blum, *Strength in Numbers: Population, Reproduction and Power in Eighteenth-Century France* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 152.
[59] Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary*, 141-142.

domestic scenes of virtue, and to political judgement on tyrants and the restoration of justice. The audiences were not afraid to express their opinion.[60]

The *comique* power of *ridicule*, coupled with the sentimental trope of the domestic life, had therefore been successfully – and very quickly – deployed to work directly against those who some have portrayed as directing *opéra-comique* for their own ideological reasons. This includes McClellan, who describes the sentimental procedures of *opéra-comique* during the Terror as evincing instead a 'republican sensibility' which apparently served the Committee of Public Safety by offering political themes that "served the Republic's immediate propagandists needs."[61] This approach does not account for the political agency of artists and audiences who, as the case of *Arabelle* demonstrates, also engaged in expressing their own political voices in and around the performance context of *opéra-comique*.

If the positive reception of moral principles did indeed relate to the use of sentimental tropes which were employed to act on the *sensibilité* of audiences, we may well wonder which kinds of sentimental themes proliferated in the production of *opéras-comiques* which espoused revolutionary values. I believe that three themes had a formative role: romantic love, scenes of domestic virtue and familial devotion, and the moral virtue of self-sacrifice.

In the first instance, the theme of 'romantic love' (so ingrained in opera culture, but here brought to bear on the political context) was applied throughout the Revolution, although the ways in which it was applied varied. We have discussed one permutation in *Arabelle*, for example, but as we shall see in the next chapter, in *Pierre le Grand* (1790) it became the vehicle for a compelling lesson on the nature of sovereignty, offering a powerful and emotive representation of the intersubjective bonds which should bind a ruler and their citizens; in *Le Nouveau d'Assas* (1790) and *La Prise de Toulon* (1794) it symbolised the triumph of revolutionary sacrifice over absolutism and *pouvoir arbitraire*; in Méhul and Hoffman's *Euphrosine ou le Tyran corrigé* (1790) it was the means by which tyranny was reformed; and in *Ariodant* (1799) how it was overcome; in *Guillaume Tell* (1791) it was the motivation to fight for justice against despotism; in Méhul and Forgeot's *La Caverne* (1795) it signalled social tolerance and an end to oppression.

Second, having already alluded to some revolutionary significances of this theme in *Arabelle*, scenes of domestic virtue and familial devotion proliferated widely across the Opéra Comique's repertoire throughout the decade. The virtuous domestic life or profound familial love were a particular focus of many works, including Chapelle and C.N. Favart's *La Famille réunie* (1790), Grétry and Champrion's *Joseph Barra* (1794), Dalayrac and Andrieux's

[60] Delahaye, "Le théâtre n'existe pas", 1102.
[61] McClellan, "Battling Over the Lyric Muse", 116-117.

*L'Enfance de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1794), Picard and Fillette-Loraux's *L'Écoler en vacances* (1794), Dalayrac and Bouilly's *La Famille américaine* (1796), Dalayrac and Marsollier's *Marianne ou l'Amour maternel* (1796), and Grétry and de Favières' *Élisca ou l'Amour maternel* (1799).

Frequently, theatrical depictions of the domestic sphere used it to espouse ideals of civic and personal virtue. These emphasised a *vraisemblable* mode of representation which fostered the sorts of touching themes that offered audiences strong possibilities for identification. In *L'Écoler en vacances* (13 October 1794), for example, the protagonist Merval learns that to fulfil one's duty to the *patrie* one must also fulfil one's duty to the family. After leaving his wife to live in Paris with a woman of low repute and no morals, his honourable spouse takes solace in caring for her two children. Eventually Merval is persuaded to return home to his domestic and filial duties, where he regains his family. In the last scene, Merval informs his family: "My good friend, my dear children, and you too, honourable Antoine, let us live forever reunited; let us serve the fatherland in fulfilling the duties that nature has imposed on us. It is only, I sense, in exercising domestic virtues can we prepare ourselves for practising public virtues."[62]

Dalayrac and Andrieux's representation of Rousseau's childhood in *L'Enfance de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* is a particularly intriguing work in this regard, not least because it exploited the reputation of a *philosophe* whose work on theatre and sentimental aesthetics proved so formative for composers and librettists of *opéra-comique*. Composed to mark the transferral of Rousseau's remains into the revolutionary Panthéon on 11 October 1794, it was written very much in the style of Rousseau's own sentimental aesthetic and treated familiar themes like education, paternal affection and devotion; but all were devoted to espousing republican values. Andrieux portrayed the young *philosophe* on a quest for justice against the absolutist authorities of the town in which he lives, and fastidiously worked to ensure that he depicted the *vraisemblable* cast of virtuous family members and bourgeois friends as the inspiration and motivation of Rousseau's republican efforts.

As Gauthier Ambrus points out in his preface to a recent edition of the libretto, the sentimental, the moral and the republican are inextricably intertwined in this *opéra-comique*. He shows that this works on several levels. First, Dalayrac's intensely sentimental style of composition evoked strong memories for audiences of the domestic moral works he had produced before the Revolution (including *L'Amant Statue* of 1785 and *Nina, ou la Folle par amour*, 1786), and of more recent *opéras-comiques* (*La Prise de Toulon* and *Le Congrès des rois*, both 1794) which forged a link between the sentimental and the republican. Then there was the context of the work's composition at the time of Rousseau's transferral to the Panthéon, which allowed

[62] Picard and Fillette-Loraux, *L'écolier en vacances,* 36.

Andrieux to exploit the wider ideological link which the authorities were seeking to establish between Rousseau's own sentimental style and his supposed political contribution to the Republic. In addition, he points out that *L'Enfance* cleverly subverts a long-established tradition in French theatre of representing great national heroes performing great works, by inviting the spectator in to an imagined domestic interior of Rousseau's life where the moral value of his daily life is defined by republican values, such as overcoming absolutism and social injustice on behalf of the humble citizen. The result is that great social acts are domesticised to a level which is relatable, which enhances its sentimental impact on the spectator who can identify more with such a depiction. In this instance, a *comique* aesthetic is far more powerful than the options offered by the spectacles of the *tragique* tradition.[63]

But the taste for sentimentalising the life and times of Rousseau dated back much earlier in the Revolution to the 31 December 1790, when a play by Bouilly entitled *Jean-Jacques Rousseau à ses derniers moments* appeared. Although this was not an *opéra-comique* (but rather one of the occasional spoken works which appeared at the Opéra Comique), as a parallel work similarly focused on the sentimental relevance of Rousseau to the moral values of the Revolution (in which the playwright cleverly exploited themes of domestic virtue in order to extol the values of the Revolution, moreover) it is worth examining. In this instance, the work's values were hardly republican – Bouilly was, as we have seen, a moderate and a constitutional monarchist – but, rather, offered lessons on the value of social unity in pursuit of political co-operation between government and citizen.

Fictionalising the final days of Roussseau's life, Bouilly set certain didactic vignettes into relief against the backdrop of the *philosophe*'s retirement in Ermenonville. There are two focal points in the play. The first is when Jean-Jacques returns from a walk, and informs his wife Thérese of a poor widow and her children living near to their home. He tells her that they have a duty to support her, and announces his intention to provide these neighbours with an annuity from the profit of his writing. This lesson in both personal and collective morality – that, according to Rousseau, citizens are all part of the larger family of the Nation, and thus have a duty of care towards each other – depends heavily upon Bouilly's sentimental depiction of two family models which both serve to create a poignant pathos: one is the family in need due to injury (the death of the father) and misfortune, and the other is a family able to extend its protective network of devoted relationships in order to care for those in need.

[63] Nicolas-Marie Dalayrac and François-Guillaume-Jean-Stanislas Andrieux, "L'Enfance de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, comédie en un acte, mêlée de musique de François Andrieux et Nicolas-Marie Dalayrac: présentation par Gauthier Ambrus," ed. Gauthier Ambrus, Revue Orages, accessed 03/01/20, http://orages.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/enfance.pdf), 212-217.

Accordingly, Bouilly's script (and indeed the libretto of *L'Écoler en vacances*) collapsed the distinction between private and public virtue, which permitted him to transition smoothly into instructing lessons in civic virtue with his second focus. The focus, although didactic, has less to do with morality and is more concerned with glorifying the early developments of the Revolution. It is imparted on Jean-Jacques' deathbed as he prepares to make his last will and testament known to the landowner of his estates, Monsieur de Girardin. The *Esprit des journaux françois et étrangers* reported on this scene in February 1791: "One remarkable scene is the one where Rousseau, feeling death approaching, gives M. de Girardin the manuscript of his *Social Contract.* The public euphorically applauded this form of 'prophecy' made by the proprietor of Ermonville, as a "sign" of the honours which the future would bestow on the immortal author and his work."[64]

The significance of this scene is that it anachronistically attempts to manipulate the historical image of Rousseau to fit the contemporary picture of a proto-citizen of the new regime, and the *Social Contract* as the ideological foundation of the Revolution, in turn portraying the Revolution as the inevitable culmination of decades of intellectual progress. It is anachronistic because the idea of a 'prophetic' Rousseau pre-empting (and indeed causing, no less) the Revolution does not fit with the historical Rousseau, although it was deeply ingrained in the revolutionary mindset. As Joan McDonald has pointed out in a recent and sensitive study of his politics, "the revolutionary cult of Rousseau did not in fact originate in the study of Rousseau's political theory" but in an idealised set of assumptions about his work, and those who opposed the ideals of the Revolution were equally likely to quote Rousseau to justify their own ideology.[65] The motivation behind Bouilly's anachronism, of course, was to exploit Rousseau's reputation as a man of reason, profound wisdom, and sentimental insight in order to justify the social project of the Revolution and by identifying these particular qualities within it. In other words, his historical reputation as an enlightened, progressive 'hero' legitimises the political radicalism of the Revolution.

Both scenes conform to the eighteenth-century sensationist aesthetic in two ways. First, as John H. Planer would put it, they are representative of "an artist's naïve or calculated appeal to vicarious sympathy, pity, or grief for emotional effect, an exaggeration to evoke in the beholder an excessive and prolonged emotional response".[66] Thus they contain that vital pre-requisite for sentimental influence: a deeply affective appeal to the emotions of the spectator

[64] L'esprit des journaux françois et étrangers, February 1791, 335.
[65] Joan McDonald, *Rousseau and the French Revolution 1762-1791* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2013), 3, 5.
[66] John H. Planer, "Sentimentality in the Performance of Absolute Music: Pablo Casal's Performance of Saraband from Johann Sebastian Bach's Suite No. 2 in D Minor for Unaccompanied Cello, S. 1008," *The Musical Quarterly* 73 no. 2 (1989), 215

through the senses. The importance of the domestic in this is twofold: first, as a readily identifiable context or climate it provides a compelling vehicle for *vraisemblance,* which in all sensationist models was of vital import in cultivating *intérêt* and facilitating the process of identification through which the passions are more readily engaged. Second, it affords the spectator the sight of the characters at their most vulnerable, as they really are at their most comfortable rather than presenting a social veneer to the outside world.

With all projections stripped away, the audience thus catch a more tangible glimpse of 'truth' in which personal virtue is perceived to be a fundamental aspect of the character's nature. This imbues it with a compelling pathos. For example, if the family (the inhabitants of the domestic aesthetic) was the private nucleus from which the public expression of citizenship derived, as Schama claims,[67] then the affective demonstration of a virtuous family devoted to each other was a powerful means of constructing a collective sense of revolutionary citizenship. This was exactly the sort of domestic-yet-patriotic theatre which Clozet and Baillet contended for in their 1793 reports, as we have seen. Perhaps then we might go further than Cecilia Feilla and argue that not only was the domestic aesthetic a "necessary complement" to theatrical patriotism,[68] but very often the germ from which it derived.

The third sentimental trope of particular note in the repertoire was self-sacrifice. In contemporary scholarship this has come to be associated closely with the time of martial urgency under the Terror of 1793-1794; however, it was in fact prominent both before and after this period. For example, in Dezède's patriotic *comédie mêlée d'ariettes* entitled *Ferdinand, ou la suite de deux pages* (1790), the romanticisation of self-sacrifice for the King was a particular focus, if a little indulgent. Indeed, the libretto, unfortunately lost, appears to have consisted entirely of *tableaux* depicting moments of benevolent virtue and good kingship.[69] The *Journal général de France* reported on one particular vignette which received tremendous applause:

> The author knew to sprinkle interesting moments throughout the work such as this, taken from the life of Frederick [the Great]: the King asks a grenadier: what time is it? — Seven o'clock, sire. — You're running fast. — My watch is never slow! — Let's see. — Here you are, sire. — What have we here? A musket ball! — It takes the place of my watch, sire. It tells me at all hours that I must die for your majesty.[70]

[67] Schama, *Citizens: a Chronicle of the French Revolution*, xv.
[68] Feilla, *The Sentimental Theater of the French Revolution*, 131-132.
[69] Maurice Tourneux, ed., *Corréspondence litteraire, philosophique et critique par Grimm, Diderot, Raynal, Meister etc. Revue sur les textes originaux comprenant outre ce qui a été publié à diverses époques*, vol. 16 (Paris: Imprimerie A. Quantin, 1882), 49-50.
[70] Journal général de France 174 (23 June 1790), 708.

Charlton's recategorisation of 'rescue opera' offers us a lens through which to interpret this particular trope in such a context. Though *Ferdinand* was not, strictly speaking, a rescue opera in the sense of featuring rescue from 'a place of detention', Charlton points out that in delineating this category of opera we are obliged to interpret the term 'rescue' broadly in order to account for many of the tropes which scholars have, over the years, identified as characterising 'rescue opera'.[71] It fits, in fact, as a 'humanitarian' opera, which emphasised that social justice could only be attained ultimately by self-sacrifice on behalf of the collective community.[72]

The means by which this so-called justice was attained historically, however, was often shockingly violent. Grétry and Champ-Rion's *Joseph Barra* (5 June 1794) is an excellent example. The political reference point for this *opéra-comique* was the death of Joseph Barra, a young patriot killed brutally at the age of fourteen (some accounts put them as young as twelve) whilst resisting counter-revolutionary forces in an uprising against the Republic in the Vendée. He was immortalised in the public eye, his deeds memorialised in the great quantity of songs, hymns and theatrical pieces produced during 1794. The opera depicted a fictionalised interpretation of his life, rather than the moment of his death. Remarking on the appearance of *Joseph Barra* at the Opéra Comique, a journalist for *Le Moniteur* wrote:

> The author of *Joseph Barra* has not put any action in his drama. He contented himself with showing us the inside of [Barra's] house, and with developing the character of those who reside within: a sensitive, virtuous mother, enjoying the delights of being surrounded by children worthy of her; the sisters of Barra, well raised; a child of eleven years, their brother, boiling with courage, indignant that his age and his size does not permit him to fight the rebels; an uncle who had been a drummer [in the military] but who can be one no longer, ever since a cannon ball 'took his sleeve, and his arm with it' (a bit of a drunkard, but a good and frank republican); Joseph himself, who the author shows us to be good, humane, generous, loving of his mother and family, devoting his blood for

[71] Charlton points out that the exact nature of 'rescue opera' is problematic to delineate. The term did not arise until the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, and various scholars identify different characteristics as its key constituent elements, including 'devotion to the ideals of "humanity', 'the closer involvement of opera with real-life situations', and 'the assurance that freedom would always triumph over tyranny'. However, Charlton proposed a helpful recategorisation which leaves us with three types of rescue opera: the 'tyrant opera' in which injustice is personified by an evil character to be overcome; the 'humanitarian opera', which emphasises that sacrifice is necessary for justice and freedom; and the 'catastrophe' opera, in which some form of natural disaster suggests moral degradation. Keeping these in mind, we recognise that 'rescue opera' as a template surely predates the Revolution, with key examples including Sedaine and Monsigny's *Le roi et le fermier* (1762) and *Le déserteur* (1769), and Sedaine and Grétry's *Richard Coeur-de-lion* (1784). See David Charlton, "Rescue Opera," Oxford Music Online, accessed 06/01/20, available: https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.23227.

[72] In this context, it seems that the term 'rescue' might be best applied in relation to the notion of a rescue from social injustice: a 'national' rescue, so to speak.

the fatherland and desiring only to preserve his life for the benefit of this same family that he feeds with his wages.[73]

It is striking that Grétry and Champ-Rion chose not to depict the moment of Barra's sacrifice, but instead prioritised cultivating a sentimental aesthetic. This is reflected in the journalist's own emphases too, for instead of discussing the moral principles of the work (which, as we have seen, was common in reviews of *pièces de circonstance*), they focused on the sublimity of the domestic aesthetic and indicated the affective power of this 'nouveauté assez piquante'. The politics of the work, it seemed, were inextricable from the emotions which were evoked through techniques (such as depictions of the *vraisemblable* domestic, familial love, even *tableaux*, considering the apparent lack of dramatic 'action'); and so we see sensationism securely at the service of republicanism in this work.

Though it is not depicted, the violent sacrifice is implicit in the opera. It resides in the consciousness – or perhaps cultural memory – of the spectators, in which it was vivid, for the opera premiered at the same time as Barra's sacrifice was officially commemorated by the inauguration of his bust. This was followed by a national festival held in his honour, and the Feydeau's violent depiction of his sacrifice in *L'Apothéose du jeune Barra* (libretto by François-Pierre-Auguste Léger, music by Louis-Emmanuel Jadin, premiered on 5 June 1794). The spectators are left to draw the connection between the sentimental inner life of the Barra household and the violent sacrifice he made on the battlefield.

As Derek Hughes points out, the politically instructive function of self-sacrifice during the Revolution occurs because spectators come to perceive the laying down of one's life as a transaction that might (and in the right context, should) be replicated. The moment itself, whether present in the operatic depiction or only implicitly in cultural memory, becomes a metonym for this transaction in which 'life is the currency', and the *patrie* is shown to be worth this exchange.[74]

We recognise, however, that this transaction was not simply a cold or logical process which Hughes' language of 'transaction' might imply, and nor was it intended to be interpreted by spectators on a purely cognitive level; rather, it had a deep emotional, even spiritual, resonance because it tapped into a cultural memory saturated with the religiosity of Catholicism. By evaluating the speeches of numerous revolutionary leaders, Jesse

[73] Le Moniteur universel 288, 18 Messidor an II/6 July 1794, 1177.

[74] Derek Hughes, *Culture and Sacrifice: Ritual and Death in Literature and Opera* (New York: Cambrige University Press, 2007), 127, 273-274. Hughes also shows that the event itself (and not just the symbolic depiction of a general sacrifice) was of the highest importance during the French Revolution, breaking from preceding approaches to sacrifice in which the event being averted was preferred (as in the 'masterpieces of Goethe, Gluck, and Mozart). As Hughes puts it, fashions for 'averted sacrifice' gave way because "this was no longer a time to deplore sacrificial deaths."

Goldhammer shows how the revolutionaries' understanding of an individual's sacrifice on behalf of the Nation was essentially a secularisation of the model of Jesus Christ, whose death expiated the sins of the world. Self-sacrifice was perceived as 'a sacrificial mechanism of purification' replicable in revolutionary society for the end of social unity:

> In giving his life in order to purify his followers of sin, the example of Jesus shows how sacrificial exchange fosters human spiritual transformation… the secularization of the willingness to die for the Christian *corpus mysticum* became a quasi-religious duty of subjects and citizens to sacrifice themselves for the good of their countries or fatherlands. This secular, political interpretation of Jesus' crucifixion thus gave rise to the concept of the political martyr who dies not for heavenly redemption, but rather for earthly immortality in the historical memory of that political community for whom the self-sacrifice was made.[75]

That the communication of these sacred resonances of self-sacrifice depended on engaging with citizens (and, in our context, spectators) on the sort of affective level which the sensationists had argued for is attested to in the work of Antoine de Baecque, who has shown that 'death' (both as a concept and as representation) intrinsically 'engender[ed] the language of emotion, hate or compassion'. Representations of the corpse became common, as we recognise from the outpouring of art produced in response to national martyrs like Marat and Barra (see, for example, the 1794 portrait of Barra below), and they revealed the 'cruelty' of 'conspirators and counterrevolutionaries' in such a way that spectators were compelled to endure the profoundly intense feelings of terror that the political and international situation had produced. De Baecque demonstrates that they did this primarily by themselves embracing the repulsive imagery of the corpse as their own identity in order to become terrifying in turn. As he puts it, it 'behoove[d] them to be terrifying' in order that they might successfully 'endure' their own anxieties. The result, he argues, was a shared victory over enemies both external and internal (even within their own sub-consciousness) which served to 'bind the political community together.[76]

This is, I would argue, borne out in the striking juxtaposition between the sentimental world of *Joseph Barra* and the horror-inducing reality of a child's martyrdom which was, as I have said, vivid and fresh in the national consciousness at the time of the opera's performance. In refraining from depicting the violence of Barra's death itself, it could be argued that Grétry and Champ-Rion were simply avoiding or sanitising the truth. But this does not take into account the context in which the work was produced. It was hardly possible to avoid the violent reality

[75] Jesse Goldhammer, *The Headless Republic: Sacrificial Violence in Modern French Thought* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 35-36.
[76] Antoine de Baecque, *Glory and Terror: Seven Deaths Under the French Revolution* (tr. Charlotte Mandell) (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), 7-9.

of the child's death when – across the nation – festivals in memory of the event explicitly drew citizens' attention back to it. Then, of course, it was simultaneously being staged at the Théâtre Feydeau. As such, it seems more convincing to conclude, with Goldhammer and de Baecque, that the sentimental depiction of *Joseph Barra* is in itself an attempt to 'endure' terror by embracing its terrible truth as their own: by domesticising and then celebrating it within the most intimate setting imaginable to a revolutionary mind– the family.

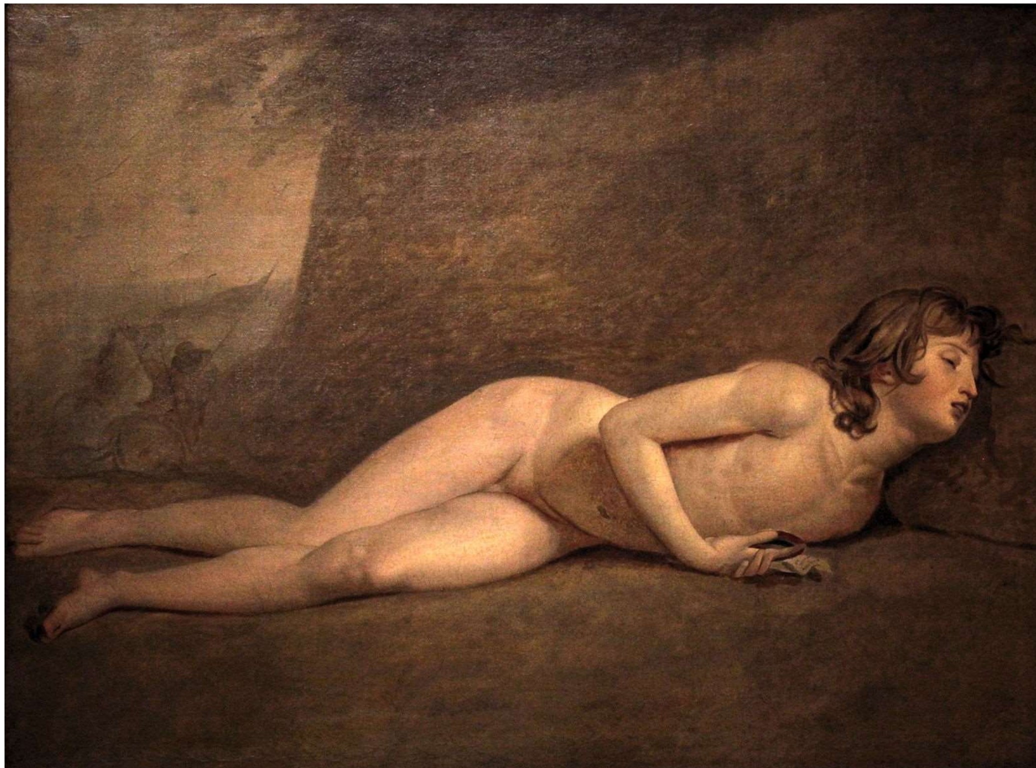

Fig. 5 Anonymous (un Élève de Jacques-Louis David), *Le Mort de Barra*. 1794. Oil on canvas, 96.2 x 129 cm. Wikimedia Commons (online). Accessed 28/10/19, available : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mort_de_Barra_IMG_2266.JPG.

The sentimental power of these works can therefore be framed as an attempt to elicit the sorts of strong emotions (fear, hate, compassion, love) which would serve the political community by binding citizens in unity and encouraging them to participate in the Revolution, having adopted its anxieties as their own. It was perceived to serve, therefore, as something of a cathartic inoculation for spectators against the anxieties of the moment, in very similar terms to the sentimental '*médecine*' which d'Alembert had posited would protect against moral disease. Moreover, in this configuration, the theatre had in essence become a vehicle for the

sort of sentimental training that sensationists like Vandermonde, Rousseau and Diderot had advocated for, because it offered audiences a positive experience of desirable sensations (compassion, love, courage, 'righteous' hatred) which would engender virtue, and also allowed them to experience (and reject) negative sensations (fear).[77] This was, however, a complete politicisation of the process envisioned by the sensationists, with abstract notions of virtue becoming cemented in the political themes identified by Charlton as 'humanitarian' within the context of the triumph of revolutionary justice.

The continued prevalence of these tropes between 1789-1799 is also evidence of a high degree of consistency with regards to what constituted revolutionary virtue. Love, domestic fidelity, and self-sacrifice were important revolutionary values (though not exclusive ones) which *opéras-comiques* produced throughout the Revolution sought to instil. But they also pointed towards a deeper, continuing notion of revolutionary virtue which persisted between 1789-1799: the individual's voluntary subjection of their liberty and person to the collective good of the revolutionary community (whether represented as a whole or as individuals). We shall see in the next chapter, for example, that romantic love in *Pierre le Grand* (1790) primarily represents a sacrifice that the individual owes to the nation; the domestic intimacy of family life in *Élisca* (1799) serves to foreground the willingness of a mother to lay down her life for her son;[78] and martyrdom in *Joseph Barra* (1794) signifies that the life of the individual – even of the most innocent and virtuous – is a sacrifice worthy of the *patrie*.

In recent decades, scholars have presented compelling evidence that this concept was indeed at the heart of notions of revolutionary virtue even in a wider context. Marisa Linton, for example, makes this point in arguing that political virtue was essentially rooted in authenticity during the Revolution, with a growing and ultimately intense belief that "the highest form of politics is based on devotion to the public good and the abnegation of self-interest."[79] Though her focus is on the Jacobins specifically, Linton points out that this also reflects the general political climate they found themselves in before the Terror began in 1793; in fact, she argues that the Terror was ultimately caused by politicians' failure to cope with their lack of integrity in the earlier years. In her words, it was the result of their inability to align their internal, selfish ambitions with their external, projected appearance of self-sacrificing 'self-abnegation' which was necessary to be perceived as politically 'virtuous'.[80] Although for politicians this was

[77] See p. 73, 131
[78] For an analysis of the narrative and the significance of domestic intimacy in *Élisca*, see Raphaëlle Legrand, "Elisca ou les dangers de l'exotisme," in *Grétry et l'Europe de l'opéra-comique*, ed. Philippe Vendrix (Liège: Mardaga, 1992), 155-166.
[79] Marisa Linton, *Choosing terror: virtue, friendship and authenticity in the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4.
[80] Ibid, 5, 272-284.

particularly intense and the consequences of being ‘found out’ during the Terror were especially severe for them (as evidenced by the ‘Politicians’ Terror’), the same demands of self-sacrifice for the community were felt by citizens too.

The reality of this corporate sacrifice is made particularly clear, I believe, in the work of Nira Kaplan, whose study of ‘emulation’ in eighteenth-century French pedagogy demonstrates that revolutionary application of this process – in which individuals learnt morals and ‘correct social comportment’ primarily through imitating virtuous examples offered to them, producing a “virtuous competitiveness natural to all” – developed to emphasise public virtue over private as the individual’s agency became subsumed within the community’s. Kaplan points out: “while not effacing its influence on moral development, [revolutionary emulation] nevertheless tended to lead to a relative neglect of personal character by linking public virtue more explicitly to the ability or *capacité* to produce more concrete social benefits.”[81]

Kaplan argues this shift from private to public virtue occurred principally because school and *collège* curricula shifted to cultivate more competitive modes of learning and assessment (including public ‘prize contests’ in Latin verse between students) that were intended to produce students capable of contributing to the national good, rather than simply virtuous citizens.[82] She also extends her study beyond Linton’s, showing that this mode of virtue-as-service continued until the end of and even beyond 1794, with a return of state-centralised schools which sought to form productive citizens rather than virtuous individuals.[83] Kaplan’s conclusion has been corroborated more recently by Aurelian Craiutu’s study on political ‘moderation’, who has shown that the very definition of ‘virtue’ had come to focus explicitly on the collective interest: virtue was “no longer dependent primarily upon the virtuous character of individuals, but was predicated upon the existence of a sound balance of powers, institutions, forces, and interests.”[84] As such, we recognise that the strikingly consistent morality of *opéra-comiques* was reflective of a wider social reality in which the individual’s virtue should be subordinated towards the general good of the community.

As well as highlighting a consistency within revolutionary concepts of virtue, these studies also indicate important elements of continuity with the *ancien régime*. Both Linton and Kaplan demonstrate that the process of transforming virtue from an emphasis on the personal to an

---

[81] Nira Kaplan, “Virtuous Competition Among Citizens: Emulation in Politics and Pedagogy During the French Revolution,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36 no. 2 (Winter 2003), 241, 242. See also See Jean-Claude Bonnet, *La Naissance du Panthéon: Essai sur le culte des grands hommes* (Paris: Fayard, 1998), 32–47.
[82] Kaplan, “Virtuous Competition Among Citizens”, 243.
[83] Ibid, 246-247.
[84] Aurelian Craiutu, *A Virtue For Courageous Minds: Moderation in French Political Thought, 1748-1830* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), 8.

emphasis on the collective, as well as the associated subsummation of the individual within the collective body of citizens, had begun well before 1789.

Whilst François Furet had claimed that 1789 marked a great rupture in which politics and morality became conflated, Linton provides compelling evidence that this was not the case.[85] Highlighting broad trends in political text and rhetoric produced by politicians under the *ancien régime* (and particularly their shared vocabulary which utilised and moralised terms normally associated with politics post-1789, including lexis like 'nation, patrie, despotism, privilege, citizen, and virtue'), she demonstrates that this conflation had begun long before the Revolution. Moreover, the texts and authors that she identifies as responsible explicitly concerned themselves with the relationship of the individual to the corporate community in such a way that emphasised subsummation: Montesquieu's egalitarian selflessness; Rousseau and the self-mastery of one's passions in order to serve the community, as well as his concept of natural virtue "based on the notion of an inner truth: authentic emotions written on the human heart and expressed by means of a sensibility that found an outlet in an active concern for others"; and Shaftesbury and Toussaint's *bienfaisance*. The difference, of course, was that these ideas intensified after 1789. Serving the *patrie* was no longer considered to be merely a sign of one's personal virtue; it was also a civic duty in which one's words were 'meaningless' if not accompanied by actions and 'genuine emotions' which protected and nurtured the *patrie* as a place of belonging and love.[86]

Equally, Kaplan highlights how revolutionary practices of pedagogical 'emulation' – in which devotion to one's national community was inculcated – developed out of earlier practices with children fostered during the second half of the eighteenth century: "As a pedagogical tool under the Old Regime, emulation molded the mind and morals of the child, encouraging individual effort and engendering the values necessary for correct social comportment."[87] The Revolution embraced this, but fostered a new social framework in which the important new rights and liberties of the individual should be tempered (largely by steering the spirit of competition towards serving the *patrie*) by an increased awareness of the greater significance of the nation.[88]

Therefore, if, during the Revolution, the use of sentimental tropes in *opéra-comique* ultimately came to advocate the individual's voluntary subjection of their liberty and person to the *patrie*, and if this also represented a broader element of continuity throughout the Revolution, then we would conclude that it also represented continuity with the *ancien régime*. In the context of

---

[85] Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, 26.
[86] Linton, *Choosing Terror*, 21, 26, 32-40.
[87] Kaplan, "Virtuous Competition Among Citizens", 241.
[88] Ibid, 243.

*opéra-comique* specifically, this would seem to fit well with the conclusions drawn by Leavens and Thomas about the development of this genre under the *ancien régime*: that creators of *opéra-comique* consciously sought to use it in order to foster and strengthen the sorts of intersubjective bonds which could contribute to unity within society.[89] In this regard, what Linton and Kaplan's work suggests – as well as my own examination of *opéra-comique* in the present study – is that continuity must be held in tension with important aspects of development and transformation (including politicisation) during the Revolution, though ultimately these ruptures were localised and the broader context was indeed continuity.

It could be argued, of course, that if sentimental tropes in *opéra-comique* were ultimately politicised to fulfil a pedagogical function in keeping with the values of the Revolution, then the primary function of revolutionary *opéra-comique* was, in fact, propaganda. This is McClellan's interpretation. He argues that, particularly during the Terror, the government monopolised a centralised ideology which theatres were compelled to propagate even against their wishes. He derives this conclusion from the politicisation of the repertoire which we have discussed, concluding that it proves that "the government of the Terror expected theaters to discredit the *ancien régime* and to propagate the values appropriate for a revolutionary society… The state, controlled by the Committee for Public Safety, actively encouraged the production of dramas that served the Republic's immediate propagandist needs."[90]

I do not agree, not least because – in addition to the arguments which I have already made against propaganda in the previous chapters of the present study – the idea of the Government manipulating the Opéra Comique in this way implies a high degree of unity and consistency which does not seem to have existed. Michael Fend has already pointed out various problems which the adjective 'revolutionary' invokes in music historiography of this period: to what, explicitly, does it pertain? Although various interpretations offered by scholars are helpful and shed partial light on the matter, the term 'revolutionary' cannot adequately be contained within categories of musical forms or compositional devices, 'conditions of production', or even of 'sound'; and certainly not any of these exclusively.[91] This is at least in part because the political

---

[89] Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime*, 179-180; and Leavens, 'Figures of Sympathy in Eighteenth-Century Opéra-Comique', 225-226.
[90] McClellan, "Battling Over the Lyric Muse", 116-117.
[91] Fend refers here to the work of Mongrédien (who argues that the 'revolutionary' in music of this decade is characterised by applications of 'pre-existing forms'), Julien and Klein (who focus on the conditions in which a work was produced), and Bartlet (who emphasised the 'overall sound effect'). See Fend, "The Problem of the French Revolution in Music Historiography and History," in *Musicology and Sister Disciplines: Past, Present, Future. Proceedings of the 16th International Congress of the International Musicological Society, London, 1997*, ed. David Greer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 244; Mongrédien, *French Music from the Enlightenment to Romanticism*, 344; J.R. Julien and J.C. Klein, "Un moment unique dans l'histoire de la musique française," in *Orphée phrygien: Les musiques de la Révolution*, eds. J.R. Julien and J.C. Klein (Paris: Éditions du May, 1989), 16; and M.E.C. Bartlet, 'The New Repertory at the Opéra", 132.

usage of the adjective 'révolutionnaire' is difficult to delineate, becoming only bound up in abstract terms such as 'liberty, equality, and fraternity'.[92] I would agree, and add that we cannot speak meaningfully of a revolutionary agenda in the singular any more than we can speak of a single revolutionary government. There were many regimes, and their identities and agendas often changed.[93] To imagine that the Opéra Comique became a vehicle for revolutionary ideology drastically over-simplifies the chronology of the Revolution.

However, it would be fair to say that at all points during the Revolution the authorities – ultimately the governments of the National Assembly, Convention, and Directory (and the pertinent authorities deriving their power from these, including the aforementioned Committee of Public Safety) – were keen to maintain a participative function in the running and activity of the Opéra Comique, as they were with all the major Parisian theatres. Various measures were enacted between 1789-1799 which were intended to allow the respective government to be involved with the theatrical process of educating the citizenry, for example. A comprehensive overview of these measures is beyond the bounds of the present project, but several of particular relevance to the Opéra Comique which have traditionally been interpreted by scholars as evidence of 'propaganda' might be noted.[94]

For example, the government encouraged the Opéra Comique (and indeed all Parisian theatres) to participate in performing patriotic pieces in a variety of different contexts. From as early as 1790 they engaged the troupe to perform at national festivals, starting with a performance of Dalayrac and de Monvel's *Le Chêne patriotique, ou la matinée du 14 juillet 1790* in the open air at the Fête de la Fédération on 14 July 1790.[95] They also provided

---

[92] Ibid, 245.
[93] An overview of these is available in the Introduction. See pp. 39-41.
[94] There are many excellent surveys of theatrical (and indeed operatic) life during the French Revolution which discuss the involvement of various governments in the running and activity of the Paris theatres. Scholars are divided on the issue of propaganda, but the evidence relevant to my present claim can be found in various sources. These include (but are by no means limited to) Marvin Carlson, *The Theatre of the French Revolution* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966); Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution*; F.W.J. Hemmings, *Theatre and State in France, 1760-1905* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Johnson, *Backstage at the Revolution;* Pougin, *L'Opéra-Comique pendant la révolution de 1788 à 1801*; Ernest Lunel, *Le theatre de la révolution: Histoire anecdotique des spectacles, de leurs comédiens et de leur public par rapport à la Révolution française* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970); and M. Mili, "L'Ecole de la vertu : fonction didactique du théâtre pendant la Révolution française, 1789-1799," in *L'Image de la Révolution française: Communications présentées lors du Congrès Mondial pour le Bicentenaire de la Révolution*, vol. 3, ed. Michel Vovelle (Paris: Pergamon Press, 1989), 1917-1922.
[95] According to Julien Tiersot, extracts from this work shared the stage with other pieces from across the theatres of Paris, including *La Famille patriote* (d'Herbois; Théâtre de Monsieur, 17 July 1790), *Le Dîner des patriotes* (presumably *La Fête de la Liberté, ou le Dîner des Patriotes* by Charles-Philippe Ronsin; Théâtre du Palais-Royal, 12 July 1790), *Le Souper du Champ de Mars* (Cler-Châtelain; Théâtre français, 16 July 1790), *Momus aux Champs-Elysées* (Aude; Théâtre de la Nation, 14 July 1790), *La Confédération* (presumably *La Confédération du Parnasse* by de Reigny; Théâtre des Comédiens de Beaujolais, 11 July 1790) and *La fête du grenadier au retour de la Bastille* (anonymous; Ambigu-

financial incentives to theatres which performed works deemed to be in the spirit of the Revolution. On the 2 August 1793 a law was passed by the National Convention (discussed below) which made available the sum of 100,000 livres to be distributed amongst 20 Paris theatres, including the Opéra Comique which received 7,000 livres. Substantial gifts and subsidies would be made to the Opéra Comique at various moments in the Revolution, including the rather large sum of 30,000 livres on the 17 August 1794 (26 Thermidor an II) for patriotic performances.[96]

On the other hand, there were some more apparently coercive measures put in place during the Terror. These included laws which combined incentives with the threat of punishment. For instance, alongside the financial incentives for performing patriotic repertoire, preventive (i.e. pre-performance) censorship was effectively reinstated on the 2 September 1793 when the Paris Commune was given the responsibility for overseeing the works performed at every theatre in the city.[97] Also, repressive censorship (post-performance) was more strictly enforced after this date. At the Opéra Comique, *Bathilde et Éloy* by Dalayrac and de Monvel was pulled once it was determined that it was based on *Raoul, sire de Crequi,* deemed to be an *ancien régime* opera because it invoked the historically aristocratic family name of 'Crequi' and depicted feudalist ideologies. This was in spite of the fact that, as Charlton has highlighted, it offered audiences a non-specific (i.e. not explicitly monarchist) example of democratic dependence on the 'common people' exerting their own will in order to establish their preferred government.[98]

In addition, beginning with Joigny and Trial fils' *La Cause et les effets ou le réveil du peuple en 1789* (17 August 1793) the National Convention determined to subsidise three performances of patriotic repertoire a week which would be free for audiences to attend. This was intended to attract an audience of citizens who under normal circumstances could not afford the cost of attending the Salle Favart. This initiative was not unique to the Opéra Comique. It was in fact implemented city-wide (having been proposed by Deputy Couthon who asked the theatres of Paris to put on *représentations par et pour le peuple*). By the same stroke, however, the Convention also determined to punish those theatres which did not contribute to the revolutionary project of national instruction.[99]

---

Comique, 3 September 1789). See Julien Tiersot, *Les Fêtes et les Chants de la Révolution française* (Paris, Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1908), 46.

[96] Pougin, *L'Opéra-Comique pendant la révolution de 1788 à 1801*, 126.

[97] Hemmings, *Theatre and State in France, 1760-1905*, 95.

[98] Charlton, "The French Theatrical Origins of *Fidelio*", 59.

[99] See Le Moniteur 217, 5 August 1793, 924. It reported that this decision was made during a meeting on 2 August 1793 (15 Thermidor), and copied the following official bulletin:

Nevertheless, I would argue that it is still problematic to think that the Opéra Comique 'served the Republic's immediate propagandists needs'. First, as Darlow has shown in his study on the Opéra, it is unlikely that the government (even during the Terror) ever had the necessary authority to enforce a single, monopolised ideology, even if such an ideology could be identified. Scholars such as Martin Nadeau commonly point to the closure of the Théâtre de la Nation (formerly the Comédie Française) after the performance of the controversial *Paméla* by François de Neufchâteau (1 August 1793) when they wish to highlight the Revolution's oppressive theatrical policies.[100] Darlow rightly points out this was highly unusual, however. Instead, "state attempts to impose repertory in this way are sporadic… and frequently unsuccessful, partly because the legality of censorship and control remain contested after 1791."[101] No other significant theatres in Paris were ever closed for political reasons between 1789-1799. The legal threats made by the Convention perhaps sounded intimidating, but in reality they did not have sufficient control to act against major theatres.

As an important corollary to this, Kaplan points out that in many respects the Terror was the time at which measures of public education were the least centralised. The desire to have revolutionary values existing in and shaping every aspect of citizens' lives meant that centralised control was simply unmanageable; the possibility of pedagogy through emulation

---

> "Citizens, the day of the 10th August approaches. Republicans were sent by the people to file the proceedings — in which the acceptance of the constitution was recorded — at the national archives.
>
> You would injure and outrage these republicans if you would allow an infinite multitude of pieces filled with damaging references to liberty to continue to be played in their presence, pieces which have no other purpose than to corrupt the spirit and morals of the public, even if you order that that only those pieces worthy to be heard and applauded by republicans are to be performed.
>
> The committee [the CSP], dedicated to enlightening and shaping opinion, thought that the theatres were not to be overlooked in the current situation. They have too often served tyranny. It is necessary now that they serve liberty. I have, by consequence, the honour to propose the following decree to you:
>
> I. The National Convention decrees that from the fourth of this month until the 1 November next year, republican tragedies such as *Brutus*, *William Tell*, *Caius Gracchus*, and other dramatic pieces suitable for upholding principles of equality and liberty will be performed at the theatres indicated by the Minister of the Interior, three times a week. Once a week, these performances will be given [free] at the expense of the Republic.
>
> II. All theatres which represent pieces contrary to the spirit of the Revolution will be closed, and the directors arrested and punished with the full force of the law."

The Opéra Comique responded quickly to the measure, and performed a series of patriotic works *gratis* in the space of a fortnight (including *Jean et Geneviève* and *Guillaume Tell* on 13 August, *Le Tonnelier* and *Le Siège de Lille* on the 16th, *Le Convalescent de qualité* and *Les Rigueurs du cloître* on the 20th, and finally *La Cause et les effets* on the 27th.

[100] Nadeau, "La politique culturelle de l'An II: les infortunes de la propaganda révolutionnaire au théâtre", 63.

[101] Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution*, 16.

therefore "became an excuse for establishing a drastically reduced skeleton of public instruction" because self- or mutual-education was perceived to be possible (and more desirable) in a society already made virtuous by the coming of Revolution.[102]

Second, if anything the authorities were themselves heavily reliant on popular opinion in matters of theatrical life. For example, the librettist of the controversial *Urgande et Merlin* (14 October 1793), known as Monvel, was able to escape retribution by reminding the authorities of his popularity amongst audiences. As well as being a librettist, he also had a highly successful career as an actor and a singer which had endeared him to the public. In her biography of Monvel, Roselyne Laplace highlights just how important this popularity was for him in navigating the treacherous waters of reputation during the Revolution, particularly under the Terror when he found himself at odds with the government.[103] In this instance, it meant that he was able to pass *Urgande* off as an aesthetic misjudgement rather than a crime against the *patrie*, whilst also highlighting his previous track-record of producing patriotic works which appealed to audiences.[104]

Popular opinion was also a powerful and noisy force in guiding repertoire choice at the Opéra Comique. For example, spectators took strongly to a patriotic spoken play by Charles-Louis Lesur entitled *La Veuve du républicain, ou la Calomniateur* (23 November 1793). This piece, in which a republican defends his honour against slander, set out to demonstrate republican virtue and the triumph of patriotic honour. Audiences held it in such high regard that they formed a popular delegation of citizens to petition its official recognition as a work worthy of the Revolution. *Le Moniteur* reported:

> A deputation presents itself in the name of the citizens who yesterday found themselves at the Opéra Comique on the *rue Favart*, at the first performance of a patriotic piece entitled *la Veuve du républicain ou le Calomniateur*, in three acts in verse. They ask that this work — in which instruction finds itself alongside entertainment, and which has stimulated the love of liberty and the hatred of kings in all hearts — be played in all theatres of the Republic, and that the Convention

---

[102] Kaplan cites several contemporary politicians who outlined this position particularly clearly. One was Citizen Bouquier, who wrote in 1793: "The Revolution has, in truth by itself, organized public education and placed everywhere inexhaustible sources of instruction. Do not replace this organization, simple and sublime like the people that created it, with a fractious and derivative one." Another deputy put it like this: "Never does a great and free nation need a decree to possess all that human industry, all that a universal emulation can offer naturally to civilized men . . . Education should circulate like any other merchandise." See Kaplan, "Virtuous Competition Among Citizens", 246.

[103] Roselyne Laplace, *Monvel: Un aventurier du théâtre au siècle des Lumières* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998), passim.

[104] The dispute was largely conducted in *La Feuille de salut public*, which was a Jacobin journal edited by the radical politician Alexander Charles Omer Rousselin de Corbeau. The accusations against him can be seen in La Feuille de salut public 108, 25 Vendémiaire, an II/16 October 1793, 3. De Monvel's response is preserved in issue 109, 26 Vendémiaire, an II/16 October 1793, 3-4.

> decrees that its author, citizen Lesur, ready to depart [for war] with the first wave of conscription, has proven himself well-worthy of the fatherland.
>
> This petition is referred to the Committee of Public Instruction.[105]

*La Veuve's* popularity was so great amongst audiences that it continued to receive acclamation well into the following month. According to Pougin, on 21 December, the public even demanded its performance in place of a work which was due to be staged: "*Fanfan et Colas* [a pre-revolutionary play about brotherhood] had been announced, but an unhappy delegation suddenly arrived to speak to citizen Gontier in order to thwart the performance of this piece. They gave *la Veuve du Républicain* [instead], requested by the public."[106] Though there is some confusion on exactly what happened in this particular instance,[107] it is pertinent that delegations of spectators were generally well known for making their opinions clear and accordingly influencing the choice of repertoire at French theatres. This is a point that Susan Maslan has made strongly, pointing out that since the time of *Charles IX* (1789), audiences representative of a popular sphere – extending far beyond a literate circle of journalists, playwrights and politicians – had grown used to having their preferences observed and acceded to. As she concludes, "The most effective arguments for the power of theater and the legitimacy of audience opinion were made *in* the theater *by* audiences."[108]

The case of *La Veuve* (and certainly the broader context of audience demand) is ample reason for a more cautious approach than McClellan's reading of *opéra-comique* as propaganda in service of a coercive state, even during the Terror. French citizens were keen to participate in the progress of the Revolution and were themselves often invested both emotionally and practically in its success. They had little need of persuasion. In other words, spectators – not just the authorities – helped shaped the repertoire. Indeed, if Pougin's account is correct, if there was any coercion at the time of *La Veuve* it was on the part of the Opéra Comique's audience, and it was enacted *upon* the government (who, remarkably, seemed to have been

---

[105] Le Moniteur 65, 5 Frimaire an II/25 November, 1793, 264.
[106] Pougin, *L'Opéra Comique pendant la Révolution*, 91.
[107] Brenner's study of the Opéra Comique's *registres* casts some doubt on Pougin's account. He records that a scribe noted the reason for *Fanfan's* cancellation as Gontier's sudden illness. See Clarence D. Brenner, *The Theatre Italien: Its Repertory, 1716-1793*, University of California Publications in Modern Philology, vol. 63 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961), 501. I have been unable to locate any record of this in the *registres*.
[108] Maslan writes, "On 19 August 1789, for example, voices from the pit of the Comedie-Francaise cried out for the performance of *Charles IX*. When the actors refused to accede to the audience's demand, citing lack of official permission, the audience responded with the shout "No more permissions," asserting that no permission and no command beyond its own were any longer relevant. The intimidated actors tried to find a way to appease the audience without recognizing the legitimacy of its dictates; they promised to consult the revolutionary municipal government instead of the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber, the appointees of the king, who traditionally had governed the theater." See Susan Maslan, "Resisting Representation: Theater and Democracy in Revolutionary France," *Representations* 52 (Autumn 1995), 34.

caught unawares by the zeal of the delegation and required time to make a decision about the use of this piece in the future), and upon the Opéra Comique itself in causing *Fanfan et Colas* to be postponed.

Neither should we allow the political instability of the Revolution to cause us to overlook the fact that the Opéra Comique was primarily dependent upon the public – and not the Government – for its continued existence. After all, it was the public that bought the tickets which provided the institution with its revenue. The Government certainly made participating in the revolutionary effort attractive with their financial incentives, but they would not provide sufficient subsidy on their own to run the institution without strong audience attendance. In other words, official support could not replace popular appeal. A far more consistent model, I would argue, is that which I have proposed in previous chapters: one in which the government, composers and librettists, and audiences themselves co-operated in order to shape the revolutionary repertoire at the Opéra Comique. This was what the authorities and the artists of France had advocated for in their texts, as we have seen, and I believe it is also evidenced by the institutional experience of the Opéra Comique, detailed here.

**Conclusion**

This participative relationship provided important stimulation to revolutionary composers and librettists who did indeed respond to the social urgencies of the period by producing morally instructive *opéras-comiques*. As we have seen, praxis and theory aligned: sensationist aesthetics underpinned the didactic production of the Opéra Comique during the Revolution, providing not only devices and processes (including new genres and a greater emphasis on dramatic hybridity) which were intended to intensify and inculcate moral lessons, but also the very ideology which underpinned contemporary conceptions of the moral instruction (conducted for the sake of social unity) which was to be achieved through *opéra-comique*. If, as Denby puts it, the French Revolution was the "central historical experience" in which Enlightenment sensationism was fully outworked, *opéra-comique* became an important vehicle through which new and revolutionary bonds of pity, solidarity and sympathy could be established.[109]

This demonstrates the existence of significant continuity between the *ancien régime* and the Revolution in an operatic context, though the politicisation of sentimental processes represents elements of transformation (or localised rupture) which must be held in tension simultaneously. An excellent example of this tension is the growing hybridity (an eighteenth-

---

[109] Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France*, 240.

century concept) of the revolutionary repertoire: despite advances towards this in the 1780s (as explored by Doe), eighteenth-century notions of hybridity could not be fully realised until the Revolution because of the strict laws of *privilège* abolished in 1791. The Revolution's pedagogical requirement for more innovative and expressively potent material (and the freedom to compose it) produced a richer, more sophisticated variety of *opéras-comiques*, which would continue to diversify during the following century.

What constituted 'revolutionary virtue' actually remained remarkably steady throughout the period, and notions of self-abnegation, derived from developments predating the Revolution, continued to influence its development between 1789-1799. Nevertheless, we have seen that it is problematic to assume that the revolutionary governments monopolised this virtue or that they possessed any centralised ideology towards which they sought to coerce the public. As such, both the generalised, lingering assumptions about propaganda and the specific conclusions McClellan draws in the case of *opéra-comique* are unhelpful. They do not represent an accurate picture of the Opéra Comique's repertoire or institutional experience during the Revolution. The striking affectivity of *opéras-comiques* was thus not exploited for this purpose, but is rather indicative of an intensifying desire to unify the revolutionary community and facilitate widespread participation in the political project of Revolution. As I have put it, sensationism was the channel through which composers and librettists, the authorities, and spectators conducted a trialogue on virtue and mutually established the affective significance of national events.

Having observed the dual and symbiotic importance of *sensibilité* and didacticism in the revolutionary repertoire of the Opéra Comique, it remains now to examine how composers and librettists employed both in the composition of their works. The subject of this examination will be Jean-Nicholas Bouilly and A.E.M. Grétry's *Pierre le Grand* (13 January 1790).

# Chapter VI. *On peut refuser un trône, une couronne, mais non résister à l'amour :* the sentimental basis of moral instruction in *Pierre le Grand* (1790)

*On peut refuser un trône, une couronne, mais non résister à l'amour.* – Catherine in *Pierre le Grand* (1790)[1]

If, as I have claimed, sensationist aesthetics underpinned the didactic production of the Opéra Comique during the Revolution, it stands to reason that the evidence would be clear not only across the repertoire but also within the works themselves. Accordingly, in the present chapter I analyse Bouilly and Grétry's *Pierre le Grand* as a case study for the *opéras-comiques* produced during the Revolution. Exploring how sentimental procedures are employed within this opera to act powerfully upon the emotions of the spectator, I aim to demonstrate that their primary function is both political and didactic in nature: offering the spectator explicitly moral lessons. I thus conclude my argument begun in the previous chapter that theory and praxis were aligned in *opéra-comique* during the Revolution and offer some final evidence of the continuities between this repertoire and the aesthetics of Enlightenment sensationism. Of course, Bouilly and Grétry were innovators as well, and it is evident from *Pierre le Grand* that they developed ingenious new techniques which nevertheless fulfilled the traditional sensationist objective of affecting the *sensibilité* of the spectator.[2]

I conclude that the political, didactic significance of the sentimental in *Pierre le Grand* is not simply that it seeks to be affectively persuasive by moving the emotions. Rather, it comes to represent a kind of 'communal currency' whereby deeds of profound sentimental value are rooted in the *sensibilité* of virtuous characters; and these in turn serve to prompt reciprocal acts of sentimental virtue which fill society with the sorts of good deeds and strong relationships which one would wish to witness in their own community. Through allegory, it

---

[1] Jean-Nicolas Bouilly and A.E.M. Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*: *comédie en 3 actes, et en prose, mêlée de chants* (Paris: J.L. de Boubers, 1792), xxiv.

[2] Grétry and Bouilly together offer an excellent opportunity to explore the didactic application of sentimental aesthetics after 1789. We have already studied Grétry's sentimental aesthetics in Chapter IV of the present study; Bouilly also prioritised an affective approach to writing as Edgar Istel once pointed out, with the playwright eventually becoming known as the *poète lachrymal*. See "Beethoven's "Leonore" and "Fidelio"," *The Musical Quarterly* 7 no. 2 (April 1921), 227.

ultimately functions as an invitation to the spectator to participate in forming such a society through their own actions, regarding their own community as an extension of the one offered on stage, in which an individual's virtuous actions can prompt reciprocal deeds and establish a society rooted in the values of liberal egalitarianism.[3]

**Pierre le Grand**

*Pierre le Grand* premiered at the Opéra Comique on 13 January 1790. It is likely, however, that the work had begun its gestation in 1788. *Pierre* was based upon an earlier history by Voltaire on the Russian monarch (known to us as Peter the Great),[4] and like Voltaire, Bouilly and Grétry depict Peter as an enlightened monarch worthy of his people.

It tells the (fictional but popular) story of a young Tsar Peter (Pierre) disguised as a carpenter in a Russian shipyard, working to help the small local community. Pierre has left his court for a year in order to aid his people in their labours, in the process humbling himself to live alongside them in the house of Georges, the master-carpenter. The audience of the opera witness many examples of Pierre's virtue in service of his people. He is joined in this by his minister and friend, Le Fort, working incognito as 'André'. Le Fort desires them to leave to return to matters of state, but Pierre has fallen in love with Catherine, a young widow (and a commoner), and seeks to win her hand in marriage. Catherine (unaware of his true identity) is willing to marry Pierre, but only if Georges can be persuaded to allow his daughter Caroline to marry Alexis, a young orphan and son of a rich farmer. Georges, however, wants Pierre for his son-in-law, but Pierre is able to persuade him of Alexis' merits and a double marriage (Caroline/Alexis and Catherine/Pierre) is arranged. In the end, Pierre's cover is blown by the arrival of soldiers accompanied by the Governor of Moscow, Mensikoff, and Pierre is obliged to leave briefly in order to address the soldiers after trouble is reported in Moscow. Catherine is consoled (but rather overwhelmed) by Pierre's return in royal robes, at which point he announces his desire to marry Catherine and take her back to court with him. Though Catherine is reticent to leave, they finally marry and begin their new life together. The opera

[3] The version of *Pierre le Grand* studied here is the three-act version, which Bouilly and Grétry produced in 1792. This was considered by the authorities of the Opéra Comique to represent the 'correct' one, with the original receiving considerable criticism as 'diffuse', containing 'considerable faults', and unlikely to survive. A full account of the versions produced at this time (as well as a list of the amendments which were made) can be found in Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique*, 308. The version studied here is the one in which the work continued to be performed throughout (and beyond) the Revolution. Though it is rarely performed today, a DVD recording of a production (based on this 3 act version) was produced in 2001. See Jean-Nicolas Bouilly and A.E.M. Grétry, *La Jeunesse de Pierre le Grand*, Namur Chamber Choir and Chamber Orchestra conducted by Olivier Opdebeeck. Performed 2001 (Compiègne, Disques DOM, 2001), DVD.
[4] Voltaire, *Histoire de l'empire de Russie sous Pierre le Grand*, 2 vols. (Genève: no publisher details, 1759-1763).

concludes with a series of sung pieces celebrating benevolent monarchs and, specifically, Louis XVI.[5]

The story of *Pierre le Grand* was eminently suited to the sentimental mode of opera discussed in previous chapters. Bouilly made full use of stock sentimental characters (like the obstructed lovers, the stern but protective father), the exposition of intense emotions experienced by individuals and a community, and a domestic rustic setting. These provide the aesthetic foundation of the work. Ultimately, though, the sentimental aesthetic of *Pierre le Grand* is strongly oriented towards sustaining an inherently political lesson: one in favour of moderate reform and a constitutional monarchy. Bouilly and Grétry depict an enlightened, benevolent King ruling in co-operation with a virtuous and supportive people empowered by their monarch to participate in the functioning of state. *Pierre* therefore simultaneously expressed the hopes of the French public for a productive outcome to the political contest between the upper and lower orders from 1789, and a peaceful co-existence between a humble monarch and his devoted subjects.

This objective was most likely motivated by Bouilly's politics because, as Charlton points out, *Pierre* was produced as a result of his (explicitly stated) desire to write an opera which both reflected his constitutional monarchism and featured the Favart's Mme Dugazon. Both objectives were fulfilled in this *opéra-comique* (with Dugazon taking the role of Catherine).[6] In addition, Grétry's own politics were likely influential too. We have seen previously that he was politically liberal in a broad sense, not least that he advocated for a participative social base characterised by a "broader tendency to promote the individual and plurality of opinion" in a 'regenerated' society.[7] This is consistent with the message of *Pierre*.

These ideological intentions must be taken into account in the context of the political state of France in 1790. It is well established that this period of the Revolution was broadly characterised by a desire on the part of politicians and citizens alike to emphasise national political unity and participation. Schama, for example points out that from the appearance of 'liberty trees' (around which citizens and members of the National Guard swore collective oaths to the cause of constitutional liberty) to masonic rituals that ostensibly bound members in harmony and mutual support, 'devotion' to the *patrie* was the order of the day: "such that it collapsed all previous allegiances–to guild, province, social order or confession–within the new indefinitely extended political family… In Paris, at least, the limits of political participation

[5] An act-by-act breakdown is available in Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique*, 300.
[6] Ibid, 300.
[7] Arnold, *Grétry's Operas and the French Public*, 71. Unfortunately Grétry remained silent on the subject of *Pierre le Grand*'s political motivations. He did not give this opera any attention in the first volume of his *Mémoires*, because this concluded with an analysis of *Le Comte d'Albert* (which predated *Pierre le Grand*). It only receives passing reference in the subsequent volumes.

were expanding fast, so that they pressed against not just the conventions of the old regime but those the new regime of 1789 had set for its own safety. The rhetoric of revolutionary leadership had encouraged this process. It had spoken in indefinitely inclusive terms–of the Nation, of the *patrie,* of citizenship–as if every French man and woman had a direct stake in that enlarged political family."[8]

Schama also acknowledges, however, that this was a period of intense ideological conflict. The 'myth' of inclusiveness was a paradox, because it was contingent upon the existence of outsiders "in order to define its limits and to give insiders a sense of their own bonds." These outsiders were identified as 'aristocrats', even when their origins were from amongst the commons or the accuser was of noble birth: the term did not identify social pedigree, but rather the existence of 'obsitnate anticitizens' who were opposed to political reform and ultimately the adoption of enlightened, constitutional monarchy.[9] At the same time, these differences were exacerbated by a growing factionalism exhibited by political 'clubs' and institutions formed in response to the 'currents of opposition' that divided Paris.[10] Grétry and Bouilly's opera therefore expresses a particular agenda on their part, and acts as a vehicle for their own political ideals which were not unanimously held.

One of the most important ways in which the opera acts as a vehicle for these ideals is evident in Bouilly's allegorical approach to characterisation. Both Pierre and his advisor Lefort are representative of contemporary figures (King Louis XVI and Jacques Necker, respectively) closely involved with the political events of the day, whilst other characters take on a more general allegorical function (such as Catherine) as we shall discuss. Bouilly himself made these allegories explicit in his original preface to the four-act print version of *Pierre* published in 1790.[11]

---

[8] Schama, *Citizens: a Chronicle of the French Revolution*, 492-497.
[9] Ibid, 492-493.
[10] D.M.G. Sutherland, *France 1789-1815: Revolution and Counterrevolution* (London: Fontana Press, 1990), 89-90.
[11] On Pierre, Bouilly wrote: "Struck with astonishment and admiration at the sight of the regeneration of France, I searched history for some feature with a connection to it, which I could depict onstage… From a multitude of barbarians without morals, principles or talents, Peter the Great created a society of educated and civilised men. In calling the French into participation with the rights of royalty, Louis makes a people of kings of which he becomes the divine tutor… The analogy was compelling. Nobody was mistaken, and I had the sweet satisfaction of witnessing love, respect, and faithfulness break out in every heart: precious sentiments with which I am intimately touched for the sake of my King. The success which this work has achieved on the stage made me decide to give it to the public. May this impartial judge, this ever-accurate guide read this work with the interest with which they deigned to bestow on it then!" On Necker he wrote: "Furthermore, I saw the celebrated Lefort, Genevan, guiding the Emperor of the Russians in all his great and memorable deeds; just as in France M. Necker directs and assists in the charitable visions of the monarch [Louis XVI]." See Jean-Nicolas Bouilly, *Pierre le Grand: comédie en quatre actes, et en prose, mêlée de chants* (Paris: Brunet, 1790), 1-2. In fact, Charlotta Wolff goes so far as to describe this preface as a 'eulogy' (*un éloge*) to Necker. See "La

The allegorical characterisation of Pierre as Louis naturally serves to politicise his actions, dialogue, and the situations in which he finds himself, but the dominant impression which one receives from the libretto is of its sentimental emphasis. Nearly every one of Pierre's interactions with his compatriots, for example, functions in terms of what M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Harpham have aptly described as an "appeal to "vicarious sympathy, pity, or grief for emotional effect, an exaggeration to evoke in the beholder an excessive and prolonged emotional response".[12] In other words, his interactions are characterised by representations of extreme emotional states evoked by the context, and the effect of these interactions seems primarily to strengthen bonds of sympathy between characters which – when reciprocated – serve as the essential characteristics (or, as Leavens put it, the 'natural basis') of a united community striving together for the common good.[13]

There is a strongly didactic purpose to these affective, sentimental interactions too. In fact, they serve as the primary vehicle through which the allegorical function of the opera facilitates the process of political instruction for both citizens and King alike. This is particularly evident in the depiction of Pierre's relationship with Lefort. In the second scene of the opera, Lefort is emotionally overcome by the touching beauty of the situation. Here are a people labouring to civilise Russia with the construction of St Petersburg, and their King leaves the luxuries of his palace to share in their hard labour for the good of all his people. Lefort announces: "I love to see you dressed-down, axe in hand, yourself guiding a troop of workers in their difficult and tiring work!"[14] The indulgent sentimentality of the situation is intensified by Pierre's response:

> I was only nineteen years old; master of the greatest empire in the world, rudely elevated in the backwards fashion of my forefathers. I had no talents and, I can say, no virtues, when heaven guided you to Moscow and presented you to me… you became my friend… you desired that he who became governor of men began by being a man himself.[15]

The sentimentality of this exchange derives from the fiction of the narrative. In an essay on sentimentality in absolute music, John H. Planer offered scholars a framework by which to identify and interpret the sentimental, arguing that its essence in any media is 'exaggeration' or 'hyperbole': a manifestation of dishonesty concerning any situation and its emotional significance which nevertheless finds its basis in reality.[16] *Pierre le Grand* is of course not absolute music, but Planer's framework would nevertheless seem to work well here too. As

---

musique des spectacles en Suède, 1770 – 1810: opéra-comique français et politique de l'appropriation", *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 379 (January-March 2015), 20-21.

[12] M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, tenth edition (Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2012), 363.

[13] Leavens, "Figures of Sympathy in Eighteenth-Century Opéra-Comique", 1.

[14] Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand,* ix.

[15] Ibid, ix.

[16] Planer, "Sentimentality in the Performance of Absolute Music", 213.

the events occurring between Pierre and Lefort as depicted onstage did not occur historically, the scene is – in a purely objective sense – a 'dishonest' exaggeration which has been invented for the reason that it allows for an emotional exchange in which the two characters indulge in declarations of fraternal love. This is not an isolated scene but a recurring feature of the opera. Where Pierre is praised (which happens frequently, such as in Act III Scene 5), it is usually Lefort who is to be found at the head of the praising party.

This takes on a political significance if we consider that Lefort was not merely a representative of Necker, but through Necker a representative of the French people. After all, in 1789 Necker was widely regarded as a champion of the people (who perceived him as their own advocate in petitioning for greater and fairer representation of the Third Estate, which Necker hoped to double in size) and as "the perfect solid citizen".[17] Thus these exchanges between the two characters, which pervade the opera, must be regarded not just as examples of friendship, but also as a sentimental model of the communal esteem and co-operation hoped for between King and citizens in the early days of the Revolution. These were after all the feelings Bouilly had hoped to inspire with his libretto, describing in the foreword to the 1790 edition of *Pierre* his great delight at witnessing audiences absorbed by feelings of love, respect, and faithfulness to the *patrie* and to the King himself.[18] But in Pierre's description of his own person and his stately duties, there is a subtle lesson that the King himself should be aware that his position entailed pastoral guidance as well as authoritarian duties. This is attested to by the fact that Pierre describes his position as that of a '*gouverneur*', which might equally be translated 'teacher' as 'governor'.

Whilst Pierre undoubtedly recognises his pedagogical duty, he also acknowledges that he depends upon a representative of the people for his own education. In response to his advisor's praise, Pierre points out that it had been Lefort who had instructed him in all matters of governance and of virtue. He argues that the King and his citizens learn together, and each is dependent upon the other for success and improvement. Despite the fact that Pierre's words are addressed personally to Lefort and seem primarily concerned with the virtues of personal service and friendship rather than governance or representation, the allegorical nature of the work means that we must always be aware of contextual significance which lies behind the text. In this instance, the significance is that Bouilly implicitly celebrates a model of political unity in which the mutual devotion of monarch and citizens (through their representatives) ensures the wellbeing of the national community.

---

[17] Schama, *Citizens: a chronicle of the French Revolution*, 88.
[18] Bouilly, *Pierre le Grand*, 1-2.

Grétry's score also plays a vital role in intensifying the sentimental poignancy with which this lesson is offered. After the two characters' emotions have increased beyond the expressive possibilities of spoken dialogue, they erupt into a touching duet characterised by the simple musical clarity which prevails throughout the opera. The ingenuity is evident in the manner Grétry depicts the two characters' co-labour musically. Admittedly Pierre takes the lion's share of the melodic interest, but Lefort accompanies his king with a complementary bass line that serves to accentuate important cadential movement (see ex. 1). As if to acknowledge the King's insistence that the people themselves share in the glory, Lefort occasionally breaks from his accompanist's role in order to harmonise with Pierre's melody as we see between bars 53-76 (see ex. 2). Even here, however, Lefort's primary function is to complement and refine Pierre's own vocal labours: a mimetic musical depiction of their friendship and political co-operation in the business of improving the nation. Musically, then, the characters are manoeuvred into a prefiguration of the ideal political relationship in which, moreover, the emotional experience of the moment itself (both as apparently 'felt' by the characters and as communicated to the audience through identification) is intensified by the demonstration of reciprocal sympathy between Pierre and Lefort.

Ex. 1 *Pierre le Grand*,

Act I Scene 2, bb. 29-36.

Ex. 2 *Pierre le Grand*,

Act I Scene 2, bb. 53-62.

All the while, the sentimental signification of the duet is unobtrusively reinforced by the gentle orchestral accompaniment. Relying on a characteristically minimalist use of forces, Grétry employs a string quartet only to double the melody an octave above (in the first violin), provide harmonic support and restrained ornamental interest (second violin and viola) and offer a simple bass line primarily for clarity and cadential function. In fact, the second violin is engaged throughout the duet in sustaining a simple but distinctive alberti figure.

This style of composition has been identified by Charlton as an example of what he calls the 'expressive medium': a musical 'phenomenon' – characterised by "a slow or moderate tempo; sustained tone, often heard as a pedal point; a rocking or oscillating string figuration; and stable harmony, using either a tonic pedal or steady alternation of tonic and dominant" – which carried 'extra-musical connotations'. He explores the application of this phenomenon in eighteenth-century French opera, offering evidence from diverse operas of the period that the 'expressive medium' came to specifically represent "mutual affection or love, untroubled by irony or premonition."[19] Like the use of characterisation in *Pierre*, in this instance music

[19] David Charlton, "Orchestra and Image in the Late Eighteenth Century", 1.

therefore fulfils a sentimental, 'allegorical' function by communicating to the audience an "emotional state ruled by quietness, stability and gentle repetition".[20]

Therefore, we understand that sentimental devices and gestures are important in both the dramaturgical and musical representations of Pierre and Lefort's relationship during this scene, and that these offer an implicit lesson on the desirability of political co-operation between monarch and citizen. However, the sentimental significance of Pierre's relationship with his people is only partly accounted for by his interactions with Lefort. He also spends a great deal of time at the heart of the community in which he finds himself, where Pierre applies the lessons which he has learnt from Lefort.

This is particularly evident at the opening of the opera. Here we find Pierre surrounded by his subjects, all labouring together in a communal effort to build the ships which sustain St Petersburg. This scene has no narrative significance; instead, this scene functions as an impressive *tableau* primarily intended to make a profound impression upon the spectator. The stage directions indicate: "The theatre resembles a village square. To the left in the foreground is Georges' house, ending in a great door which is the entrance to his construction site. To the right and all around are trees forming a bower. At the edge of the scene we find the sea whose shores are covered in piles of wood belonging to a frame, in the midst of which we see a ship under construction."[21] Populating this scene are large numbers of workers singing as they hammer and saw, led by Pierre and accompanied by Lefort.

The affective intentions of this scene are clear because, as we have explored in previous chapters, *tableaux* of this nature were intended to excite audiences to impassioned emotional states. More recent conceptions of the device discussed in the previous chapter are relevant again here, including Leavens' account of "a moving, emotionally heightened scene frequently presented in a naturalistic style… [often] accompanied by the presence of an intradiegetic spectator who is shown to be moved, thus indirectly testifying to the tableau's affective efficacy";[22] similarly, Le Guin's idea of "a mysterious, ideal synoptic moment, where narrative and indeed any temporality at all give way to an insuperably intense impression, a brand seared upon the mind of the observer."[23] And indeed this is exactly what the audience of *Pierre*

---

[20] Ibid, 10. The intended sentimental impact of this device is something which Charlton explores explicitly, describing the 'expressive medium' as a vehicle for sympathy between 'object and beholder', or opera and audience. He points out that "the delicate relation between emotion and meaning is brought out well in the following extract from a letter by Laurence Sterne written in 1768: 'A true feeler always brings half the entertainment along with him. His ideas are only call'd forth by what he reads, and the vibrations within, so entirely correspond with those excited, 'tis like reading himself and not the book'." The sensationist implications of this device are therefore evident.

[21] Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, ix.

[22] Leavens, *Figures of sympathy in eighteenth-century opéra-comique*, 8.

[23] le Guin, *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology*, 80.

are presented with, as both Pierre and Lefort can be considered the 'intradiegetic spectators' (considering their outbursts in the subsequent scene) whose emotional experience should be analogous with the audience's.

Musically, Grétry takes full advantage of the devices afforded by *opéra-comique* in order to emphasise the effect of this absorption. This is particularly evident in the mimetic *vraisemblance*. The audience finds themselves visually in the midst of a domestic, rustic setting. Aurally, they are bathed in pastorally-oriented music with a distinctive 6/8 metre; predominating woodwind and horn figures in the orchestral accompaniment (both instrumental timbres associated with the pastoral topic in music);[24] and jolly, conjunct melodic themes above a simple oompah ostinato which could quite easily have been sung and accompanied by real-life labourers themselves.

But this is only a backdrop for some rather remarkable gestures which intensify the sentimental effect: we might consider the use of the instrumentation to depict (rather literally) the sounds of construction, for example. The double basses and cellos mark the falling of axes with their downbeat *sforzandi,* whilst the violas and second violins evoke the cries of sailors with a rising-falling motif which continues throughout the scene (see fig.6). This is not a matter of interpretation. Grétry inscribed the instructions in the score itself, writing, for example: "the *sforzandi* mark the blows of axes, hammers, and the effort of the workers". By the violas, he inscribed: "this line is a sailor's cry, which must be well-heard". During a period in which even basic performance instructions like dynamic markings were largely kept to a minimum, it is striking to note the authoritative detail with which Grétry directed his musicians to perform the scene. This can only have been because he wished the figures to sound as convincing is possible, and thus indicates that the mimetic quality of his music was of the highest priority in *Pierre le Grand*.[25]

---

[24] See Raymond Monelle, *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 229-251.

[25] This was very much in keeping with the traditional imitation-of-nature thesis which held sway in the aesthetics of music during the 1740s and 50s. We have seen in Chapter II of the present study that from the 1760s the imitative or mimetic function of music was frequently conceived of in terms of language and/or emotional experience. Before this, however, music was also understood to imitate sounds and gestures which one might encounter in nature. Charles Batteux (1713-1780), for example, argued that musical expression was produced by the composer's use of sounds to imitate natural models (from bird song to human emotion). The success of a composer's praxis could be established by the degree to which one could recognise the model upon which the music was based. Batteux was not the first to propose this, however; he developed on the earlier work of the Abbé du Bos (1670-1742) which in turn found its basis in Platonic and Aristotelian models of *mimesis*. For further information on the imitation-of-nature thesis in contemporary French musical aesthetics, see Edward A. Lippman, *A History of Western Musical Aesthetics* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 59-202. On Platonic and Aristotelian models of *mimesis*, see Matthew Potolsky, *Mimesis* (London: Routledge, 2006), 1-112.

ACTE I.

Le théâtre représente la place d'un village. A gauche, sur le devant de la scène, est la maison de Georges, terminée par une grande porte qui est l'entrée de ses chantiers. A droite et vis-à-vis, sont des arbres formant un berceau. Au fond de la scène on découvre la mer dont les bords sont couverts de monceaux de bois de charpente, au milieu desquels s'élève un vaisseau en construction.

SCÈNE I.

Pierre, Lefort, vêtus en charpentiers; Troupe de Charpentiers.
(Ils chantent le Chœur suivant, en travaillant au vaisseau.)

Chœur.

[Moderato.]

Hautbois.
Bassons.
Cors en ut.
1rs Violons.
2ds Violons.
Altos.
Pierre (Ténor).
Lefort.
1r CHŒUR. Hautes-contre. Tailles. Basses.
2d CHŒUR. Hautes-contre. Tailles. Basses.
Violoncelles et Contrebasses.
Piano.

a 2.

ce trait est un cri de matelot, qui doit être bien entendu.

(Les *sforzando* marquent les coups de hache, de marteau, et la peine des ouvriers.)

Moderato.

G. 33.

Fig. 6, The first page of *Pierre le Grand*, Act I Scene 1, 1792 edition.

Note the unusual performance directions which are clearly marked.

We should recall, in fact, Grétry's own insistence in his *Mémoires* on realistic local colour in imitating what would be the true soundscape of the environment in which the characters find themselves. In this scene, we are afforded a clear example of how Grétry employed this technique to great sentimental efficacy. After all, the primary reason for such a technique – as Grétry himself stated – was to communicate the "authentic accents" of emotional experience, to "strike [the audience] with sentiments", and most of all to "whip up passions".[26]

In this instance, the emotions which Grétry and Bouilly sought to invoke in their audience are those shared amongst the characters as well as the chorus of labourers themselves, whose thoughts seem wholly occupied by the emotional experience of their work. The chorus announces:

> Let us work and sing
> Redouble our courage;
> That the weariness of working
> Dissipates in our songs.[27]

This is also Lefort's desire:

> Let us chase away melancholy,
> And open ourselves to cheerfulness;
> It's the balm of health;
> It's the charm of life.[28]

That the *tableau* of this scene is oriented towards a sentimental emphasis (over narrative) is not altogether surprising given Grétry's aesthetic theory, although it is nevertheless interesting to glimpse such a carefully-wrought, practical realisation of an established theoretical principle. More significant though is the subtlety with which the *tableau* is inclined towards socio-political didacticism. For example, Pierre's own stanzas exhibit the same sentimental emphasis but with a more explicitly political bias:

> Wealth, honours, sceptre and crown,
> You only offer everyone a false joy.
> With you, rarely can one open their heart
> To the sweet distractions that gaiety gives us…
>
> But all these salutary pleasures
> Are only a part of true joy.
> Two additional things are necessary:

[26] Grétry, *Mémoires,* vol. 1, 209.
[27] Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, ix.
[28] Ibid, ix.

Love, and friendship above all.[29]

Pierre's lesson for his listeners is that true joy (an emotion which in *Pierre le Grand* is repeatedly proposed as the purpose of society) is not to be found in the absolutist mode of sovereignty with its trappings of wealth and power, but rather in the love and friendship which are manifested in a sovereign's co-operation with his people.[30] It is important to note, however, that in this scene social equality is abstracted into the sentimental qualities of love and friendship. Leavens has identified what she terms an "amorous intersubjectivity" (by which she means relationships of acknowledged and reciprocated dependence, characterised by love of various natures) at the heart of *opéra-comique* before the Revolution.[31] In the first scene of *Pierre*, however, this "amorous intersubjectivity" is not constructed between individuals, but aligned as a corporate relationship between sovereign and people. In other words, an abstract and impassive relationship normally conceived in terms merely of duty and positionality is sentimentalised through the embodiment of the people in the chorus, and of the monarch in Pierre. In this way, the allegorical function of the characters is an important means by which the audience could be convinced of their own intersubjectivity with the King, seeing it abstracted in terms of love, and above all friendship.

Strikingly, it would seem that the didactic aspects of the opera were equally an appeal to King Louis as to the citizen-spectators of France, with Pierre standing as the ideal model which Louis should imitate. This is evident in the foreword of course, where apparent praise of the King can certainly be read as a subtle attempt to construct a popular framework for the model of French kingship and to supplant the traditional absolutism. But the appeals permeate the work, even invading the dramatic narrative itself. For example, we have seen that in Act I Scene 2 the dialogue between Pierre and Lefort features a lengthy exposition of Pierre's egalitarian virtue and *sensibilité* as they discuss his history and the present situation in which they find themselves. This then prompts Lefort to exclaim: "What an example you provide to sovereigns!"[32] Sovereigns, it seems, might learn something of political duty from Pierre's example.[33]

---

[29] Ibid, ix.

[30] Quite what characterises this co-operation is a pertinent matter. It could be argued, for example, that in this scene Bouilly's language (as a monarchist) does not speak of partnership with the people, but rather of the ruler's own power to create more enlightened conditions among the people. This would be true but for the emphasis that the opera, taken as a whole, places on reciprocal work and interdependence between sovereign and citizen. This will be discussed in more detail later in the present chapter, particularly with regard to work and to Pierre's relationship with Catherine.

[31] Leavens, *Figures of sympathy in eighteenth-century opéra-comique*, 105-107.

[32] Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, ix.

[33] *Pierre le Grand* was not the first opera that sought to represent the virtues of a society in which monarch and citizens were bound in mutual affection and respect for each other; nor was it the first to address the monarch on points of civic virtue. This kind of message can be seen, as Charlton points

This is even clearer in the couplets sung *en vaudeville* at the very end of the opera, when Catherine steps through the fourth wall to discourse on the relationship between the historical Pierre and Louis. In total disregard for the dramatic integrity of the opera, she declares:

> In celebrating an Emperor
> Whom his people cherish and revere
> Each of us feels his heart
> Name him our august father.
> If, by his assiduous labours,
> Peter made his Empire flourish
> Louis, by his great virtues,
> Causes all France to say:
> [May he] Be blessed forever.[34]

I believe the theme of labour, celebrated here by Catherine, is used by Bouilly and Grétry to intensify their allegorical depiction of political co-operation. For example, in addition to the visual *tableau* arrayed before the spectator onstage in this scene, the mimetic musical gestures, and the chorus's call to 'work and sing' as discussed earlier, the busy activity of the scene is lent musical weight by the manner in which Grétry employs his forces. Instead of a conventional approach in which one unified choir might support more virtuosic material sung by the main characters, he divides his forces into two separate choirs which participate in imitative antiphonal exchanges (see ex. 3). These are in turn contrasted with the orchestra which has its own important thematic material and motivic gestures, and with Pierre and Lefort's solo passages appearing between the refrains of the choruses. This creates a most compelling sense of dispersed activity.

Most notable of all, the refrains (rather than the characters' solo passages) form the thematic and structural anchor of the scene, and we are therefore given a sense of Grétry and Bouilly's belief in the importance of unity, even if the labour is divided up. Pierre and Lefort actually end up conceding to the chorus' authority by subjecting themselves to their compatriots' material rather than retaining their own musical identity. Just as their labour is conducted in the midst of their compatriots', they frequently find their own melodies subsumed within the richer homophonic textures of the refrain. It is a musical depiction of egalitarian effort, in which the

---

out, in operas by Metastasio (as in *La clemenza di Tito*), and in the work of Voltaire (*Le Temple de la Gloire*, 1745) and Cahusac (who, as Charlton puts it, 'regaled' King Louis XV on virtue in his 1745 opera *Les Fêtes de Polimnie*). See Charlton, *Opera in the Age of Rousseau*, 114-115. What makes *Pierre* revolutionary, however, has already been discussed above: in this work, far greater emphasis is placed upon the participation of the people with whom Pierre labours. The model of co-operation in this opera goes deeper than the moralising of the kind exhibited in earlier works, which generally only emphasised the duty of the monarch to create an enlightened society.

[34] Ibid, xxiv.

busy activity of the scene is in no small measure conveyed through the extra-musical significance of the orchestra and the choir(s). This in turn colours the meaning of their music, giving it an allegorical or dramaturgical function of its own as it comes to signify the transcendence of collective effort into the triumph of social unity.

Ex. 3 *Pierre le Grand*,
Act I Scene 1, bb. 21-28.

Yet despite the extra-musical significance, the material itself is eminently simple and very much in keeping with the musical *vraisemblance* we might expect from Grétry. Aside from a few incidences of chromatic colouring, the score is entirely functional and the scene largely rests in a jolly C major tonality (evoking simplicity and pastoral innocence). Hints of A minor do indeed appear to emphasise the moments when ‘melancholy’ is discussed and the exertion of the labour seems to take its toll (like the appeal for ‘courage!’, bb. 46-49), but these are rapidly dispelled by strong reconsolidations of the tonic key (such as the repeated perfect cadences between bars 53-61) as the choir redouble their courage in response to their compatriots’ call. Pierre’s greatest contribution is to lift the tonality in a joyful modulation to the

dominant G major (b. 70), suggesting that the King has the duty and the capacity to strengthen and empower his people in adversity and triumph. Even the tonal narrative is afforded a mimetic function in order to further the moral lesson of *Pierre le Grand*.

Such depictions of labour reappear frequently throughout the opera in one guise or another, emphasising a pervasive moral focus on political co-operation. There is undoubtedly a strong ideological element to this message very much in keeping with Grétry and Bouilly's liberal politics, particularly given the context in which the work was produced. As Schama has pointed out, 1790 was a year in which citizens and politicians alike explicitly sought to emphasise national unity in a co-operative, participative sense. This was clearly the message Grétry and Bouilly wished to communicate.

In some instances, Bouilly and Grétry greatly intensify the political connotations by subtly shifting the context in which similar devices are employed. Thus, what they represent becomes slightly altered. Act I Scene 7 is an excellent example. At this moment in the opera the village labourers have laid aside their tools in order to gather together to celebrate Catherine's virtue. Their celebrations take on political implications when an elder of the community arrives to crown her with flowers and announce an annual festival in her honour. Catherine is both flattered and flustered by their recognition, but nevertheless accepts the tribute.

Again the chorus is divided into groups, but this time representing the community demographically. Antiphonal exchanges are abandoned in favour of alternating choral groups singing of Catherine's virtues homophonically, and each group is distinguished by idiosyncratic musical features which mimetically represent their character. For example, the elders (*viellards et vieilles*, bb. 18-22) have very static lines within the most limited range (the soprano melody for example remains within a perfect fourth) and are in a lower tessitura. In contrast, the young girls (*jeunes filles*, bb. 22-26) have a much more nimble passage sung only by the sopranos and undulating more intrepidly over a minor seventh, with the young boys (*jeunes garçons*, bb. 26-28) somewhere in between in character. Each group is thus afforded the opportunity to express their own opinion of Catherine. The devices employed by Grétry are evidently different from the first scene, and yet they have a very similar effect: a sense of dispersed activity is instigated, before eventually this activity resolves in the reassembling of the chorus (ex. 4) to proclaim the peoples' favour of Catherine which will eventually lead to her crowning:

> Let us celebrate this day
> For us, so lucky;
> May Catherine and her good deeds

Never leave our hearts.[35]

Ex. 4 *Pierre le Grand*,

Act I Scene 7, bb. 26-38.

Whilst each of the demographic groups thus represented expresses their own favour (and in different scenes, the characters do too), it is the community (through the chorus) which is given the sovereign voice in pre-empting Catherine’s coronation. It is curious, however, that in this instance the chorus is male only, thus omitting a significant proportion of the community who have previously voiced their support and opinion in the matter. In a sense, though, this consolidates the idea of the moment as an exercise of suffrage. As James McMillan points out, though the Revolution produced a degree of emancipation for women in the political

[35] Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, xiii.

sphere, suffrage was limited to men only; and so if this moment is indeed an election of sorts (as an exercise of public opinion), the absence of female voices is consistent.[36]

It is only after the chorus has expressed their opinion that the elderly Mathurin is allowed to offer Catherine her crown. Thus Catherine can only be considered, like Lefort, the people's representative. The political element of such a lesson is of course intensified by the fact that this is a coronation, and not merely a general example of social co-operation the likes of which the audience witness in the first scene. Given Bouilly's acknowledgement of the allegorical function of the opera, we might consider that this scene could be understood a subtle and compelling sentimental *tableau* representing the state of France itself in 1789, when the dispersed people of France assembled to (eventually) witness and pronounce a constitutional monarchy. Of course, this is not labour in the conventional sense; but the clear musical and visual relationship between this scene and the first would suggest the Bouilly and Grétry were keen to minimise the distinction. The effect of common labour – whether physical as in the construction of St. Petersburg, or political as in the co-operation of sovereign and citizen – is to draw the country into triumphant unity.

The power of the community as embodied in the chorus is frequently restated in a like manner at intervals throughout *Pierre*. For example, they pronounce a similar judgement on Catherine again later (Act I Scene 7), and on Pierre (Act II Scene 5). Additionally, they are given the authority to declare Pierre their monarch (Act III Scene 4) and to proclaim the advent of a new political age (Act III Scene 5). Employing the chorus in such a prominent way envoiced the people themselves, if we consider the chorus onstage as functioning within the allegorical mode of representation so prominent in the opera. Indeed, the grounds for identification between spectator and chorus are strong: the chorus consists of labourers, sailors, wives, husbands, and all manner of everyday citizens one might have expected to find on the streets of revolutionary Paris. In short, the *vraisemblance* of the domestic, *comique* setting in which *Pierre le Grand* is set was eminently suitable for sustaining the degree of *intérêt* which would allow the audience to feel like they participated, rather than spectated.

[36] As McMillan puts it, "At no stage… did the revolutionaries think of including women within their definitions of citizenship. In the first constitution, drawn up in 1791, a distinction was made between active and passive citizens. Active citizens were males over the age of 25 who were both independent (domestic servants were excluded) and able to meet a minimum property requirement… In 1792, under the Republic, so-called 'universal' suffrage was introduced, which in reality meant that citizenship was granted to all independent males over 21. Women, like domestic servants, were not considered autonomous human beings: they were nature's 'passive' citizens, irrespective of their property conditions." This being the case, *Pierre* is all the more remarkable for including female voices in the exercise of public opinion earlier in the scene. See *France and Women 1789-1914: Gender, Society and Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 16.

But it is primarily in the development of Pierre's relationship with Catherine in which the politics of participation is most evident, and in which this is depicted with the most sentimental strength. We have seen that the theatrical depiction of love in terms of *sensibilité* had been a subject which received a great deal of attention from the *philosophes* much earlier in the eighteenth century. Rousseau had famously warned of the dangerous passions that depictions of love could unleash in the theatre in his dispute with d'Alembert, whilst Riccoboni was also wary because of its powerful effect on the natural *sensibilité* of the spectator. More generally, it had taken a pre-eminent place in the sensationist aesthetics of most of the theorists examined in Chapter I, including Malebranche, André, Diderot, and Helvétius.[37]

Practically speaking, modern scholars have demonstrated how in a literary context love was a foundational device in the sentimental narrative. Examining a significant quantity of eighteenth-century texts, Denby concludes that love was an important theme in one sense because representing the democratic struggles of young people in the bourgeois household and the social struggles of the impoverished.[38] This is pertinent in the case of Pierre and Catherine. More than this, however, is the fact that romantic love comes to function as a figuration of democracy which subverts the aristocratic social 'code' by pitting the powerful feelings of the heart, believed to manifest truth, against the archaic and oppressive barriers of the prevailing social order. Denby writes:

> Sentimental or *romantic* love… as it is presented, endlessly and repetitively, in sentimental fiction of the eighteenth century, is systematically defined in opposition to social convention; in order to be interesting as narrative, love must be pitted against social barriers… the economy of these texts, then, is such that experiential authenticity is defined by opposition to external social requirement: the space which we call the heart is created through conflict with a hostile externality, and it is the heart which is seen to transcend class barriers. Sentimental love appears as a figure of democracy… The lovers whose love breaks the code of aristocratic society might then be seen as giving voice, precisely, to a message of bourgeois protest at the aristocratic domination of society: the love story is to be read as a figure of ideological values and struggles, and sentiment… is fundamentally democratic."[39]

According to this model, Pierre and Catherine's love breaks through the social barriers of the old 'aristocratic' society because it produces the marriage of monarch and commoner, the thought of which initially scandalises Catherine when she discovers Pierre's true identity. As we shall see, Pierre is forced to work hard to convince Catherine that she is worthy of his affection. But the love between the two also appears as a 'figure of democracy' allegorically, I

[37] For example, see pp. 62-64.
[38] Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the social order in France, 1760-1820*, 61.
[39] Ibid, 97.

believe, in that it comes to represent a union of monarch and citizen in political participation. And the primary vehicle for this is, in fact, the sentimental mode of expression.

This is particularly clear in Act II Scene 2, for example, which follows a conversation with Georges (the master-carpenter) in which for the sake of love Pierre turns down an alternative marriage and the inheritance of the shipyard. In the subsequent scene, Pierre seems to be justifying his decision by eulogising Catherine, demonstrating that a woman of such qualities should rightly be considered more important than both wealth and position. Pierre sings:

> I will marry the one I love;
> On the head of beauty
> I will place the crown.
> What a happy destiny! What bliss!
>
> Catherine, soul of my life!
>
> Yes, I will love you
> As long as I live.
> O my wife! O my friend,
> By your virtues, by your genius
> You will guide me,
> You will steer me
> Towards the goal to which I aspire.
> Yes, you will help me
> To civilise my empire
> To make all my subjects happy,
> To spread joy and peace everywhere.
>
> I will marry the one I love;
> On the head of beauty
> I will place the crown.
> What a happy destiny! What bliss![40]

In this instant, the tender expression of love becomes inextricably bound up in Pierre's political aspirations for his wife. He does not seek her only as the object of his affections, but as a political guide possessing the virtue and skill necessary for steering him to the better governance of his dominion. Accompanying the eulogy, Grétry's score serves to increase the sentimental impact of this political lesson by both communicating and intensifying the sense of Pierre's infatuation. Moving away from the typical verse-refrain structure of other ariettes and choruses, Grétry lends the ariette weight by composing it in a tauter ternary structure.

[40] Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*: xv.

This also allows for the return emphasis of the A section, re-imbuing the audience with a sense of Pierre's emotional experience ("What a happy destiny! What bliss!"), thanks to the dominance of a bright and joyful E major tonality.

In the A section (ex. 5), it is indeed the experience of joy which receives the greatest musical emphasis. At moments in which Pierre dwells on this subject, we consistently find the most interesting musical gestures which convincingly but unobtrusively colour his sentiments, as if the orchestra were another character capable of entering into dialogue with Pierre in order to concur with his sentiments. The first time Pierre cries "Quel heureux sort! Quelle félicité!" (bb. 44-56) for example, a descending flurry of semiquavers in the violins convey his excitement. He begins to repeat his words with a swelling excitement depicted in the development of the melodic phrase. It begins as a simple crotchet-minim declamation predominantly fixed on the tonic (44-45) before picking up syllabic pace through the introduction of quaver movement (46-47), which is once more reinforced by the violins. The melody subsequently reverts to minims but is this time accompanied homophonically by the full string section for emphasis, with the excited forwards momentum carried by a syncopated violin motif. Following this, Pierre makes a dramatic octave leap up to a top A on a melismatic 'sort!', which is then followed by an excited quaver cascade spanning a perfect fifth (48-52).

The most striking musical material is reserved, however, for the moment that Pierre draws an explicit political conclusion about the nature of his partnership with Catherine (Par tes vertus, par ton génie,/Tu me guideras… bb. 72-102). The simple musical depiction of love with its emphasis on clarity of melody gradually gives way to a more complex and turbulent harmonic passage, more developmental in character, and this with a greater forward impetus provided by tonal instability as the orchestra pushes Pierre towards the E major resolution of the $A^1$ section. The chromatic harmony colours a distinctive semitone descent in the bass (bb. 72-80), so that the supposed truth of Pierre's assertion that political co-labour will result in the apotheosis of society ("Tu me conduiras/Au but où j'aspire") is made all the more conspicuous by the progressive tonal instability.  This assertion is lent gravity as the locus of a brief tonal resolution into a distinctive E minor, although the resolution is never consummated with a perfect cadence once again delaying the satisfaction of local harmonic expectations.

The tonic E major is quickly re-asserted (83), and Pierre's excitement once more carries him into an unusual melodic passage characterised by impassioned minor seventh leaps drawing attention to his political ambitions ("rendre heureux tous mes sujets"). These are ornamented by prominent *forte pianos* very similar in character to those used in the opening scene of the opera to depict the travails of the labourers, as if to suggest that Pierre's proposed co-labour with Catherine in the political sphere is indistinguishable from the co-operative work that he

undertakes with his citizens in 'civilising' his country. Eventually Pierre is able to recover his composure and both the harmonic and melodic content stabilise in sympathy (bb. 87-102), but the textural composition remains fairly dense (retaining virtually all of the forces available to Grétry, including the brass) and the dynamic level high (*forte*), which conveys an appropriate topical stress on regal splendour.

Ex. 5 *Pierre le Grand*,

Act II Scene 2, bb. 44-56.

The return of the refrain (b. 103) witnesses a return of the simple, conjunct melody which does not obscure the exposition of Pierre's tender emotions. However, in contrast with the original A section, a codetta is added to the A$^1$ section in which the regal topic once more emerges

only this time to emphasise Pierre's indulgent emotions rather than his more political musings on stately duty and co-operation (bb. 136-152). Here Pierre's joy and infatuation is repeated and developed along with melodic fragments very much in keeping with his earlier excitement (44-56), although coloured by brass fanfares and cascading string passages. Both topics, love and regal splendour, are emphasised by a prominent Mannheim rocket: a device in which the ascending and arpeggiated melodic line swells irresistibly from a *piano* up to a grand *forte*.

The real ingenuity of Pierre's ariette is thus in fusing together the two themes – love and politics – rather than in distinguishing between them. The two are certainly treated with some degree of isolation in their exposition, but Grétry's clever use of the orchestra to preserve the sense of regal splendour whilst accompanying Pierre's declaration of love creates a compelling sense of sentimental unity rather than juxtaposition, in keeping with his own aesthetic theory.[41]

Ex. 6 *Pierre le Grand*,

Act II Scene 2, bb. 72-81.

[41] Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, 145.

The turbulent musical narrative of Act II Scene 2 is thus highly sentimental, both in terms of its depiction of tender emotions but also more forcefully in its close adherence to the corresponding emotional narrative which is more clearly outlined by the text. In this way Pierre's ariette is perfectly Rousseauian. Bouilly's text provides the clear, fixed meaning of spoken language, and so Grétry is thus free to exploit the full affective potential of the orchestra, which features a wide variety of devices intended to both beguile the senses and to move the emotions of the spectator. This is particularly clear at moments in which Pierre's excitement gets the better of him (bb. 45-56 for example), where the music appropriates a linguistic quality in its depictions of the impassioned accents of vocal cries.

This scene therefore exploits the affective power of love most powerfully due to a potent mix of dramaturgical and musical expressivity, and yet it is primarily intended to carry the political themes of the opera. Pierre conceives of his relationship primarily as a partnership in which the business of state will benefit from Catherine's virtues: love is significant in its own right, but it has a function and a duty.

This principle is in fact deeply ingrained in the narrative of *Pierre le Grand*. Although Pierre has admired and loved her for some time, in the events which precede the start of the narrative Catherine has apparently refused all his proposals of marriage. The result is that Pierre is forced to prove the sincerity of his love in order to win the hand of his beloved, which mirrors a trope found in Favart's *Soliman II, ou Les trois sultanes* (1761). Even in this context the trope had taken on political connotations as a protest against absolutism, although here it was still the reform of the sultan's personal morality which the heroine Roxelane required as a condition of marriage.[42] The situation is quite different in *Pierre le Grand*. Pierre is virtuous and Catherine is already aware of his qualities. She does not doubt his personal integrity nor the sincerity of his affections. Rather, she fears that his love is only emotional. Catherine holds out for a union in which she will have a productive part to play, telling Pierre:

> Very well, I will open my heart to you. If up until now I have refused you my hand, it's because I wasn't yet sure of your feelings. It's because I feared that you only felt love for me, and love, without respect, flies away quickly leaving only disgust and remorse behind it. But now that I have understood your soul, now that I am assured I am as respected as I am cherished, I will be the first to hasten the moment in which we marry… but before this I require a service… Protect two lovely people for whom I am concerned. You know the feelings that Alexis and Caroline have for each other; you know how they suit each other. You must help me to get them married, and the day of their marriage, Pierre, is the day I set for our own. With me, the good Geneviève, convinced that Alexis will make her daughter happy, urges master Georges every day to consent to their

[42] See Ziad Elmarsafy, "Submission, Seduction, and State Propaganda in Favart's *Soliman II, ou Les trois sultanes,*" *French Forum* 26 no. 3 (2001), 13-26.

> marriage. But he refuses us constantly. Both of you [Pierre and Lefort] have his trust and a great influence over his mind. You alone can cause him to answer our prayers.[43]

Catherine thus does not just want to be loved; but to be valued, esteemed and respected in her own right for her personal talents and qualities. In fact, she holds that emotional love on its own is not enough to sustain marriage because she conceives of marriage in terms of a productive partnership which must bear good fruit for the community at large. This then explains the gauntlet that she lays down for Pierre: prove that our co-labours might be productive and yield results (in this instance the changing of Georges' mind for the good of two restricted lovers), she argues, and I will be content to marry you knowing that our partnership will prove productive.

This model of marriage is prophetic of the revolutionary model, which was gestating in 1790 but was only consolidated between 1793-1794 through reforms introduced by the Legislative Assembly. It was during this period, writes Suzanne Desan, that:

> the deputies debated and devised the changing legal contours of marriage [and]… gradually elaborated on a vision of marriage as a microcosm of the social contract. They anticipated that this institution would tie the individual to the social whole, the citizen to the state, the patriot to the nation… this most elemental social bond, grounded in the natural complementarity of the genders, should enable virtually everyone to contribute to the nation. By forming a useful and even virtuous bridge from the state of nature to civil society, and from civil society to the state, marriage took on political importance at this moment when revolutionaries strove to unite the civil and natural man in service of the nation and to draw on the distinct, but socially useful qualities of each citizen, female or male.[44]

There is a clear parallel between the contemporary politicisation of the institution of marriage and Catherine's hesitation to marry Pierre. The Legislative Assembly reconceived of marriage as a 'microcosm of the social contract': Catherine desires her marriage to be founded on the parity afforded by *estime.* The Assembly sought for marriage which would 'tie the individual to the social whole': Catherine hopes to see Pierre to realise his duties to the community and the responsibilities entailed by his close relationship with Georges. The Assembly hoped that marriage might enable 'virtually everyone' to 'contribute to the nation': Catherine calls upon Pierre to serve the community by working for the good of the young lovers, and by answering the prayers she shares with the good Geneviève, Caroline's mother.

Thus what we see from the 'test of love' trope as it is figured in *Pierre* is an overt (although subtle) politicisation of the theme of love in general: in holding out for Pierre to prove his social

---

[43] Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, xi.
[44] Suzanne Desan, *The Family on Trial in Revolutionary France* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2004), 50.

convictions before giving herself to him in marriage, Bouilly's Catherine was demonstrating to her audience that whilst the emotional value of love was valuable, it could only reach its fullest potential if its considerable affective intensity drove a productive partnership which served the community. The hardship was not all Pierre's, of course. Catherine's admission of love indicates that her initial refusal of marriage was an act of self-sacrifice too, taken in order to assure the well-being of the community even at her own expense. Once again we note the subtle prevalence of the theme of labour so clearly foregrounded in the opening *tableau*. Co-operative labour was to be the fruit of Pierre and Catherine's emotions, in this instance to witness love flourish under the collapse of Georges' prohibitions. In this instance love is indeed (as Denby argued) a compelling force for democratisation, and thus an important social development for the small community inhabited by these characters.

Evidently, then, Grétry and Bouilly were calling the citizens of France to insist upon partnership in social duty. But it should also be regarded as a sober reminder of their duty to the monarch, for, as Joan B. Landes as pointed out, marriage had long been regarded as a "middle course" between total liberty and despotism.[45] Thus the people were not to be oppressed by the monarch, but neither should they consider themselves above dependence on the steady hand and moderating power of the king. There are some duties, Bouilly seems to be saying, which require the sovereign capabilities of the monarch.

At the same time, in depicting Catherine's own sovereignty (having been crowned by the people), *Pierre le Grand* also outlined Bouilly's conception of the popular duty. Throughout the opera, Catherine's actions are always for Pierre's benefit even if her refusal of marriage caused him dismay. In modern colloquial terms, we might consider it an example of 'tough love'. This becomes clear if we survey what Catherine's gauntlet leads Pierre to. He is driven to share the burden borne by Aléxis and Caroline, in turn deepening his relationship with them as he learns of their suffering. The sympathy he develops causes him to intercede with Georges on their behalf, in turn allowing him to correct the misguided (though understandable) prohibitions of a man whose intentions were always good and simply required wiser counsel. It also allows him to fulfil his duty to better the lot of his subjects by answering the prayers of Caroline's mother, Geneviève, and her friend Catherine.

In short, it teaches Pierre that his duties as sovereign are intrinsically bound up with state and affairs of his people, thus deepening his understanding of his role and completing the work begun by Lefort who had already taught Pierre self-discipline. Therefore, not only does Catherine's self-sacrifice benefit the whole society, but it also sentimentalises the King's duty

[45] Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 35.

in such a way that he realises the tender emotions he feels for his subjects are indicative of his responsibility to govern wisely in a way which improves their existence. Her sacrifice is for his edification. The principle underlying Bouilly's narrative is that not only does the King have a duty to work for the good and improvement of his people, but the people have a duty to work for the good and improvement of their King.

All benefit from the people's recognition of their duty, even the people themselves. As becomes clear in the finale (Act III Scene 5), they will be raised up into partnership with the king even despite the lingering sentiments of their historical subservience. When the revelation of Pierre's true identity is made to her, Catherine does not feel suitable for the task of joint-ruling offered to her by Emperor Pierre, asking to be left in "the rank in which destiny has placed me."[46] But Pierre objects, telling her that it is indeed her place to rule by his side because of her virtues. Catherine concedes, acknowledging that "one can refuse a throne, a crown, but not resist love."[47] Intersubjective bonds between characters' *sensibilité* – love – are depicted as the means of society's progress, providing sufficient motivation for a benevolent king and a virtuous people to step into equal partnership together. This is a compelling model of co-labour for the good of the collective. Catherine's desire to both labour with *and* love Pierre – sentimentalised by exaggerated, indulgent displays of emotion foregrounded in the dramaturgical and musical content of the opera – thus form an important foundation for the work's political principles.

We might therefore conclude that in *Pierre le Grand*, the sentimental power of sensation is not only intended to work directly upon the audience by moving their emotions at the sight of socio-political virtue (thus ingraining it through its association with pleasure, according to the eighteenth-century model). It is in fact also depicted as a communal currency of sorts, whereby deeds of profound sentimental value derive from the *sensibilité* of virtuous citizens and prompt reciprocal acts of sentimental virtue, in turn filling society with deeds of virtue and profound emotional significance. Bouilly attempts to inspire citizens to love their compatriots by presenting *sensibilité* not merely as a quality possessed by the elite, hyper-intensified so as to lead to great acts of political virtue (such as the king condescending to labour with his subjects), but as a quotidian quality manifested in all sorts of acts.

An excellent example is Georges' decision to give Pierre 400 ducats in thanks for his labour, friendship, and love. Georges was moved by Pierre's faithfulness to Catherine when he presented Pierre the opportunity of wealth and social status with the hand of Caroline, and, so moved, secretly resolved to award his friend this money in recognition of his service and for

[46] Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, xxiii.
[47] Ibid, xxiv.

his future security. Despite the cost to himself (a son-in-law capable of taking over the family business to ensure its prosperity for years to come) Georges is clearly convinced that no virtue should go unrewarded. The value of the financial gift is indicated by the intensity of Pierre's reaction: "My God! ... Master Georges! ... My friend! ... I could not know what to say… My heart is too full."[48] The two embrace in a touching display of friendship.

The sentimentality of the exchange is movingly poignant for an audience, but we should not overlook how the poignancy of the deeds greatly affects the characters themselves and prompts their own reciprocal acts of virtue. At the end of the opera, Pierre returns in the splendour of his true identity to award Georges and the people of St Petersburg six thousand ducats. Georges' virtuous *sensibilité* is repaid fully and then rewarded generously. Accordingly, the financial element of this particular act of kindness is a helpful demonstration of how *sensibilité* becomes a form of social currency which, when spent, benefits the whole community in an economy of virtue.

It also affords Bouilly an opportunity to reinforce the political principles of the work. This is encapsulated visually by an embrace: a poignant display of the 'amorous intersubjectivity' which pervades the protagonists' relationships throughout *Pierre le Grand*. Initially Georges objects, leading to an exposition of egalitarian morality in which character and deeds are more important than rank or position:

> Pierre: Let us embrace, my dear Georges! (Georges hesitates to approach Pierre who rushes towards him and pulls him into his arms.)
>
> Georges: Heavens! Your Majesty deigns to demean himself…
>
> Pierre: Demean myself! Come now, good man, come now, this position honours both of us equally. Believing me poor and without parents, you were my benefactor; it is now my turn to be yours.[49]

Emotional outbursts like Pierre's upon receiving Georges' gift (and later in embracing him) are testament to the universal *sensibilité* of the *personnages*, which might be considered the lubricant of this sentimental economy. It is also most interesting that *sensibilité* is repeatedly equated with virtue, which is then in turn subsumed into this sentimental economy so that good deeds (like the gift of money) become inextricably sentimentalised and thus part of this 'economy'. The effect is a strong sense that any distinction between *sensibilité* and virtue has been collapsed. In the case of Pierre, Catherine herself explicitly identifies his personal *sensibilité* as the basis for his virtue, which in turn leads to an exposition of his egalitarian

[48] Ibid, xviii.
[49] Ibid, xxiii.

principles. Pierre's convictions regarding *égalité*, it seems, derive not from cold reason but from his feelings which belie his virtue (and thus the two become explicitly linked):

> Catherine: Yes, Pierre, your tone, your way of living, finally your feelings; all contradicts that which you assure me you are.
>
> Pierre: My feelings, you say? Feelings are common to all ranks, and it is not birth which bestows them. You yourself, Catherine, are the most convincing proof.
>
> Catherine: However, the virtues which characterise you appear too profoundly engraved in your soul for them not to have grown in your childhood. And these virtues can only be the fruit of an education lacking the misfortunes of the majority amongst whom you set yourself.[50]

However, if for Catherine it betrayed his noble breeding, it is nevertheless clear that Pierre's particular genre of virtuous *sensibilité* is not only the preserve of the social elite. Rather, it is shared by the people themselves. In fact, in Pierre le Grand many characters (regardless of their social standing) are frequently overwhelmed by the virtuous *sensibilité* of their compatriots. This is particularly evident in Catherine's own reaction to her crowning at the hands of people, who, in repaying Catherine's kindness to the people, prompt her to tears. She sings:

> I cannot restrain it anymore… I'm dissolving into tears…
> What a prize for so few good deeds!...
> Ah! How delightful is this moment!
> No, I will never forget it.[51]

The sentimentality of the moment is greatly emphasised by its musical accompaniment. It is preceded by a bombastic climax in which the chorus' *fortissimo*, homophonic declamation (*Il est si doux d'vous couronner*!) is reinforced by similarly dramatic ascending string figures lent fervency by their semiquaver *tremolos*, accompanied by brass calls and woodwind arpeggios. Interrupted by a pause, Catherine's response could not be more distinct. Rather than integrate the response as a solo refrain on the material of the chorus (as is often the model for so much of the opera thus far), Catherine takes a recitative (ex. 7) which shifts time signature from the pastoral 6/8 to a more syllabic 2/4. There is a new, less constrained tempo (*allegretto agitato*) emphasising the speech-like freedom of the recitative (consolidated by a sudden change in tempo to *plus lent* halfway through), and a very light orchestration (string quartet only) which efficiently outlines a simple harmony without obscuring Catherine's words. Melodically, it features short, fragmentary sections of around two beats which are isolated from each other by rests, accentuating the syllabic quality of Catherine's declamation. This is accentuated by

[50] Ibid, xvi.
[51] Ibid, xiv.

the general ‘agitato’ marking which allows the singer to linger on certain syllables or to quickly progress through them according to what is interpreted to be most effective expressively.

Catherine’s *sensibilité* is thus afforded parity with Pierre’s, receiving a corresponding degree of musical representation. Accordingly, *sensibilité* should be perceived not as the basis of two separate modes of virtue, one noble and the other common, but instead more democratically as a trait shared amongst those of all social backgrounds.[52]

Ex. 7 *Pierre le Grand*,

Act I Scene 7, bb. 64-77.

[52] As Maarten Fraanje puts it, *sensibilité* functions as a general indication of “mérite personnel” because it is depicted as the primary motivation for good deeds; in Catherine’s case, helping older citizens and encouraging young lovers despite their misfortunes. It is this *sensibilité*, in fact, which makes her worthy of Pierre’s affections and ultimately of the crown: all because it produces the sort of altruistic virtue which a monarch needs to govern a society of citizens devoted to each other’s needs. There is indeed, therefore, a collapsing of any distinction between *sensibilité* and virtue, for Catherine as well as for Pierre. I concur with Fraanje’s conclusions, although I disagree that the marriage between Pierre and Catherine represents the ideas of ‘Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité’. The problem with this conclusion is one of anachronism: the very first expression of these ideals wasn’t until Robespierre delivered a speech on the subject of the National Guard in December 1790, almost eleven months after the premiere of *Pierre* at the Opéra Comique. Even then, it wasn’t in common circulation as a motto until at least 1793. See “La Sensibilité au pays froid: les Lumières et le sentimentalisme russe,” *Revue des études slaves* 74 no. 4 (2002), 663-664.

The democratic possession of *sensibilité* is attested to by the chorus themselves in their response to Catherine's joy. Overwhelmed themselves, the adoring people draw close to tears themselves:

> I feel our tears flowing
> At the memory of your good deeds.
> Ah! How delightful is this moment!
> No, I will never forget it
> Let us celebrate this day
> So lucky for us
> Let Catherine and her good deeds
> Never leave our hearts.[53]

If *sensibilité* is to be equated with virtue as I have argued (acting as a social currency in an economy of virtue), the people's indulgent weeping at the poignancy of Catherine's crowning and at the memory of her good deeds is sufficient evidence of the virtue of the people themselves. This is indeed in keeping with their description at other moments in the opera. The peoples' *sensible* virtue is established more prosaically by Catherine herself in an earlier scene (Act I Scene 3) for example, when she protests that the citizens of St Petersburg are both more *sensible* and more committed to good deeds than herself.[54] It is also reiterated in a similar prosaic manner at intervals throughout the opera.

But in Act I Scene 7, Bouilly and Grétry chose to represent the citizens' virtue in a much more affective manner, and the result is a more compelling means of highlighting the enduring connection between *sensibilité* and virtue. Again, appearing in the same *tableau* as the depiction of Catherine's own *sensibilité*, Grétry's score continues to play a prominent role in intensifying and communicating the experience of the people's emotions. Excited by Catherine's impassioned response to their praise and the sight of her tears, the people announce their own overwhelmed state (*J'sentons couler nos larmes*) with an antiphonal exchange in B minor which ascends upwards gradually before cascading downwards as if to first depict the building emotion before the falling tears themselves (ex. 8).

This is an unusual texture for a chorus in *Pierre*, which predominantly employs homophonic declamations. Once again, we might note the use of performance directions to emphasise the sentimentality of the scene, for the chorus is instructed to sing as if "speaking amongst themselves, with emotion." Their singing is accompanied by a sighing oboe motif which is associated with misery and misfortune within the opera: in Act I Scene 4, the unfortunate

[53] Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, xiv.
[54] Ibid, x.

Aléxis, despairing of ever being allowed to marry Caroline, expresses his grief by playing a melancholy oboe solo which becomes a 'sentimental object' imbued with an explicit psychological meaning.[55]

Ex. 8 *Pierre le Grand*, Act I Scene 7, bb. 77-85.

[55] Denby, *Sentimental Narrative and the social order in France*, 51.

The appearance of the same solo oboe in this scene is thus coloured by the memory of Aléxis' earlier grief, and although the motif is different, it nevertheless retains something of the same dejected sighing rhythm and contour (see ex. 8). Moreover, the timbre of the solo oboe over a limited string accompaniment is distinctive in both passages, and thus it alludes to the earlier emotional experience in order to more effectively represent the falling of tears. However, it is also something of a redemptive experience. In the earlier scene weeping would have represented grief, but in this scene it is indicative of joy, and thus Catherine's *bienfaisance* as well as the people's virtuous *sensibilité* transform the memory of Aléxis' oboe solo into a positive experience. Thus, Grétry's clever orchestration features a dual function of word painting (for more effective expression) and pointing prophetically to the moment that Catherine and Pierre's co-operative labour (epitomised in their marriage) will turn the citizens' grief into joy and bring about a new season of prosperity.

We might of course ask why it is significant that Bouilly and Grétry devoted similar attention to the citizens' *sensibilité* as they did to that of the major characters. The answer to this question draws us back to where we began, with the allegorical function of the characters and the representation of the citizens of France. As we have established, the chorus and other characters like Catherine and Lefort are representatives for the literal citizens of France. As such, the *sensibilité* of these characters and the citizens of the chorus in particular can be perceived as something which the French people might share in. As Feilla observed with regard to spoken theatre, it offered the public: "a visible and continuously-performed ideal community… in a world where social, political, and religious attachments were being dissolved."[56]

As a utopian community, Bouilly's St Petersburg was hardly a direct representation the French *régime* as it was in 1790, but it was perhaps intended to be the ideal to which the French people could strive. In demonstrating that *sensibilité* and virtue was a trait common to all ranks, as Pierre put it, Bouilly and Grétry were presenting the audience with a model which they could genuinely hope to imitate in society. In this way, the enlightened principles of *Pierre le Grand* were not simply retrospective; rather, they were prospective in seeking to reinforce moral and political principles of 1789 by both instructing the audience in what was possible and encouraging them to imitate the ideal.

[56] Feilla, *The Sentimental Theater of the French Revolution*, 14-15.

**Conclusion: *Sensibilité* and moral instruction in *Pierre le Grand***

In *Pierre le Grand* we have seen a striking prominence of sentimental devices, processes, and techniques which pervade the entire fabric of the opera, and are variously dramaturgical, visual, literary, or musical in nature. A significant quantity of these devices – including the preponderance of *vraisemblable*, mimetic representation (in both the score and the dramaturgy); the prominence of the *tableau*; and the democratic application of love, identified by Denby as foundational in the eighteenth-century sentimental narrative – should be regarded as having a direct connection with the corpus of seventeenth and eighteenth-century aesthetic theory which was so influential before and during the Revolution. Bouilly and Grétry's ingenuity is particularly evident through the ways in which their practical realisations develop and transform these eighteenth-century sensationist ideas, employing devices which fulfil the sensationist objective of profoundly affecting the emotions but which were not theorised at the time. These include the use of the oboe as a sentimental 'object'; the corporate (rather than purely interpersonal) framework of 'amorous intersubjectivity'; and the allegorical function of characters and the sophisticated nature of their musical representation through the choral and orchestral forces available to Grétry.

Most importantly, the sentimental aesthetic of the opera not only produces an emotionally compelling drama, but also plays an invaluable role in sustaining the didactic function of the opera. The careful union of socio-political principle with affective techniques of all kinds is a distinctive characteristic of *Pierre le Grand*. In this instance, the term 'socio-political principle' might more accurately be read to mean an early-revolutionary ideology, specific to the period pre-1792, when hopes for a reform of the monarchy were very much alive; as such, a tolerant, constitutional, and egalitarian system is the moral 'ideal' which pervades *Pierre* on every level. The process of exploiting *sensibilité* to inculcate political virtue results in both the politicisation of the sentimental and the sentimentalisation of politics, to the extent that the two are largely indistinguishable within the opera. Although composed three years beforehand and featuring political principles which would not have been acceptable in 1793, *Pierre le Grand* would have satisfied the aesthetic criteria of Baillet and Clozet's patriotic pieces which, as Serge Bianchi put it, express "the collective sensibility of a society which wishes to patriotise the universe."[57]

In a sense therefore, Bouilly and Grétry's didacticism can be understood as an expression of a 'collective sensibility' which already existed, in essence providing an opportunity for the release of a burgeoning political *sensibilité*. Related to this, allegorical representation is the prime method of encouraging the audience to recognise their own *sensibilité* through its appearance in the characters onstage. In turn this *sensibilité* is apotheosised. After all, within

[57] Bianchi, *La revolution culturelle de l'an II*, 190.

the fictional world of *Pierre le Grand,* intense emotions are the primary catalysts for social progress and civil harmony. Moral decisions are driven by sentimental motives. Above all, the traits which make Pierre an effective King and Catherine a suitable partner are derived from their *sensibilité*. Emotion, it seems – properly calibrated and carefully applied, of course – is the basis of social progress as well as personal virtue.

Accordingly, the intense and varied emotions experienced by the spectators (which Bouilly and Grétry worked so hard to elicit through the opera's sentimental aesthetic) are vindicated and shown through the drama to have a useful purpose: political and social regeneration. The audience are encouraged to allow the power of their emotional experience to shape their own society, just as apparently it had done so in the semi-historical world of *Pierre le Grand*. Here, the historical basis for the opera plays a subtle but vital role in union with its pervasive *vraisemblable* mode of expression. The work is indeed a sentimentalisation of history, but Bouilly and Grétry work hard to convince the audience that what is presented to them is nevertheless a representation of historical truth. The security that an 'historical' basis affords allows the authors the liberty to interpret figures like Peter the Great and the Empress Catherine I as champions of enlightened reform, in turn validating 1789 as another manifestation of a noble and inevitable spirit of democratic virtue.

# Conclusion

What do two polymaths, a novelist, a composer, a dissolute father, and a Russian empress have in common? In eighteenth-century France, at least, a deeply entrenched investment in the power of *sensibilité* to change lives and transform nations. As the quotations which head each chapter of the present study suggest, the belief that the emotions were the catalyst for behavioural change – and theatrical sensation the most powerful means of affecting them – proliferated in France during the eighteenth century.

Sensationism was pervasive in France before the Revolution. The perceived importance of human *sensibilité* dominated not only aesthetic texts on the arts (not least on opera, theatre, and literature) but became embedded in eighteenth-century French culture, producing a 'flowering of sentimentalism' and a 'cult of sentiment' even to the extent that its influence became "evident in every discourse essential to the age of Enlightenment."[1] In the context of music and opera, the noisy disagreements which erupted frequently during this period (such as those over harmony and melody, national style and the value of the *tragédie-lyrique*, and the place of the *merveilleux*) have broadly masked a striking consensus that opera was capable of exerting a profound influence over emotions to the extent that it could affect both the body and human behaviour. The best, most expressive opera would therefore make the most profound sentimental impact on the spectator.

Ultimately, the expressive or aesthetic objectives which concerned the use of opera's sentimental power over human *sensibilité* never remained purely aesthetic; they became inextricably bound up in the conceived moral and didactic opportunities that opera could offer French society. Despite Rousseau's impassioned opposition to the theatre (an opposition which he never extended to opera) it was widely believed that the proper application of its sentimental power centred on offering audiences emotionally powerful lessons in civic virtue. These lessons would both foster personal morality and strengthen intersubjective bonds between spectators, cultivating socio-political unity within the national community.

The role of the government in this process was never fully established. Marmontel warned against involving them too closely, for example, and Riccoboni proposed that they contributed a single member to a board of four censors overseeing the moral conduct of theatrical performances. Riccoboni's more participative model was also echoed by those who advocated programmes of sentimental training and aesthetic education; these programmes extended the

[1] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling,* 141; Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics, and the Culture of Feeling*, 2; and DeJean, *Ancients Against Moderns*, 79.

participative element to incorporate citizens themselves, who would thereby take responsibility for and control over their exposure to sensations in places like the theatre. The ultimate aim was to cultivate a 'taste for moral beauty'.[2]

I have argued that the particular expressive qualities of *opéra-comique* made it an attractive option to pre-revolutionary composers, librettists, and theorists seeking a form of opera directly suited to moral intstruction, especially in comparison with *tragédie-lyrique*. It was not only *opéra-comique*'s powers of *vraisemblance*, *ridicule* and its thematic content which was believed to make it so potent, but also its natural propensity for a hybridity that enabled *opéra-comique* to depict and explore the fullest possible range of the human condition (and not least the complete range of human emotions, from despair to humour).

This hybridity undoubtedly caused some concern to various writers (including Diderot) who feared the possibility of 'incoherence', but their anxieties were in no small part relieved by the work of Sedaine. The juxtaposition of aesthetic opposites was central to his work (hence Ledbury's term: 'discourse of opposition') and hybridity was at the very core of his *opéras-comiques*. His praxis was highly esteemed, even to the extent that the most vocal of opponents to hybridity (Grimm) acknowledged its merits. The hybridity of *opéra-comique* meant that it was regarded as being "culturally and socially alert… not a dangerous transgression but a necessary artistic process."[3] According to many eighteenth-century writers, the combination of all these characteristics meant that *opéra-comique* could exert a greater influence on the *sensibilité* of spectators than *tragédie-lyrique* could. Therefore, it was more capable of fulfilling a didactic objective, a fact to which writers from Diderot to Sedaine consistently returned in their aesthetic texts. By the time of the Revolution, then, *opéra-comique* was understood to offer significant expressive and didactic opportunities.

The Revolution of 1789-1799 was the first instance that these ideas about the interconnection between theatrical and operatic sensation and moral, civic education were applied systematically on a national level. The didactic role of the theatre and the opera house during the Revolution has been considered from many angles in recent scholarship, but the central role of a sensationist view of human *sensibilité* in driving the revolutionary pedagogical project has not yet received attention commensurate with its significance, particularly in the realm of *opéra-comique* (where it is barely discussed at all).

I have sought to demonstrate that sensationism was in fact the ideological basis of the revolutionary conception of the theatre's political and didactic utility. The influence of a

---

[2] Cook, "Feeling Better: Moral Sense and Sensibility in Enlightenment Thought", 97.
[3] Ledbury, "Sedaine and the Question of Genre," in *Michel-Jean Sedaine (1719-1797): Theatre, Opera and Art,* eds. David Charlton and Mark Ledbury (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2000), 15-20.

sensationist view of the theatre is evident in important texts produced during the Revolution, which illuminate key events at moments when establishing and harnessing the theatre's perceived sentimental power proved to be of the highest significance. The controversy between Bailly and Chénier (and their factions, indeed) is an interesting case in point: though both authors disagreed vehemently on the proper approach to controlling the theatre's influence over the public, both were equally convinced that this influence was exerted on *sensibilité*. It was believed to act powerfully on the emotions or 'passions' of the spectator, in such a way that it affected their behaviour and intensified the enthusiasm that spectators felt toward the political and social causes. The same debates which had occupied the *philosophes* were now being wrestled with by politicians: did the sentimental power of the theatre instruct or corrupt? What sorts of pieces and themes would ensure the moral security of French society, and what would lead to moral degradation and division?

Where the revolutionaries were compelled to moved beyond the *philosophes*, however, was in the matter of practical application. The need regulate the use of the theatre's sentimental power produced what I have termed the 'politicisation of the sentimental', as the revolutionaries began to conceive of sentimental theatre within explicitly (and even exclusively) political parameters. This produced or intensified changes in the way that important aspects of society were conceived of in this context: the relationship between the individual and the community (within which the rights and duties of the individual became subsumed, and the priority of intersubjective bonds was established); the relationship between the individual and the government (and the need for political participation); and the sorts of themes it was necessary to produce in order to elicit appropriate, sentimental responses from spectators (which could be as specific as 'the love of kings', or 'devotion to the *patrie*'). The purpose of the sentimental power of the theatre, they believed, was to produce a regenerated society, and whilst there was naturally great difference in opinion on the detail of what constituted a 'regenerated society, the belief in the need to empower and incorporate the individual citizen to contribute to the political project of Revolution was widespread and crossed factional lines.

Composers of *opéra-comique* shared their political colleagues' didactic ambitions for the theatre, and also the sensationist understanding of opera which they held in common with the *philosophes*. Grétry's perspective is illuminating in this regard, as his didactic plan for opera (the extent of which is particularly evident in his interpretation of Antique history) depended directly upon a sensationist understanding of the medium. They believed that *opéra-comique* offered greater potential than *tragédie-lyrique* in this regard, in no small part because of the same characteristics that their predecessors had identified as being both expressively and didactically effective in *opéra-comique*. Like Sedaine, Diderot, and others, Grétry and Framery

in particular conceived of a hybrid form of *opéra-comique* which employed both the power of comedy (*ridicule*) and the *pathétique* to act upon the *sensibilité* of the spectator in order to produce profound behavioural changes and instil new and powerful moral convictions through the emotions. They too regarded it as an important opportunity to forge powerful intersubjective bonds between spectators which could unify French society and encourage participation in the political project.

But Grétry also contributed to developing the sensationist view of opera: I have argued that it is a mistake to label him as an aesthetic conservative because his own aesthetic theory of opera and *opéra-comique* is highly developmental, looking forward to the innovations of the nineteenth century. This is the case both in the sense that it is implicitly political (and thus he contributed to the politicisation of sensationism) and highly pragmatic, offering numerous and sophisticated insights into a praxis which could fully exploit the sentimental power of operatic sensation. The *Mémoires* in particular illuminate not only the perceived political implications of opera and *opéra-comique*, as well as the shifting social positionalities which particularly concerned the role of the composer; but also a creative approach to composition that illuminated and emancipated new expressive opportunities, in which elements like the orchestra could take on powerfully psychological, symbolic functions where instrumental metaphor, narrative and image were essential. As such, there is much about Grétry's theory which can be considered as a contribution to the burgeoning of French Romanticism, and not simply as an echo of Enlightenment past. This is clear in both musical and literary contexts.

A didactic approach to *opéra-comique* rooted in sensationist principles was not limited to theoretical texts during the Revolution, however. I have also shown how aesthetic and didactic objectives intertwined in practice both across the breadth of the repertoire and within individual works like *Pierre le Grand*. Praxis and theory were indeed aligned in this regard. The appearance of new sub-genres and the adaption of more familiar forms of *opéra-comique* between 1789-1799 is striking, particularly considering the innovative ways in which composers used both to find more powerful ways of engaging with audience *sensibilité* and inculcating moral principles. This included utilising a hybrid type of *opéra-comique* in keeping with the developments of Sedaine, but also the incorporation of *tableaux*, non-traditional elements (like the patriotic song), politicised sentimental themes and a mode of *vraisemblance* in depictions of historical or contemporary events of national significance.

It is also striking that the content of the moral lessons these operas offered did not change significantly throughout the Revolution. There were naturally elements which did (particularly those which concerned modes of government and the reputation of various individuals and groups), but overall the moral objectives of most *opéras-comiques* were relatively stable. They

centred upon a collapsing of any distinction between private and public virtue – which incorporated the individual's voluntary subjection of their liberty and person to the collective good of the revolutionary community – and foregrounded authenticity, communal co-operation, mutual love, and domestic fidelity.

Accordingly, the ways in which composers and librettists employed sentimental devices and processes for the purpose of moral instruction frequently emphasised a participative mode of spectatorship in which the positionality of the individual in relation to the community was afforded the highest significance. In *Pierre le Grand*, for example, the political significance of the work is not simply that it seeks to be persuasive by moving the emotions; instead, *sensibilité* is portrayed directly onstage as a kind of 'communal currency' whereby deeds of profound sentimental value derive from the *sensibilité* of virtuous characters. These in turn prompt reciprocal acts which fill society with good deeds and strong relationships between individuals, and the intention seems to be to invite the spectator to participate themselves in this process. The spectator's own world is seemingly fused with the one depicted onstage, and they are invited to join the protagonists in acts of sentimental virtue which might contribute to the regeneration of the revolutionary community in France. It was not just spoken theatre, then, which offered the public "a visible and continuously-performed ideal community… in a world where social, political, and religious attachments were being dissolved." Nor was this theatre the only place where "feeling increasingly became a matter of public as well as private consequence, and thus of political not just psychological interest."[4] The same was true for the Opéra Comique.

We witness this theatrical phenomenon in *opéra-comique* many times more in the repertoire of *opéra-comique*, not least in *pièces de circonstance* like *La Prise de Toulon*, for example. It was expected that the sentimental efficacy of this opera would dissolve the line of demarcation between drama and reality, allowing the audience to 'retrace' and somehow participate in the historical event itself, especially where 'participation' meant going on to imitate virtuous actions of self-abnegation in favour of the *patrie*.

This participative mode of spectatorship is one reason why I believe the notion of 'propaganda' in relation to the revolutionary opera house is highly problematic. Far from ensuring subservience to a centralised ideology, by attempting to dissolve the line between drama and reality, revolutionary composers and librettists were in effect offering citizens agency in the great events of revolutionary significance which would then impact their future actions and involvement. The power of experience – bound up in the power of performance, as we have

[4] Feilla, *The Sentimental Theatre of the French Revolution*, 15.

seen – was believed to stir up an enthusiasm and excitement amidst groups of individuals that was not easily controlled; we have seen that both before and during the Revolution the sense of optimism about the moral influence of theatrical sensation was also intertwined with apprehension about the difficulties of controlling it. To elicit this enthusiasm was therefore a potentially costly act, because it actually required a surrendering of control. Nevertheless, it seemed that the authorities were sufficiently committed to political participation with their artists and the public to take the risk.

Indeed, for all that the sensationists described the 'astonishing' effects of sensation on human behaviour (and even physiology), the model which the revolutionaries inherited was fundamentally contingent on the willing participation of the spectator. Rousseau's theory of the theatre was particularly clear about the limits of sensation to sufficiently induce positive change in uncooperative or even ill-disposed audiences, whilst even *philosophes* with a more positive perspective (like d'Alembert) conceded that many would not be open to its positive sentimental influence. This seems to have been borne out in revolutionary perspectives of theatre, which were frequently characterised by a belief in the necessity of citizens participating emotionally with the events onstage. This theatrical participation was seen as a basis for encouraging spectators' political participation, through which citizens would contribute to the progress of the Revolution and help to establish and implement its values and ideologies in society. This is consistent with the fact that the revolutionaries were even less convinced than their predecessors by the notion of spectatorial 'plasticity' in their conceptions of *sensibilité*, as Quinlan pointed out, meaning that the possibility of coercion in the opera house was even less likely for them than it was for their predecessors.[5]

At the same time, I do not believe any single government ever exerted sufficient control of the theatres of France for them to have their own agenda dominate their repertoires; not to mention the difficulty we have identifying any single 'revolutionary' agenda to start with. Darlow has provided compelling evidence that the measures which scholars have often cited as evidence of coercion were inefficient and transitory, and the institutional life of the Académie Royale de Musique does not bear out the idea that its repertoire functioned as propaganda for the government.[6] As there was also a remarkable lack of centralisation during the Terror and because the politicisation of the Opéra Comique's repertoire during the Revolution seemed to continue uninterrupted, regardless of which faction was in government,[7] I have argued that we should redress McClellan's claims that revolutionary *opéra-comique* served as a 'pedagogical tool' which "served a politically progressive agenda simply by substituting revolutionary values

---

[5] Quinlan, "Physical and moral regeneration after the Terror", 140-141.
[6] Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution,* 7, 384.
[7] Kaplan, "Virtuous Competition among Citizens", 244.

for the norms of the ancien regime."[8] I believe that this is too simplistic a label and it ignores that the repertoire and institutional life of the Opéra Comique during the Revolution were influenced by diverse groups, including composers and librettists (who had their own political agendas, as we have seen) and even demanding audiences. In short, proponents of propaganda overstate the dominance and consistency of the revolutionary regimes, over-simplify the role of the composer and the spectator in shaping the revolutionary repertoire, and overlook the desires of the authorities to encourage participation in a project of national self-definition, rather than to coerce citizens into obedience underneath a clearly-defined political ideology.

My interpretation of moral instruction in *opéra-comique* produced during the Revolution therefore moves away from notions of rupture which are inherent in some views of opera's politicisation during this period, and instead emphasises continuity with opera under the *ancien régime*. Indeed, I have argued that praxis during the Revolution must be regarded as developing eighteenth-century sensationist principles which situated moral instruction firmly in the realms of human *sensibilité*. In this sense, there is a strong parallel with a process which Webster identified occurring in late eighteenth-century Viennese music: developments in conceptions and praxis of musical composition were only possible because of the ways that composers, librettists, and writers received and worked with the 'traditional aesthetic function' which they inherited.[9]

At the same time, therefore, there was a strong degree of change and transformation. I have not suggested, for example, that the Revolution witnessed a hiatus in aesthetic and compositional development, as Buckley has,[10] nor have I sought to suggest that the revolutionaries merely preserved the practices of their forebears. Quite the opposite, in fact: we have explored the development of striking changes in aesthetics, compositional and literary praxes (including those which I have argued represent an important step towards Romanticism), generic paradigms, as well as the political and social relevance and application of *opéra-comique*. But in contrast with Buckley again, neither do I believe that *opéra-comique* of the French Revolution represents an 'explosion' which destroyed all that came before.[11] Both narratives are too simplistic. Instead, *opéra-comique* of this period produced a distinctive alteration in aesthetic paradigms as well as new praxes in which politics and formal development in opera became inextricably entangled.

[8] McClellan, "Battling over the Lyric Muse", 247-248.
[9] Webster, "The Eighteenth Century as a Music-Historical Period?", 58.
[10] Buckley, *Tragedy Walks the Streets*, 2.
[11] Ibid, 6.

I believe we are entitled to use the term 'rupture' only to foreground the simultaneous existence of both change and continuity in these categories. In this respect I have found Darlow's conclusions (and those of his colleagues) regarding simultaneity convincing (specifically, that we witness both large-scale continuities whilst acknowledging the importance of localised disruptions: ruptures), though, unlike Darlow, I do not believe we are compelled to strictly categorise continuity with aesthetic traditions and rupture with institutional experiences.[12] Rather, I see both existing simultaneously in theories of didactic theatre and institutional experience.

We have, therefore, established some answers to the questions about revolutionary *opéra-comique* which I posed at the beginning of this study. First, given the perceived power of this genre to transport spectators to a 'liminal space' between 'singular and shared human experience',[13] *opéra-comique* was perceived as a moral and social pedagogical tool which could make a significant contribution to French society by unifying citizens in a shared experience of the Revolution. The space between singular and shared experience that Thomas identifies could apparently be reached through the genre's perceived powers over spectators' *sensibilité*, and in this space civic virtue could be inculcated and trained whilst social abuses could be corrected through the power of *ridicule*.  Second, there was little difference between theory and praxis of *opéra-comique* in this regard. In both contexts the influence of sensationism is clear, and composers did indeed share their contemporaries' conceptions of sentimental strategies which could be employed for the moral and political benefit of the nation. Accordingly, the revolutionary consequences of the *philosophes*' conception of *opéra-comique* as a "social act of participation in cultural values and beliefs" were profound.[14]

More work remains to be done on the connection between eighteenth-century sensationism and moral instruction through the arts during the French Revolution, particularly where opera is concerned. As I have alluded to in the course of this present study, the influence of sensationism on the fields of literature and *philosophie* are relatively well-explored. Its impact on the theatres of France would benefit from further study, Feilla's study notwithstanding. But very little work has been conducted on sensationism and opera during the Revolution, and much fruit could be borne in the context of *opéra-comique* in particular.

In addition, many of the generic conclusions which I have sought to establish in the context of *opéra-comique* are not necessarily exclusive to it. Especially given the broad generic

---

[12] Darlow, ed., "Revolutionary Culture: Continuity and Change", 2-4.
[13] Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647-1785*, 263.
[14] Ibid, 262-264, 319-320.

categories in which both *philosophes* and revolutionary authorities tended to discuss opera and the theatre in general, the rich multiplicity of *comique* forms (or at least those favouring the sentimental, including vaudeville and melodrama) could equally benefit from exploration in the context of eighteenth-century aesthetics and sensationism in particular. Where repertoires are concerned, it would undoubtedly be stimulating to see how sensationism may have influenced those of other institutions, including the Théâtre Feydeau.

Finally, I would suggest that many of the revolutionary texts which I have studied here have not yet received the attention which they warrant in an operatic context. These include Condorcet's treatise on public instruction, as well treatises by Lesueur and Framery. Grétry's *Mémoires* are a particularly rich resource which could benefit scholars of eighteenth-century opera far more extensively than they have already. They offer us not only illumination on the aesthetics of the period, biographical information about composers' lives and work, and insights into their praxis; but also material through which to consider important socio-political issues pertaining to opera and indeed striking changes in the positionality of the composer on the threshold of Romanticism. I have sought to stimulate the discussion in the present study, but much remains to be done.

# Bibliography


**Manuscript Sources**

*Registres de l'Opéra Comique*

TH OC 73-83: recettes journalières.

TH OC 122-124: déliberations.

*Archives nationales*

AJ/13: archives of the Opéra comprising documents pertaining to the Opéra Comique.

**Contemporary Periodicals**

*Almanach de muses*

*Feuille de salut public*

*Journal de Paris*

*Journal général de France*

*Journal helvétique*

*L'Esprit des journaux françois et étrangers*

*Mercure historique et politique*

*Mercure universel*

*Moniteur universel*

**Scores**

Grétry, A.E.M., with Jean-Nicholas Bouilly, *Pierre le Grand: comédie en quatre actes, et en prose, mêlée de chants.* Paris: J.L. de Boubers, 1792.

**Recordings**

Bouilly, Jean-Nicolas and A.E.M. Grétry. *La Jeunesse de Pierre le Grand*. Namur Chamber Choir and Chamber Orchestra. Conducted by Olivier Opdebeeck. Recorded 2001. Compiègne, Disques DOM, 2001. DVD.

## Play Scripts and Libretti

Bouilly, Jean-Nicholas. *Pierre le Grand: comédie en quatre actes, et en prose, mêlée de chants*. Paris: Brunet, 1790.

Chénier, M.J. *Charles IX ou l'école des mœurs*. Paris: Bossange et compagnie, 1790.

Dalayrac, Nicolas-Marie and François-Guillaume-Jean-Stanislas Andrieux. "L'Enfance de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, comédie en un acte, mêlée de musique de François Andrieux et Nicolas-Marie Dalayrac: présentation par Gauthier Ambrus." In *Revue Orages* edited by Gauthier Ambrus. Accessed 03/01/18. http://orages.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/enfance.pdf.

Lebrun-Tossa, Jean Antoine "Avertissement," in Arabelle et Vascos, ou les Jacobins de Goa, drame-lyrique en trois actes (Paris : Citoyen Toubon, 1795), 1.

Picard, Louis-Benoît and Claude-François Fillette-Loraux. *L'Écolier en vacances, comédie en 1 acte et en prose, mêlée d'ariettes*. Paris: Huet, 1795.

Sedaine, Michel-Jean and A.E.M. Grétry, *Guillaume Tell.* Paris : Chez Maradan, 1794.

Voltaire. "Mort de César." In *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, volume 2, 295-366. Paris: Garnier frères, 1877.

- "Sémiramis." In *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, volume 4, 14-65. Paris: Hachette, 1891.
- "Zaïre." In *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, volume 2, 533-619. Paris: Garnier frères, 1877.

## Primary Sources

Anon. "Déclamation." in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert. Volume 4, 683. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 03/07/16. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/4/3482/.

Anon. "Comique." in *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert. Volume 3, 681. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 07/01/20. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/3/3127/.

Anon. *Observations sur les spectacles de Paris*. No publishing details, 1789.

Alembert, Jean le Rond d'. "De la liberté en musique," in *Mélanges de littérature, d'histoire, et de philosophie*. Volume 4, 383-462. Amsterdam: Zacharie Chatelain et fils, 1759.

- "Fragments sur l'opéra" in *Œuvres et correspondance inédites, publiées avec introduction, notes et appendice* edited by Charles Henry. Paris: Perrin et compagnie, 1887.
- "Genève" in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert. Volume 7, 577-588. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 01/02/17. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/7/1890/.
- "Lettre de M. d'Alembert à M. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève." In *Œuvres complètes de J.J. Rousseau, supplément à la collection*. Volume 26, 31-74. Deux-Ponts: Sanson et compagnie, 1782.

André, Yves-Marie. *Essai sur le beau.* Paris: H.L. et J. Guérin, 1741.

Apligny, Charles le Pileur d'. *Traité sur la musique, et sur les moyens d'en perfectionner l'expression*. Paris: Demonville and Saugrain, 1779.

Bailly, Jean-Sylvain. *Mémoires de Bailly : avec une notice sur sa vie, des notes et des éclaircissemens historiques*. 2 volumes. Paris: Baudouin frères, 1821-1822.

Batteux, Charles. *Les beaux arts arts réduits á un même principe*. Paris: Chez Durand, 1746.

Bossuet, Jacques-Bénigne. *Maximes et réflexions sur la comédie*. Paris: Jean Anisson, 1694.

Bouilly, Jean-Nicholas. *Mes Recapitulations*. 3 volumes. Paris: Louis Janet, 1836-1837.

Burke, Edmund. *Reflections on the Revolution in France.* London: James Dodsley, 1790.

- *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Edited by Frank M. Turner. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

Burney, Charles. *The Present State of Music in France and Italy: or, The Journal of a Tour through those Countries, undertaken to collect Materials for a General History of Music*. London: T. Becket and Co., 1771.

Cahusac, Louis de. “Enchantement.” in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert. Volume 5, 619. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 12/12/16. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/5/2262/.

Chabanon, Michel-Paul Guy de. *Observations sur la musique, et principalement sur la metaphysique de l’art*. Paris: Pissot, 1779.

Chambaud, Ménuret de. “Musique, effets de la” in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert. Volume 10, 905. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 01/02/17. http://artflsrv02.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.9:2337:3.encyclopedie0513.

Chapelier, Isaac-René-Guy le. *Rapport fait par M. Le Chapelier, au nom du comité de constitution, sur la pétition des auteurs dramatiques, dans la séance du jeudi 13 janvier 1791, avec le décret rendu dans cette séance.* Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1791.

Chastellux, François-Jean de. *Essai sur l’union de la poésie et de la musique.* La Haye etc: Merlin, 1765.

Chénier, M.J. *De la liberté du théâtre en France.* No publishing details.

- “Epître dédicatoire à la Nation française.” In *Charles IX ou l’école des mœurs*. Paris: Bossange et compagnie, 1790.

Collé, Charles. *Journal et mémoires de Charles Collé, sur les hommes des lettres, les ouvrages dramatiques et les événements les plus mémorables du règne de Louis XV (1748-1772)*. 3 volumes. Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot Frères, fils et compagnie, 1868.

Condillac, Etienne Bonnot de. *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*. 2 volumes. Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1746.

Condorcet, Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat. *Cinq mémoires sur l’instruction publique* edited by Charles Coutel and Catherine Kintzler. Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1994.

- *Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind.* Unknown translator. Chicago: G. Langer, 2009.

Crousaz, Jean-Pierre de. *Traité du beau.* Amsterdam: François l'Honore, 1715.

Desboulmiers, Jean-Auguste Julien. *Histoire du théâtre de l'opéra comique*. 2 volumes. Paris: Lacombe, 1769.

Diderot, Denis. "De la Poésie dramatique." In *Œuvres complètes de Diderot : revues sur les éditions originales, comprenant ce qui a été publié a diverses époques et les manuscrits inédits conservés à la bibliothèque de l'Ermitage, notices, notes, table analytique* edited by J. Assézat. Volume 7, 369. Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1875.

– "Entretiens sur le fils naturel." In *Œuvres complètes de Diderot : revues sur les éditions originales, comprenant ce qui a été publié a diverses époques et les manuscrits inédits conservés à la bibliothèque de l'Ermitage, notices, notes, table analytique* edited by J. Assézat. Volume 7, 85-169. Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1875.
– "Essais sur la peinture." In *Œuvres complètes de Diderot : revues sur les éditions originales, comprenant ce qui a été publié a diverses époques et les manuscrits inédits conservés à la bibliothèque de l'Ermitage, notices, notes, table analytique* edited by J. Assézat. Volume 10, 455-520. Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1875.
– "Letter on the Deaf and Dumb." In *Diderot's Early Philosophical Works*. Translated by Margaret Jourdain. London: Open Court Publishing, 1916.
– "Lettre sur les aveugles à l'usage de ceux qui voient." In *Œuvres complètes de Diderot : revues sur les éditions originales, comprenant ce qui a été publié a diverses époques et les manuscrits inédits conservés à la bibliothèque de l'Ermitage, notices, notes, table analytique* edited by J. Assézat. Volume 1, 275-342. Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1875.
– "Lettre sur les sourds et muets." In *Œuvres complètes de Diderot : revues sur les éditions originales, comprenant ce qui a été publié a diverses époques et les manuscrits inédits conservés à la bibliothèque de l'Ermitage, notices, notes, table analytique* edited by J. Assézat. Volume 1, 349-428. Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1875.
– "L'Origine et la nature du beau," in *Œuvres esthétiques* edited by Paul Vernière. Volume 1, 387-436. Paris: Garnier, 1965.
– *Rameau's Nephew/Le Neveu de Rameau: A Multi-Media Bilingual Edition* edited by Marian Hobson, translated by Kate E. Tunstall and Caroline Warman, Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2016).

– “Réfutation d’Helvétius suivie de l’ouvrage d’Helvétius intitulé l’Homme (inédit).” In *Œuvres complètes de Diderot : revues sur les éditions originales, comprenant ce qui a été publié a diverses époques et les manuscrits inédits conservés à la bibliothèque de l’Ermitage, notices, notes, table analytique* edited by J. Assézat. Volume 2, 263-449. Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1875.

Dixmérie, Nicolas Bricaire de la. *Lettres sur l’état présent de nos spectacles, avec des vues nouvelles sur chacun d’eux; particulièrement sur la Comédie-Française et l’Opéra*. Amsterdam and Paris: Duchesne, 1765.

Dubos, Jean-Baptiste. *Réflexions Critiques sur la poésie, la peinture et la musique*. Paris: Jean Mariette, 1719.

Estève, Pierre. *L’Esprit des beaux-arts*. Paris: C.J. Baptiste Bauche fils, 1753.

Fagan, Barthélemy Christophe. “Nouvelles observations au sujet des condamnations prononcées contre les comédiens.” in *Théâtre de M. Fagan, et autres œuvres du même auteur*, volume 2. Paris: N.B. Duchesne, 1760.

Favart, Charles Simon. *Mémoires et correspondance littéraires, dramatique et anecdotiques*. 3 volumes. Paris: Léopold Collin, 1808.

Fouquet, Henri. “Sensibilité, Sentiment.” In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert. Volume 15, 38. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 19/01/17. http://artflsrv02.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.14:43.encyclopedie0513.

Framery, Nicolas-Étienne. *Discours couronné par l’institut sur cette question: analyser les rapports qui existent entre la musique et déclamation, et déterminer les moyens d’appliquer la déclamation à la musique sans nuire à la mélodie*. Paris: Pougens, an X/1802.

– “Bouffon.” In *Encyclopédie méthodique. Musique. Publiée par MM. Framery et Ginguené*. Edited by Nicolas-Étienne Framery and Pierre-Louis Ginguené. Volume 1, 174-175. Paris: Panckoucke, 1791.
– *De l’organisation des spectacles de Paris, ou essai sur leur forme actuelle*. Paris: Buisson and Debray, 1790.
– with Pierre-Louis Ginguené, eds. *Encyclopédie méthodique. Musique. Publiée par MM. Framery et Ginguené*. 2 volumes. Paris: Panckoucke, 1791.
– “Sur le genre larmoyant dans les Drames en Musique.” In *Journal de Musique* edited by François Lesure. 3 volumes. Geneva: Minkoff Reprints. No publishing details.

- *Sur les théâtres. Discours lu à la séance du Lycée des arts, du Pluviose, an VI*. Paris: Imprimerie du Lycée des arts, 1798.

Garcin, Laurent. *Traité du mélo-drame, ou réflexions sur la musique dramatique*. Paris: Vallat-la-Chapelle, 1772.

Gluck, Christoph Willibald. “Preface to Alceste (1769).” In *Music and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Europe: A Source Book* edited by Enrico Fubini. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994: 364-366.

Grandmaison, A.L. Millin de. *Sur la liberté du théatre*. Paris: Lagrange, 1790.

Grétry, A.E.M. *Mémoires, ou Essais sur la musique par Grétry, Nouvelle édition, augmentée de notes et publiée* edited by J.H. Mees. 3 volumes. Brussels: Aug. Wahlen, 1829.

Grimm, Friedrich Melchior von. *Correspondance littéraire, philosophique, et critique*. 16 volumes. Paris: Garnier frères, 1878.

- *Le Petit prophète de Boehmischbroda*. No publishing details. 1753.
- “Poème lyrique.” In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert. Volume 12:824. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 02/01/17. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/12/3679/.

Helvétius, Claude Adrien. *De l’esprit*. Paris: Durand, 1758.

Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature.* Volume 3. London: John Noon, 1739.

Jaucourt, Louis de. “Imitation (morale).” In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert. Volume 8, 569. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 23/01/17. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/8/2693/.

- “Opera.” In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert. Volume 11, 494. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 23/01/17. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/11/2459/.
- “Passion (Peinture).” In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert.

Volume 12, 151. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 23/01/17. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/12/427/.

- "Pathétique, Le (Eloquence/Art oratoire/Poésie)." In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc*., edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert. Volume 12, 169-170. University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 05/01/20. http://artflsrv02.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.14:43.encyclopedie0513, 12:169-170.
- "Poésie lyrique." In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert. Volume 12, 839. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 23/01/17. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/12/3688/.
- "Vraisemblance (Poésie)." In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc*, edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert. Volume 17, 484. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 07/01/20. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/17/1764/.

Lallemant, Jean-Baptiste Joseph. *Essai sur le méchanisme des passions en general.* Paris: Pierre-Alexandre le Prieur, 1751.

Lebrun-Tossa, Jean Antoine and Marc. *Arabelle et Vascos, ou les Jacobins de Goa, drame-lyrique en trois actes*. Paris: Citoyen Toubon, 1795.

Leclerc, Jean-Baptiste. *Essai sur la propagation de la musique en France, sa conservation, et ses rapports avec le gouvernement*. Paris : H.J. Jansen, 1797.

Leduq, Albert. *Examen de ces deux questions : L'Opéra est-il nécessaire à la ville de Paris? Faut-il en confier l'Administration ou l'entreprise à une Société ?* No publishing details.

Lesueur, Jean-François. *Exposé d'une musique une, imitative et propre à chaque solennité... et le plan d'une musique particulière à la solennité de la Noël*. Paris: Vve Hérissant, 1787.

- *Exposé d'une musique une, imitative et propre à chaque solennité... et le plan d'une musique particulière à la solennité de la Fête de l'Assomption*. Paris: Vve Hérissant, 1787.

- *Exposé d'une musique une, imitative et propre à chaque solemnité... et le plan d'une musique particulière à la solemnité de la Pentecôte. Suite de l'Essai*. Paris: Vve Hérissant, 1787.
- *Lettre en réponse à Guillard sur l'opéra de la Mort d'Adam, dont le tour de mise arrive pour la troisième fois au Théâtre des Arts ; et sur plusieurs points d'utilité relatifs aux arts et aux lettres.* Paris: Baudouin, an X/1801.

Malebranche, Nicolas. *The Search After Truth* translated by Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Marmontel, Jean-François. "Apologie du Théâtre, ou analyse de la lettre de M. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève, à M. d'Alembert, au sujet des spectacles." In *Œuvres de Marmontel* edited by Villenave. Volume 5, 739-798. Paris: A. Belin, 1819.

- "Comédie." In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert. Volume 3, 665. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 22/02/16. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/3/3113/.
- *Contes moraux, suivis d'une Apologie du Théâtre*. 2nd edition. 2 volumes. Paris: La Haye, 1761.
- *Eléments de littérature*. 6 volumes. Paris: Née de la Rochelle, 1787.
- *Éléments de littérature* edited by Sophie le Ménahèze. Paris: Éditions Desjonquères, 2005.
- "Merveilleux." In *Supplément à l'Encyclopédie* edited by Jean-Baptiste-René Robinet. Volume 3, 907. Amsterdam: M. Rey, 1777.

Mézières, Eugène Éléonore de Béthisy de. *Effets de l'air sur le corps humain, considérés dans le son; ou discours sur la nature du chant.* Amsterdam and Paris: Lambert and Duchesne, 1760.

Mirabeau, Victor Riqueti. *Mémoire concernant l'utilité des états provinciaux, relativement à l'autorité royale, aux finances, au bonheur, et à l'avantage des peuples*. Rome: Laurentem Carabioni, 1750.

Montesquieu, *Essai sur le goût.* Geneva: Librarie Droz, 1967.

Mouhy, Charles de Fieux. *Les Dangers des spectacles, ou les mémoires de Champigny*. Volume 1. Paris: Jorry et Mérigot, 1780.

Noinville, J.B. de. *Histoire du théâtre de l'opéra en France.* Paris: no publisher, 1757.

Nougaret, *De l’Art du théâtre en général où il est parlé des spectacles de l'Europe, de ce qui concerne la comédie ancienne et nouvelle, la tragédie, la pastorale-dramatique, la parodie, l'opéra sérieux, l'opéra bouffon et la comédie mêlée d'ariettes, etc., avec l'histoire philosophique de la musique et les observations sur ses différens genres reçus au théâtre*. 2 volumes. Paris: Cailleau, 1769.

Orville, André-Guillaume Contant d’. *Histoire de l’opéra bouffon*, 2 volumes. Amsterdam and Paris: Grange, 1768.

Panckoucke, Charles Joseph, ed. *Encyclopédie méthodique ou par ordre de matières par une société de gens de lettres, de savants et d'artistes; précédée d'un vocabulaire universel, servant de table pour tout l'ouvrage, ornée des portraits de MM. Diderot et d'Alembert, premiers éditeurs de l'Encyclopédie.* 216 volumes. Paris: Panckoucke; and Liège: Plomteux, 1782-1832.

Quincy, Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de. *Dissertation sur les opéras bouffons italiens*. No publishing details. 1789.

Rameau, Jean-Philippe. *Génération harmonique, ou traité de musique théorique et pratique.* Paris: Prault fils, 1737.

- “Observations on Our Instinct for Music and on Its Principles.” In *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music* edited by Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly, 175-197. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998.
- *Observations sur notre instinct pour la musique*. Paris: Prault fils, Lambert and Duchesne, 1754.

Riccoboni, Luigi. *De la réformation du théâtre*. New edition. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1971.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques and Louis de Cahusac. “Chant.” In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert. Volume 3, 141. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 19/01/17. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/3/636/.

- “Compositeur.” In *Dictionnaire de musique*. Edited by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Volume 1. Paris: Duchesne, 1748.
- “Dictionary of Music.” In *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music* edited by Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998: 366-485.

– *Dictionnaire de musique.* Paris: Duchesne, 1748.
– *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*. Amsterdam: Marc Michel Rey, 1755.
– *Émile, où de l'Éducation*. La Haye: Jean Néaulme, 1762.
– "Essay on the Origin of Languages." In *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music.* Edited by Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly, 389-332. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998,
– "First Dialogue." In *Judge of Jean-Jacques: Dialogues*, edited by Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly, 8-86. Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1990.
– *J.J. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève à M. d'Alembert… sur son article 'Genève', dans le septième volume de l'Encyclopédie, et particulièrement, sur le projet d'établir un théâtre de comédie en cette ville*. Amsterdam: Marc Michel Rey, 1758.
– "Letter on French Music." In *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music* edited by Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998: 141-174.
– "Letter on Italian and French Opera." In *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music* edited by Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998: 99-105.
– "Letter to Mr. Burney and Fragments on 'Alceste'." In *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music* edited by Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998: 486-505.
– "Musique." In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert. Volume 10, 899. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 19/01/17. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/10/3792/.
– "On the Principle of Melody, or Response to the 'Errors on Music'." In *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music* edited by Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998: 260-270. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/10/3792/.
– "Pathétique [Musique]." In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert. Volume 12, 170. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 07/01/20. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/12/531/.

– "Sonate." In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc* edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert. Volume 15, 348. University of Chicago, ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 edition). Edited by Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe. Accessed 12/03/17. https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/15/1610/.

Rozoi, Barnabé Farmian du. *Dissertation sur le drame lyrique*. Paris: La Haye, 1775.

Sedaine, Michel-Jean. "Avertissement." In *Guillaume Tell.* Paris: Chez Maradan, 1794.

Smith, Adam. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. 2nd edition. London: A. Millar, 1761.

Villeneuve, Daniel Jost de. *Lettre sur le méchanisme de l'opéra italien*. Naples: Duchesne and Lambert, 1756.

Voltaire. *Histoire de l'empire de Russie sous Pierre le Grand*. 2 volumes. Genève: n.p.d,1759-1763.

**Secondary Sources**

Abbate, Carolyn. *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Abrams, M.H. and Geoffrey Galt Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Tenth edition. Boston: Cengage learning, 2012.

Agnew, Vanessa. *Enlightenment Orpheus: The Power of Music in Other Worlds*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Aguwa, V. Kofi. *Playing with Signs: a Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Amann, Elizabeth. *Dandyism in the Age of Revolution: The Art of the Cut*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Andress, David ed. *The Oxford Handbook of the French Revolution*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Anon. "Merveilleux." *Oxford Music Online*. Accessed 03/11/16. http://0www.oxfordmusiconline.com.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/O903073.

Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by Susan D. Collins and Robert C. Bartlett. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Arnold, R.J. *Grétry's Operas and the French Public: From the Old Regime to the Restoration.* Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2016.

Astbury, Katherine. *Narrative Responses to the Trauma of the French Revolution*. New York: Legenda, 2012.

- *The Moral Tale in France and Germany 1750-1789*, SVEC number 7*.* Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2002.

Aston, Nigel. *Religion and Revolution in France, 1780-1804*. Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000.

Aulard, F. A., ed. *Recueil des actes du Comité de Salut public avec la correspondance officielle des représentants en mission et le registre du Conseil exécutif provisoire.* 33 volumes. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale 1889-1923.

Babault, A.P.F., ed. *Annales dramatiques, ou dictionnaire général des théâtres.* Volume 1. Paris: Imprimerie de Hénée, 1808.

Baecque, Antoine de. *Glory and Terror: Seven Deaths Under the French Revolution*. Translated by Charlotte Mandell. New York and London: Routledge, 2001.

Baker, Keith M. *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

- "Politics and Public Opinion under the Old Regime: Some Reflections." In *Press and Politics in Pre-revolutionary France*, edited by Jack R. Censer and Jeremy D. Popkin, 204-246. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- "Transformations of Classical Republicanism in Eighteenth-Century France." *The Journal of Modern History* 73, number 1 (March 2001): 32-53.

Barish, John. *The Antitheatrical Prejudice*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981.

Barthélemy, Maurice. "L'opéra-comique des origines à la Querelle des Bouffons." In *L'Opéra-comique en France au XVIII*[e] *siècle* edited by Philippe Vendrix, 9-79. Liège: Mardaga, 1992.

Bartlet, M. Elizabeth C. *Etienne-Nicolas Méhul and Opera: Source and Archival Studies of Lyric Theatre during the French Revolution, Consulate, and Empire*. Heilbronn, Germany: Edition Lucie Galland, 1999.

– “Grétry and the Revolution.” In *Grétry et l’Europe de l’Opéra-Comique*. Edited by Philippe Vendrix, 47-110. Liège: Mardaga, 1992.
– and Richard Langham Smith. “Opéra-comique.” *Oxford Music Online*. Accessed 16/08/17. http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/43715.
– “The new repertory at the Opéra during the Reign of Terror: Revolutionary rhetoric and operatic consequences.” In *Music and the French Revolution* edited by Malcolm Boyd, 107-157. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Bauman, Thomas and Marita Petzoldt McClymonds, eds. *Opera and the Enlightenment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Beattle, Andrew. *The Alps: A Cultural History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Beiser, Frederick C. *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism.* Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Bell, Michael. *Sentimentalism, Ethics, and the Culture of Feeling.* New York: Palgrave, 2000.

Bellaigue, Camille. “Les Mémoires ou “Essais sur la musique” de Grétry.” *Revue des Deux Mondes* 37, number 3 (February 1917): 663-682.

Bergman, Gösta M. “La Grande mode des pantomimes à Paris vers 1740.” *Theatre Research/Recherches Théâtrales* 2, number 2 (1960): 71-81.

Biard, Michel. “De la critique théâtrale, ou la conquête de l’opinion” *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 302 (October-December 1995): 529-38.

Beardsley, Monroe C. *Possibility of Criticism.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970.

Bergier, Jean-François. *Wilhelm Tell: Realität und Mythos*. Munich: Paul List Verlag, 1990.

Bernard, Jonathan W. “The Principle and the Elements: Rameau's ‘Controversy with d'Alembert’.” *Journal of Music Theory* volume 24, number 1 (Spring, 1980): 37-62.

Bianchi, Serge. *La revolution culturelle de l’an II: Élites et peuple 1789-1799*. Paris: Aubier, 1982.

Biba, Otto. “Der Sozial-Status des Musikers.” In *Josef Haydn in seiner Zeit*, edited by Gerda Mraz, Gottfried Mraz and Gerald Schlag, 105-114. Eisenstadt: Ausstellungskatalog, 1982.

Bingham, Alfred J. “Marie-Joseph Chénier and French Culture during the French Revolution” *The Modern Language Review* 61, number 4 (October 1966): 593-600.

Black, Jay. “Semantics and Ethics of Propaganda.” *The Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 16, nos. 2 and 3: 121-137.

Blanning, T.C.W. *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe, 1660-1789*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Blum, Carol. *Strength in Numbers: Population, Reproduction and Power in Eighteenth-Century France*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.

Boal, Augusto. *Theatre of the Oppressed* translated by Charles A. McBride, Maria-Odilia Leal McBride, and Emily Fryer. London: Pluto Press, 2000.

Boës, Anne. *La lanterne magique: essai sur le théâtre historique en France de 1750 à 1789*, SVEC number 213. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1982.

Bonds, Mark Evans. *Wordless Rhetoric. Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.

Bonnet, Jean-Claude. *La Naissance du Panthéon: Essai sur le culte des grands hommes*. Paris: Fayard, 1998.

Bourdin, Philippe and Gérard Loubinoux, eds. *Les Arts de la scène et la Révolution française*. Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise-Pascal, 2004.

Bouton, Anne-Noelle. “L’Improvisation chez Grétry: A propos de la Méthode simple pour apprendre à préluder.” *Bulletin de la société liègeoise de musicologie* 86 (1994): 5-13.

Braun, Theodore E.D. “The Controversy over the Morality of the Theatre in Early Enlightenment France.” *Restoration and 18th Century Theatre Research* 29, number 1 (Summer 2014): 57-75.

Brenner, C.D. “Dramatizations of French Short Stories in the Eighteenth Century.” In *University of California Publications in Modern Philology* 30 (1947):1-34.

- *L’histoire nationale dans la tragédie française du XVIIIe siècle.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1929.
- *The Theatre Italien: Its Repertory, 1716-1793. With a Historical Introduction*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961.

Brenet, Michel. *Grétry: sa vie et ses œuvres*. Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1884.

Brooks, William. “Louis XIV’s Dismissal of the Italian Actors: the Episode of *La Fausse Prude*” *The Modern Language Review* 91, number 4 (Oct., 1996): 840-847.

Brown, *A Field of Honor: Writers, Court Culture, and Public Theater in French Literary Life from Racine to the Revolution.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Buckley, Matthew S. *Tragedy Walks the Streets: The French Revolution in the Making of Modern Drama*. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006.

Burwick, Frederick. *Illusion and the Drama: Critical Theory of the Enlightenment and Romantic Era*. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991.

Byford, Andy. "The Figure of the "Spectator" In the Theoretical Writings of Brecht, Diderot, and Rousseau." *Symposium: A Quarterly Journal in Modern Literatures* 56, number1 (Spring 2002): 25-42.

Byrnes, Joseph F. *Priests of the French Revolution: Saints and Renegades in a New Political Era*. Pennsylvania: Penn State Press, 2014.

Caplan, Jay. *Framed Narrative: Diderot's Genealogy of the Beholder*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985.

Carlson, Marvin. *The Theatre of the French Revolution.* New York: Cornell University Press, 1966.

Carrier, Peter. "Historical Traces of the Present: The Uses of Commemoration." *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 22, number 2 (Spring 1996): 431-445.

Castelvecchi, Stefano. *Sentimental Opera: Questions of Genre in the Age of Bourgeois Drama*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Chaouche, Sabine. "Naissance de l'interprétation de l'opéra-comique sur les scènes des Lumières." In *L'invention des genres lyriques français et leur redécouverte au XIXe siècle*, edited by Agnès Terrier and Alexandre Dratwicki, 177-195. Lyon: Symétrie, 2010.

Charlton, David, ed. *French Opera, 1730-1830: Meaning and Media*. Aldershot and Brookfield: Ashgate Variorum, 2000.

- "Envoicing the Orchestra." In *French Opera, 1730-1830: Meaning and Media*. Edited by David Charlton. Aldershot and Brookfield: Ashgate Variorum, 2000.
- "Genre and Form in French Opera." In *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera* edited by A.R. DelDonna and P. Polzonetti, 155-183. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- *Grétry and the Growth of opéra-comique*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

– “Grétry instaurateur de l’opéra moderne.” *Regards sur la musique: Grétry en société*. Edited by Jean Duron, 13-40. Wavre: Mardaga, 2009.
– “Hearing Through the Eye in Eighteenth-Century French Opera.” In *Art, Theatre, and Opera in Paris: Exchanges and Tensions, 1750-1850*. Edited by Sarah Hibberd and Richard Wrigley, 17-36. Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2014.
– “Le matériel musical de l’opéra-comique.” In *L’invention des genres lyriques français et leur redécouverte au XIXe siècle,* edited by Agnès Terrier and Alexandre Dratwicki, 239-256. Lyon: Symétrie, 2010.
– “On Redefinitions of “Rescue Opera”.” In *Music and the French Revolution*. Edited by Malcolm Boyd, 169-188. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
– *Opera in the Age of Rousseau: Music, Confrontation, Realism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
– “Orchestra and Image in the Late Eighteenth Century.” *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 102, number 1 (1975): 1-12.
– “Rescue Opera.” Oxford Music Online. Accessed 06/01/20. Available: https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.23227.
– “Sedaine’s Prefaces: Pretexts for a New Musical Drama.” In *Michel-Jean Sedaine (1719-1797): Theatre, Opera and Art.* Edited by David Charlton and Mark Ledbury, 230-233. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2000.
– “The French theatrical origins of *Fidelio*.” In *French Opera 1730-1830: Meaning and Media*. Edited by David Charlton, 51-68. Aldershot and Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2000.

Charlton, Donald G. “The French Romantic Movement.” In *The French Romantics*. Edited by Donald G. Charlton. Volume 1, 1-32. Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Chartier, Roger. *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution* translated by Lydia G. Cochrane. North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1991.

Chouillet, Jacques. *La Formation des idées esthétiques de Diderot 1745-1763*. Paris: A. Colin, 1973.

Christensen, Thomas. “Bemetzrieder’s Dream: Diderot and the Pathology of Tonal Sensibility in the *Leçons de clavecin.*” In *Music, Sensation, and Sensuality*, edited by Linda Phyllis Austern, Critical and Cultural Musicology 5, 39-56. New York and London: Routledge, 2002.

- *Rameau and Musical Thought in the Enlightenment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Clay, Lauren. “Provincial Actors, the Comedie-Francaise, and the Business of Performing in Eighteenth-Century France.” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38, number 4 (Summer 2005): 651-679.

Clercx, Suzanne. *Grétry: 1741-1813.* Brussels: La Renaissance du livre, 1944.

Coleman, Francis X. J. *The Aesthetic Thought of the French Enlightenment*. London: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971.

Colm, Kiernan. ‘‘Rousseau and Music in the French Enlightenment.” *French Studies* volume 26, number 2 (1972):156-165.

Cook, Alexander. “Feeling Better: Moral Sense and Sensibility in Enlightenment Thought.” In *The Discourse of Sensibility: The Knowing Body in the Enlightenment, Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* edited by Henry Martyn Lloyd. Volume 35, 85-103. Heidelberg, New York, Dordrecht and London: Springer, 2013.

Cooper, Martin. *Opéra Comique*. London: Max Parish and Co Limited, 1949.

Costelloe, Timothy M. “The Theater of Morals: Culture and Community in Rousseau’s Lettre à M. d’Alembert.” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 27, number 1 (Winter 2003): 52-71.

Couvreur, Manuel. “Grétry, lecteur des philosophes.” *Bulletin de la Société liégeoise de Musicologie* 77 (April 1992): 1-11.

- and Philippe Vendrix, “Les enjeux théoriques de l’Opéra-Comique.” In *L'Opéra-Comique en France au 18e siècle*, edited by Philippe Vendrix, 213-282. Liège: Mardaga, 1992.

Cowans, Jon. *To Speak for the People: Public Opinion and the Problem of Legitimacy in the French Revolution.* New York: Routledge, 2001.

Cowart, Georgia. “Critical Language and Musical Thought in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.” *College Music Symposium* 27 (1987): 14-29.

- *French Musical Thought*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1989.
- “Musical aesthetics of the *Siècle des Lumières*.” In *The Cambridge Companion to French Music*, edited by Simon Trezise, 346-361. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- “Sense and sensibility in eighteenth-century musical thought.” *Acta musicological*, number 56 (1984): 251-266

Craiutu, Aurelian. *A Virtue for Courageous Minds: Moderation in French Political Thought, 1748-1830*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012.

Crocker, Lester G. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. 2 volumes. London: Collier-Macmillan, 1973.

Crossley, Ceri. *French Historians and Romanticism: Thierry, Guizot, the Saint-Simonians, Quinet, Michelet*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993.

Csengei, Ildiko. *Sympathy, Sensibility and the Literature of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Cucuel, Georges. *Les Créateurs de l'Opéra-Comique.* Paris: F. Alcan, 1914.

Cuillé, Tili Boon. "La Vraisemblance du merveilleux: Operatic Aesthetics in Cazotte's Fantastic Fiction." *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 34 (2005): 173-195.

- "Marvellous Machines: Revitalising Enlightenment Opera." *Opera Quarterly* 27, number 1 (Winter 2011): 66-93.
- *Narrative Interludes: Musical Tableaux in Eighteenth-Century French Texts*. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2006.

Cumming, Ian. *Helvetius: His Life and Place in the History of Educational Thought*. London: Routledge, 2001.

Dahlhaus, Carl. *Die Musik des 18. Jahrhundert*s. Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1985.

- *Nineteenth-Century Music* translated by J. Bradford-Robinson. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1989.

Darlow, Mark. *Dissonance in the Republic of Letters: The Querelle des Gluckistes et des Piccinistes*. London: Legenda, 2013.

- "Eighteenth-Century French Musical Theatre" *French Studies* 66, number 1 (2012): 68-77.
- "History and (Meta-)Theatricality: the French Revolution's Paranoid Aesthetics." *The Modern Language Review* 105, number 2 (April 2010): 385-400.
- "Le vaudeville à la Comédie-Italienne, 1767-1789." In *Carlo Goldoni et la France: un Dialogue dramaturgique de la modernité (Revue des études Italiennes)* 53 (2007). Edited by A. Fabiano, 87-95.
- *Nicolas-Étienne Framery and lyric theatre in eighteeth-century France*. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2003.

- “*Nihil per saltum*: *chiaroscuro* in eighteenth-century lyric theatre.” In *Art, Theatre, and Opera in Paris, 1750-1850: Exchanges and Tensions*. Edited by Sarah Hibberd and Richard Wrigley, 37-53. Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2014.
- ed., *Revolutionary Culture: Continuity and Chang*e. Nottingham French Studies volume 45, number 1 (Spring 2006).
- *Staging the French Revolution: Cultural Politics and the Paris Opéra, 1789-1794*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012
- “Staging the French Revolution: the *fait historique.*” *Nottingham French Studies* 45, number 1 (Spring 2006): 77-78.
- “The role of the listener in the musical aesthetics of Revolution.” *SVEC* 6 (2007). Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2007.

Dart, Gregory. *Rousseau, Robespierre and English Romanticism*, Cambridge Studies in Romanticism, number 32. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Daubercies, Laurence. “Grétry mémorialiste ou *l’ethos du compromis*.” *Revue des historiens de l’art, des archéologues et des musicologues de l’Université de Liège* 32 (2013): 81-87.

Dean, Winton. “Opera under the French Revolution.” *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 1, number 94 (1967-1968): 77-96

Deane, Basil. “The French Operatic Overture from Grétry to Berlioz.” *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 99 (1972-1973): 67-80.

De Jean, Joan. *Ancients Against Moderns: Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin de Siècle.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Delahaye, Sophie. “Le théâtre n'existe pas, ou comment réconcilier le passé, le présent et l'avenir de la Révolution française sur scène?” *The French Review* 85, number 6, Les Lumières, au passé et à présent (May 2012): 1100-1112.

Denby, David. *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France, 1760-1820.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Dent, Edward J. *The Rise of Romantic Opera* edited by Winton Dean. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Dent, N.J.H. and T. O’Hagan, “Rousseau on Amour-Propre.” *The Aristotelian Society* 72, number 1 (June 1998): 57-74.

Desan, Suzanne. *The Family on Trial in Revolutionary France*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2004.

Didier, Béatrice. *La Musique des lumières*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985.

- “Le Texte de la musique.” In *Interpréter Diderot aujourd’hui*, edited by E. de Fontenay and J. Proust. Paris: Le Sycomore, 1984.
- “Sylvain Maréchal et le Jugement dernier des rois.” In *Saint-Denis ou Le Jugement dernier des rois.* Edited by Roger Bouderon, 129-138. Paris: Editions Paris-Saint-Denis, 1993.

Dill, Charles. *Monstrous Opera: Rameau and the Tragic Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Doe, Julia. “French Opera at the Italian Theater (1762-93): *Opéra-Comique* and the Development of National Style in France.” PhD diss., Yale University, 2013.

- “Opéra-comique on the Eve of Revolution: Dalayrac’s *Sargines* and the Development of “Heroic” Comedy.” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 68, number 2 (Summer 2015): 317-374.

Dousset, Christine. “La Nation française et l’Antiquité à l’époque napoléonienne.” *Anabases: Traditions et réceptions de l’antiquité* 1 (2005): 59-74.

Dowd, David. “Art as National Propaganda in the French Revolution.” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 15, number 3 (Autumn 1951): 532-546.

Doyle, William. *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*. Third edition. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Duce, Charles. “Condorcet on Education.” *British Journal of Educational Studies* 19, number 3 (October 1971): 272-282.

Dupront, Alphonse. *Les lettres, les sciences, la religion et les arts dans la société française de la deuxième moitié du dix-huitième siècle*. Paris: Centre de Documentation Universitaire, 1963.

Duron, Jean. “L’adresse aux jeunes compositeurs.” In *Regards sur la musique: Grétry en société*. Edited by Jean Duron, 191-227. Wavre: Mardaga, 2009.

- ed. *Regards sur la musique: Grétry en société.* Wavre: Mardaga, 2009.

Edelstein, Dan. *The Terror of Natural Right: Republicanism, the Cult of Nature, and the French Revolution.* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Elmarsafy, Ziad. “Submission, Seduction, and State Propaganda in Favart's *Soliman II, ou Les trois sultanes.*” *French Forum* 26, number 3 (2001): 13-26.

Fabiano, Andrea. *Histoire de l'opéra italien en France (1752-1815): Heros et heroines d'un roman théâtral*. Paris: CNRS Editions, 2006.

- *La "Querelle des Bouffons" dans la vie culturelle française du XVIIIe siècle.* Paris: CNRS éditions, 2005.

Faccarello, Gilbert. "An 'exception culturelle'? French Sensationist political economy and the shaping of public economics." *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 13, number 1 (2006): 1-38.

- and Philippe Steiner. "Interest, sensationism and the science of the legislator: French 'philosophie économique', 1695–1830." *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 15, number 1 (March 2008): 1-23.
- "Le legs de Turgot: aspects de l'économie politique sensualiste de Condorcet à Rœderer." In *La pensée économique pendant la Révolution française*. Edited by G. Faccarello and P. Steiner, 67-107. Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1991.
- "Turgot et l'économie politique sensualiste." In *Nouvelle histoire de la pensée économique*, volume 1, edited by A. Béraud and G. Faccarello, 254–88. Paris: La Découverte, 1992.

Feilla, Cecilia. *The Sentimental Theater of the French Revolution.* London and New York: Routledge, 2013.

Fend, Michael. *Cherubinis Pariser Opern*, *1788–1803*. Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2007.

- "Literary motifs, musical form and the quest for the 'Sublime': Cherubini's Eliza ou le Voyage aux glaciers du Mont St Bernard." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 5, number 1 (1993): 17-38.
- "Romantic Empowerment at the Paris Opera in the 1770s and 1780s.*" Music and Letters* 94, number 2 (2013): 263-294.
- "The Problem of the French Revolution in Music Historiography and History." In *Musicology and Sister Disciplines: Past, Present, Future. Proceedings of the 16th International Congress of the International Musicological Society London, 1997* edited by David Greer, 239-251. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Forrest, Allan. *The Legacy of the French Revolutionary Wars: The Nation in Arms in French Republican Memory*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Foucault, Michel. *Folie et déraison: histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*. Paris: Librarie Plon, 1961.

– “The Eye of Power.” In *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Edited by C. Gordon, 8-15. New York: Pantheon, 1980.

Fraanje, Maarten. “La Sensibilité au pays froid: les lumières et le sentimentalisme russe.” *Revue des études slaves* 74, number 4, (2002-2003): 659-668.

Frantz, Pierre. *L'Esthétique du tableau dans le théâtre du XVIIIe siècle*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998.

– “Le théâtre déstabilisé. Diderot et la critique de Rousseau.” *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie* 48 (2013): 37-46.

Frazer, Michael. *The Enlightenment of Sympathy: Justice and the Moral Sentiments in the Eighteenth Century and Today*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Fried, Michael. *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot.* Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1980.

Friedland, Paul. *Political Actors: Representative Bodies and Theatricality in the Age of the French Revolution.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002.

Frye, Northrop. “The Argument of Comedy.” In *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frames* edited by Brian Richardson. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2002: 102-110.

Fulcher, Jane F. *The Composer as Intellectual: Music and Ideology in France, 1914-1940.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Furet, François. *Interpreting the French Revolution*. Translated by Elborg Forster. Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

– *Penser la Révolution française*. Nouvelle édition revue et corrigée en 1983. Paris: Gallimard, 1983.

Garlington Jr., Aubrey S. “Le Merveilleux and Operatic Reform in 18th-Century French Opera.” *The Musical Quarterly* 49, number 4 (October 1963): 485.

Gay, Peter. “Rhetoric and Politics in the French Revolution.” *The American Historical Review* 66, number 3 (April 1961): 599-617.

Genest, Émile. *L'Opéra-comique connu et inconnu: son histoire depuis l'origine jusqu'à nos jours.* Paris: Fischbacher, 1925.

Gessele, Cynthia M. “The Conservatoire de Musique and national music education in France, 1795-1801.” In Music and the French Revolution. Edited by Malcolm Boyd, 191-210. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Geoffroy-Schwinden, Rebecca. “Politics, the French Revolution, and Performance: Parisian Musicians as an Emergent Professional Class, 1749-1802.” PhD diss., Duke Universty, 2015.

– “Rousseau and the Revolutionary Repertoire.” *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 43 (2014): 89-110.

Gier, Albert. “Guillaume Tell in French Opera: from Grétry to Rossini.” In *Essays in Honor of Steven Paul Scher and on Cultural Identity and the Musical Stage* edited by Suzanne M. Lodato, Suzanne Aspden and Walter Bernhart. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002.

Goehring, Edmund J. “The Sentimental Muse of Opera Buffa.” In *Opera Buffa in Mozart’s Vienna* edited by Mary Hunter and James Webster, 115-45. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Goldhammer, Jesse. *The Headless Republic: Sacrificial Violence in Modern French Thought.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005.

Goodell, Edward. *The Noble Philosopher: Condorcet and the Enlightenment*. New York: Prometheus Books, 1994.

Gossman, Lionel. “Time and History in Rousseau.” *Studies on Voltaire* 30 (1964): 311-349.

Grey, Thomas. “Metaphorical modes in nineteenth-century music criticism: image, narrative, and idea.” In *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries.* Edited by Steven Paul Scher, 93-117. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Grojnowski, Daniel. “Comique littéraire et théories du rire.” *Romantisme* 74 (1991): 3-13.

Guilbault, Marie-Hélène. “La régénération de la France par l’Antiquité:  les références antiques dans la presse révolutionnaire (1789-1794).” PhD diss., Université d’Ottawa, 2012.

Guillaume, J., ed. *Procès-verbaux du Comité d’instruction publique de l’Assemblée législative*. 8 Volumes. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1891-1958.

Guin, Elisabeth Le. *Boccherini’s Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2006.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society.* Translated by T. Burger and F. Lawrence. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989.

Haines, Simon ed. *European Romanticism: a Reader*. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014.

Hallays-Dabot, V. *Histoire de la censure théatrale en France*. Paris: E. Déntu, 1862.

Hamiche, Daniel. *Le Théatre et la Révolution*. Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1973.

Harris, Joseph. "Identification and the Drame." *Nottingham French Studies* 47, number 3 (Autumn 2008): 56-67.

- *Inventing the Spectator: Subjectivity and the Theatrical Experience in Early Modern France.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Harris-Warrick, Rebecca. "Paris." *Oxford Music Online*. Accessed 11/08/17. http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/O005519.

Hartman, Geoffrey. "Reflections on Romanticism in France." *Studies in Romanticism* 9, number 4: The Concept of Romanticism (Fall 1970): 233-248.

Hatten, Robert S. "The Troping of Topics in Mozart's Instrumental Works." In *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* edited by Danuta Mirka, 514-539. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Hayes, Julie Candler. "The French Theater of Sympathy." In *Sympathy: A History*, edited by Eric Schliesser, 199-207. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Haynes, Bruce. *The End of Early Music: A Period Performer's History of Music for the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Heartz, Daniel. "Diderot and the Lyric Theater: 'The New Style' Proposed by Le Neveu de Rameau." In *From Garrick to Gluck: Essays on Opera in the Age of Enlightenment*, edited by John A. Rice, 237-254. New York: Pendragon Press, 2004.

- "Grimm's *Le Petit prophète de Boehmischbroda.*" In *From Garrick to Gluck: Essays on Opera in the Age of Enlightenment* edited by John A. Rice, 213-225. New York: Pendragon Press, 2004.
- "The Beginnings of the Operatic Romance: Rousseau, Sedaine, and Monsigny." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 15, number 2 (Winter 1981-1982): 149-178.

Hemmings, F.W.J. *Theatre and State in France, 1760-1905*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Hénin, Emmanuelle. "Le Plaisir des larmes, ou l'invention d'une *catharsis* galante." *Littératures classiques* 1, number 62 (2007): 223-244.

Hibberd, Sarah. "Cherubini and the Revolutionary Sublime." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 24, number 3 (November 2012): 293–318.

- and Nanette Nielsen, "Music in Melodrama: 'the Burden of Ineffable Expression'?" *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film* 29, number 2 (2002): 30-39.
- and Richard Wrigley (eds.) *Art, Theatre and Opera in Paris, 1750–1850: Exchanges and Tensions*. Farnham and Burligton: Ashgate, 2014.

Huet, Marie-Hélène. "Performing Arts: Theatricality and the Terror." In *Representing the French Revolution: Literature, Historiography and Art*, edited by James Heffernan, 135-149. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1992.

- *Rehearsing the Revolution: The Staging of Marat's Death, 1793-1797.* Translated by Robert Hurley. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.
- "The Revolutionary Sublime." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28 (1994): 51-64

Huff, Jonathan. "Renegotiating the Composer's Authority in A.E.M. Grétry's Mémoires." *The Journal of Romance Studies* 18, number 1 (March 2018): 45-62.

- "R.J. Arnold, Grétry's Operas and the French Public From the Old Regime to the Restoration." Book Review, *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 16 (2019): 89-93.

Hughes, Derek. *Culture and Sacrifice: Ritual and Death in Literature and Opera*. New York: Cambrige University Press, 2007.

Hunt, Lynn. *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution.* Twentieth Anniversary edition. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2004.

- *The Family Romance of the French Revolution.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992.

Ida, Hisashi. *Genèse d'une morale matérialiste : les passions et le contrôle de soi chez Diderot*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002.

Idzerda, Stanley J. "Iconoclasm during the French Revolution." *The American Historical Review* 60, number 1 (October 1954): 13-26.

Isherwood, Robert M. *Music in Service of the King*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1973.

- "Popular Musical Entertainment in Eighteenth-Century Paris." *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 9, number 2 (December 1978): 295-310.

Israel, Jonathan. "French Royal Censorship and the Battle to Supress the Encyclopédie of Diderot and d'Alembert, 1751-1759." in *The Use of Censorship in the Enlightenment* edited by Mogens Lærke, 61-74. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009).

- *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French Revolution from The Rights of Man to Robespierre*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014.

Istel, Edgar. "Beethoven's "Leonore" and "Fidelio"." *The Musical Quarterly* 7, number 2 (April 1921): 226-251.

Jam, Jean-Louis. "Marie-Joseph Chénier and François-Joseph Gossec: two artists in the service of Revolutionary propaganda." In *Music and the French Revolution*. Edited by Malcolm Boyd, 221-235. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Janko, Richard. *Aristotle on Comedy: Towards a reconstruction of Poetics II.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984.

Jefferson, Mark. "What is Wrong with Sentimentality." *Mind* 92, number 368 (October 1983): 519-529.

Johnson, James H. *Listening in Paris: a Cultural History*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1995.

Johnson, Victoria. *Backstage at the Revolution: How the Royal Paris Opera Survived the End of the Old Regime.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Jowett, Garth S. and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion: Sixth Edition*. 6th edition. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore and Washington DC: SAGE Publications, 2015.

Julien, J.R. and J.C. Klein. "Un moment unique dans l'histoire de la musique française." In *Orphée phrygien: Les musiques de la Révolution*. Edited by J.R. Julien and J.C. Klein. Paris: Éditions du May, 1989.

Kaitaro, Timo. "Emotional Pathologies and Reason in French Medical Enlightenment." In *Forming the Mind: Essays on the Internal Senses and the Mind/Body Problem from*

*Avicenna to the Medical Enlightenment* edited by Henrik Lagerlund, 311-326. Dordrecht: Springer, 2007.

Kaplan, Nira. "Virtuous Competition among Citizens: Emulation in Politics and Pedagogy during the French Revolution." *Eighteenth Century Studies* 36, number 2 (Winter 2003): 241-248.

Kennedy, Emmet. *A Cultural History of the French Revolution*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.

- with Marie-Laurence Netter, James P. McGregor, and Mark V. Olsen. *Theatre, Opera, and Audiences in Revolutionary Paris: Analysis and Repertory*. Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1996.

Kintzler, Catherine. *Jean-Philippe Rameau. Splendeur et naufrage de l'esthétique du plaisir à l'âge classique*. Paris: Minerve, 1988.

- *Poétique de l'opéra français de Corneille à Rousseau*. Paris: Minerve, 1991.
- *Théâtre et opéra à l'âge classique, une familière étrangeté*. Paris: Fayard, 2004.

Kirillina, Larissa. "Le compositeur en tant qu'intellectual : l'homme et la musique dans la société du 18e siècle." *Dix-huitième siècle* no. 30 (1998): 523-537.

Kopp, James Butler. "The Drame Lyrique: A Study in the Esthetics of Opéra-Comique, 1762-1791." PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1982.

Kritzman, Lawrence D. "Identity Crises: France, Culture and the Idea of the Nation." *SubStance* 24, number 1/2, issue 76/77: France's Identity Crises (1995): 5-20.

Lagrave, Henri. "La Pantomime à la foire, au Théâtre-Italien et aux boulevards (1700-1789). Première approche: historique du genre." *Romantische Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte* 3 (1979): 408-431.

Laplace, Roselyne. *Monvel: Un aventurier du théâtre au siècle des Lumières.* Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998.

Landes, Joan B. *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001.

- *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998.

Lang, Paul Henry. "Diderot as Musician." *Diderot Studies* 10 (1968): 95-107.

Laurenti, Jean-Noël. *Valeurs morales et religieuses sur la scène de l'Académie royale de Musique (1669-1737)*. Geneva: Librarie Droz, 2002.

Leavens, Janet Kristen. "Figures of Sympathy in Eighteenth-Century Opéra-comique." PhD dissertation, University of Iowa, 2010.

Ledbury, Mark. "Sedaine and the Question of Genre." In *Michel-Jean Sedaine (1719-1797): Theatre, Opera and Art*. Edited by David Charlton and Mark Ledbury, 13-38. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2000.

- *Sedaine, Greuze and the boundaries of genre*. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2000.
- "'Vous avez achevé mes tableaux': Michel-Jean Sedaine and Jacques-Louis David." *British Journal for eighteenth-century studies* 23 (2000): 59-84.

Legrand, Raphaëlle. "Elisca ou les dangers de l'exotisme." In *Grétry et l'Europe de l'opéra-comique.* Edited by Philippe Vendrix, 155-166. Liège: Mardaga, 1992.

- "L'information politique par l'opéra: l'exemple de la prise de Toulon." In *Le Tambour et la harpe : œuvres, pratiques et manifestations musicales sous la Révolution, 1788-1800* edited by Jean-Rémy Julien and Jean Mongrédien. Paris: Éditions du May, 1991.
- and Nicole Wild, *Regards sur l'opera-comique: trois siècles de vie théâtrale*. Paris: CNRS Editions, 2002.
- "'Risquer un genre nouveau en musique': l'opéra-comique de Sedaine et Monsigny." In *Michel-Jean Sedaine (1719-1797): Theatre, Opera and Art*. Edited by David Charlton and Mark Ledbury, 119-148. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2000

Lehning, James R. *Peasant and French: Cultural Contact in Rural France During the Nineteenth Century.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Leith, James. *The Idea of Art as Propaganda in France, 1750-1799*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965.

Letellier, Robert Ignatius. *Opéra-Comique: A Sourcebook*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.

Lindenberger, Herbert. *Historical Drama: The Relation of Literature and Reality*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1975.

Linton, Marisa. *Choosing Terror: Virtue, Friendship, and Authenticity in the French Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Lippman, Edward. *A History of Western Musical Aesthetics*. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1992.

- *Musical Thought in Ancient Greece*. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1964.

Livesey, James. *Making Democracy in the French Revolution*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Lloyd, Henry Martyn. "The Discourse of Sensibility: The Knowing Body in the Enlightenment." In *The Discourse of Sensibility: The Knowing Body in the Enlightenment, Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* edited by Henry Martyn Lloyd, volume 35, 1-24. Heidelberg, New York, Dordrecht and London: Springer, 2013.

Lockhart, Ellen. "Forms and Themes of Early Melodrama." In *The Melodramatic Moment: Music and Theatrical Culture, 1790-1820*, edited by Katherine Hambridge and Jonathan Hicks, 25-42. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Loy, J. Robert. "Diderot's Unedited *Plan d'un opéra-comique.*" Romanic Review 46, number 1 (February 1955): 3-24.

Luchte, James. *Early Greek Thought: Before the Dawn*. New York: Continuum, 2011.

Lunel, Ernest. *Le theatre de la révolution: Histoire anecdotique des spectacles, de leurs comédiens et de leur public par rapport à la Révolution française.* Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970

Lyons, John D. *Kingdom of Disorder: The Theory of Tragedy in Classical France.* West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1999.

Macintosh, Fiona. "Introduction: The Performer in Performance." In *Medea in Performance 1500-2000*, edited by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh, and Oliver Taplin, 1-31. Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, 2000.

Marchand, Sophie. "Diderot et l'histoire du théâtre: passé, présent(s) et avenir des spectacles dans la théorie diderotienne." *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie* 47 (2012): 9-24.

- "Mythologies de l'effet pathétique au XVIIIe siècle: nature et enjeux de l'efficacité dramatique dans le discours commun." *Littératures Classiques* 62 (2007): 259-271.

Margollé, Maxime. “Aspects de l’opéra-comique sous la Révolution : l’évolution du goût et du comique aux théâtres Favart et Feydeau entre Médée (1797) et L’Irato (1801)”, 2 volumes. PhD dissertation, L’Université de Poitiers, 2013.

– “Prisonniers et prisons sur la scène de l’Opéra-Comique (1789-1801).” *Criminocorpus : Music and Justice, Représentations de la justice, des crimes et des peines en musique*. Accessed 27/07/15. http://criminocorpus.revues.org/2797.

Marshall, David. “Rousseau and the State of Theater.” *Representations* 13 (Winter, 1986): 84-114.

Maslan, Susan. *Revolutionary Acts: Theater, Democracy, and the French Revolution.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.

Mason, Laura. *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics, 1787-1799*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1996.

Masson, Paul-Marie. “La lettre sur Omphale.” *Revue de musicologie* 24, number 73/74 (1945): 1–19.

Masters, Roger D. *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968.

McClellan, Michael. “Battling over the Lyric Muse: Expressions of Revolution and Counterrevolution at the Théâtre Feydeau, 1789-1801.” PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 1994.

McCracken, Janet. *Taste and the Household: The Domestic Aesthetic and Moral Reasoning*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001.

McDonald, Joan. *Rousseau and the French Revolution 1762-1791.* London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2013.

McDonald, Marianne. “Medea è mobile: The Many Faces of Medea in Opera.” In *Medea in Performance 1500-2000*, edited by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh, and Oliver Taplin, 100-118. Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, 2000.

McManners, John. *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France. Volume 2: The Religion of the People and the Politics of Religion*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

McMillan, JF. *France and Women 1789-1914: Gender, Society and Politics*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

Mélèse, Pierre. “À propos de l’expulsion des Comédiens italiens en 1697.” *Revue d’Histoire littéraire de la France* 44e année, number 4 (1937): 533-537.

Mili, M. “L’Ecole de la vertu: fonction didactique du théâtre pendant la Révolution française, 1789-1799.” In *L’Image de la Révolution française: Communications présentées lors du Congrès Mondial pour le Bicentenaire de la Révolution* edited by Michel Vovelle, 1917-1922. Volume 3. Paris: Pergamon Press.

Mongrédien, Jean. *Jean-François Le Sueur: Contribution à l’étude d’un demi-siècle de musique française (1780-1830)*. 2 volumes. Berne: Peter Lang, 1980.

- *French Music from the Enlightenment to Romanticism,* tr. Sylvain Frémaux. Portland: Amadeus Press, 1996.
- “Les Mémoires ou essais sur la musique: un compositeur à l’écoute de lui-même.” In *Grétry et l’Europe de l’opéra-comique*, edited by Philippe Vendrix, 15-28. Liège: Mardaga, 1992.
- “Preface.” In *Orphée phrygien: Les musiques de la Révolution*. Edited by J.R. Julien and J.C. Klein, 9-26. Paris, Éditions du May 1989.

Monelle, Raymond. *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006.

Morgan, Janet. “The Meanings of Vraisemblance in French Classical Theory.” *The Modern Language Review* 81, number 2 (April 1986): 293-304.

Mornet, Daniel. *Les origines intellectuelles de la Révolution française, 1715-1787*. Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1933.

Mossé, Claude. *L’Antiquité dans la Révolution française*. Paris: Albin Michel, 1989.

Nadeau, Martin. “La politique culturelle de l’An II : les infortunes de la propaganda révolutionnaire au théâtre.” *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 327 (January-March 2002): 57-74.

Netter, Marie-Laurence. “The Great Successes of Each Year.” In *Theatre, Opera, and Audiences in Revolutionary Paris*, edited by Emmet Kennedy et al., 35-50. Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1996.

Niklaus, Robert. “Diderot et Rousseau: Pour et contre le théâtre.” *Diderot Studies* 4 (1963):153-189.

Nora, Pierre. “Le retour de l'événement.” In *Faire de l’histoire* edited by Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora. Volume 1. Paris: Gallimard, 1974: 210-228.

Nussbaum, Charles. "Sentiment and Sentimentality in Music." *COLLeGIUM: Studies Across Disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences* 9 (Music and Emotions): 35-44. Accessed 15/06/17. http://hdl.handle.net/10138/25826.

O'Connell, Sarah Day. "The Singing Style." In *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* edited by Danuta Mirka, 238-259. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

O'Dea, Michael. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Music, Illusion and Desire.* London: St Martin's Press, 1995.

O'Neal, John. *The Authority of Experience: Sensationist Theory in the French Enlightenment*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996.

Ozouf, Mona. *Festivals and the French Revolution*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Pappas, John N. "D'Alembert et la Querelle Des Bouffons: d'après des documents inédits." *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* 65è année, number 33 (Jul. - Sep., 1965): 479-484.

Parakilas, James. "Political Representation and the Chorus in Nineteenth-Century Opera." *19th-Century Music* 16, number 2 (Autumn 1992): 181-202.

Parker, Harold Talbot. *The Cult of Antiquity and the French Revolutionaries: A Study in the Development of the Revolutionary Spirit*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937.

Paul, Charles. "Music and Ideology: Rameau, Rousseau, and 1789." In *Music and Ideology,* edited by Mark Carroll, 1-16. New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2016.

Pendle, Karin. "L'opéra-comique à Paris de 1762 à 1789." In *L'opéra-comique en France au XVIIIe siècle*. Edited by Philippe Vendrix, 123-132 (Liège: Mardaga, 1992).

Pérez, Ashley Hope. "Material Morality and the Logic of Degrees in Diderot's *Le neveu de Rameau*." *Modern Philology* 114, number 4 (May 2017): 872-898.

Peters, John Durham. "Distrust of Representation: Habermas on the Public Sphere." *Media, Culture and Society* 15, number 4 (1993): 541-571.

Pierre, Constant. *Musique des fêtes et des cérémonies de la révolution française.* Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1899.

Pingaud, Bernard and Robert Mantéro. *Les Infortunes de la raison, 1774-1815*. Paris: Hatier, 1992.

Pistone, Danièle. "Contribution à la titrologie scénique Parisienne: les appellations génériques au théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique de 1762 à 1972." In *The Opéra-comique in the*

*Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, edited by Lorenzo Frassà, 265-282. Turnhout: Brepols, 2011.

Planer, John H. “Sentimentality in the Performance of Absolute Music: Pablo Casal’s Performance of Saraband from Johann Sebastian Bach’s Suite No. 2 in D Minor for Unaccompanied Cello, S. 1008.” *The Musical Quarterly* 73, number 2 (1989): 212-248.

Poirson, Martial. “Paméla en France ou les infortunes de la vertu.” In *Paméla européenne. Parcours d’une figure mythique dans l’Europe des Lumières*, edited by Lucie Comparini, 73-116. Montpellier: Presses universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2009.

Poitrineau, Abel. “La Fête traditionnelle.” *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 47è année, number 221(Juillet-Septembre 1975): 339-355.

Pougin, Arthur. *L’Opéra Comique pendant la Révolution de 1788 à 1801.* Paris: Albert Savine, 1891.

Prickett, Stephen. “General Introduction: Of Fragments, Monsters and Translations.” in *European Romanticism: a Reader*. Edited by Simon Haines. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014.

Profio, Alessandro di. *La Révolution des Bouffons: L’opéra italien au Théâtre de Monsieur 1789–1792*. Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2003.

Proust, Jacques. “À propos du *Plan d'un opéra-comique* de Diderot.” *Revue d'histoire du théâtre* 26, number 2 (1955): 173-188.

Quinlan, Sean M. “Physical and moral regeneration after the Terror: medical culture, sensibility and family politics in France, 1794-1804.” *Social History* 29, number 2 (May 2004): 139-164,

Randel, Don Michael. “The Canons in the Musicological Toolbox.” *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons* edited by Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992: 10-22.

Ravel, Jeffrey S. “Le théâtre et ses publics : pratiques et représentations du parterre à Paris au XVIIIe siècle.” *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine* 49, no. 3 (2002): 89-118.

- *The Contested Parterre: Public Theater and French Political Culture 1680-1791*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999.

Rebejkow, Jean-Christophe. “Diderot et l’opéra-comique : de la farce au pathétique.” *Romanische Forschungen* 107, number 1/2 (1995): 45-156.

– “Nouvelles recherches sur la musique dans Le Neveu de Rameau.” *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l’Encyclopédie* 20 (April 1996): 57-74.
– “Rousseau et l’opéra-comique : les raisons d’un rejet.” *The Romanic Review* 89, number 2 (March 1998): 161-185.

Reddy, William M. “Sentimentalism and Its Erasure: The Role of Emotions in the Era of the French Revolution.” *The Journal of Modern History* 72, number 1 (March 2000):109-152.

– *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Reichardt, Rolf and Herbert Schneider. “Chanson et musique populaires devant l'Histoire à la fin de l'Ancien Régime.” *Dixhuitième Siècle* 18 (1986): 117-142.

Riley, Matthew. “Straying From Nature: The Labyrinthine Harmonic Theory of Diderot and Bemetzrieder's Leçons de clavecin (1771).” *The Journal of Musicology* 19, number 1 (Winter 2002): 3-38.

Rizzoni, Nathalie. “Inconnaissance de la Foire.” In *L’invention des genres lyriques français et leur redécouverte au XIXe siècle*, edited by Agnès Terrier and Alexandre Dratwicki, 119-270. Lyon: Symétrie, 2010.

Robert, Yann. “Mercier’s revolutionary Theater: reimagining Pantomime, the Aesthetic of the Unfinished, and the Politics of the Stage.” *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 44 (2015): 185-206.

Robinson, Michael. “Opera buffa into opéra-comique, 1771-90.” In *Music and the French Revolution*, edited by Malcolm Boyd, 37-56. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Rosenfeld, Sophie. *A Revolution in Language: The Problem of Signs in Late Eighteenth-Century France*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001.

Roszak, Roman. “Rousseau et le théâtre: trois dispositifs de clôture du monde bourgeois.” *Cités* 68, number 4 (2016): 133-144.

Rougemont, Martine de. *La vie théâtrale en France*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1988.

Rushton, Julian. “Framery, Nicolas-Étienne.” *Oxford Music Online.* Accessed 24/01/18. http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/10079.

Russo, Elena. *Styles of Enlightenment: Taste, Politics, and Authorship in Eighteenth-Century France.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007.

Saint-Gérard, Jacques-Philippe. "Le Javelot de Marmontel au XIXè siècle." In *Marmontel: une rhétorique de l'apaisement,* edited by Jacques Wagner, 81-106. Leuven: Éditions Peeters, 2003.

Samson, Jim. "The Great Composer." In *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music* edited by Jim Samson, 259-287. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Sanders, Scott M. "Sound and Sensibility in Diderot's 'Le Neveu de Rameau'." *Music & Letters* 94, number 2 (2013): 237-262.

Saraiva, Antonio Jose. *The Marrano Factory: The Portuguese Inquisition and Its New Christians, 1536–1765* translated by H.P. Salomon and I.S.D Sassoon. Leiden, Boston and Köln: Brill, 2001.

Schama, Simon. *Citizens: a Chronicle of the French Revolution*. London, New York, Victoria, Toronto and Auckland: Penguin Books, 1989.

Schmidt, Adolphe. *Tableaux de la Révolution française; publiés sur les papiers inédits du département et de la police secrète de Paris*. 4 volumes. Leipzig: Veit & Comp., 1869.

Scott, John T. "Rousseau and the Melodious Language of Freedom." *The Journal of Politics* 59, number 3 (August 1997): 803-829.

Sewell Jr., William H. "Collective Violence and Collective Loyalties in France: Why the French Revolution Made a Difference." *Politics and Society* 18, number 4 (1990): 527-552

Shovlin, John. *The Political Economy of Virtue: Luxury, Patriotism, and the Origins of the French Revolution*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006.

Simon, Julia. *Mass Enlightenment: Critical Studies in Rousseau and Diderot.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.

Smith, Edwin Burrows. "Jean-Sylvain Bailly: Astronomer, Mystic, Revolutionary 1736-1793." *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 44, number 4 (1954): 427-538.

Smith, Patrick J. *The Tenth Muse: a Historical Study of the Opera Libretto.* New York: A. A. Knopf, 1970.

Solomon, Robert C. "In Defence of Sentimentality." *Philosophy and Literature* 14, number 2 (October 1990): 304-323.

Star, Allison. “Beethoven Poet: Hector Berlioz's "A Critical Study of Beethoven's Nine Symphonies" at the Crossroads of French Romanticism.” PhD thesis: The University of Victoria, 2002.

Steinbrügge, Lieselotte. *The Moral Sex: Woman's Nature in the French Enlightenment* translated by Pamela E. Selwyn. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Steiner, P. *La ‘Science nouvelle’ de l’économie politique*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1998.

Stenger, Gerhardt. “Le Neveu de Rameau ou l’impossible morale.” *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie* 52 (2017): 71-86.

Sutherland, D.M.G. *France 1789-1815: Revolution and Counterrevolution.* London: Fontana Press, 1990.

Szondi, Peter. “Tableau and Coup de Théâtre: On the Social Psychology of Diderot's Bourgeois Tragedy.” *New Literary History* 11, number 2 (Winter 1980): 323-343.

Tackett, Timothy. *Becoming a Revolutionary: The Deputies of the French National Assembly and the Emergence of a Revolutionary Culture (1789-1790).* First Paperback edition. University Park: The Pennsylvania State Press, 2006.

Taïeb, Patrick. “La réunion des théâtres Favart et Feydeau en 1801 et l’opéra-comique révolutionnaire.” In *Les Arts de la scène et la Révolution française*, edited by Philippe Bourdin and Gérard Loubinoux, 341-366. Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise-Pascal, 2004.

- “La réunion des théâtres Favart et Feydeau en 1801. Quelques éléments pour une histoire culturelle du théâtre lyrique français.” *Histoire, économie et société* 22e année, number 2 (2003): 239-260.
- and Judith Leblanc. “Merveilleux et réalisme dans Zémire et Azor: un échange entre Diderot et Grétry.” *Dix-huitième siècle* 43, number 1 (2011): 185-201.

Taine, Hippolyte. *Les origines de la France contemporaine*. 2 volumes. Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1986.

Tanner, Michael. “Sentimentality.” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 77 (1976-1977): 127-147.

Taruskin, Richard. “Tradition and Authority.” *Early Music* 20, number 2 (May 1992): 311-325.

Taylor, Benedict. “The Lost Chord: Sentimentality, Sincerity, and the Search for ‘Emotional Depth’ in 19th-Century Music.” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 40, number 2 (December 2009): 207-233.

Taylor, Philip M. *Munitions of the mind: A history of propaganda*. New York: Manchester University Press, 2003.

Terrier, Agnès and Alexandre Dratwicki, eds. *L’invention des genres lyriques français et leur redécouverte au XIXe siècle*. Lyon: Symétrie, 2010.

Thomas, Downing A. *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647-1785.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

- “Architectural Visions of Lyric Theater and Spectatorship in Late-Eighteenth-Century France.” *Representations* 52 (Autumn 1995): 52-75.
- *Music and the Origins of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- “Opera, Dispossession, and the Sublime: The Case of *Armide.*” *Theatre Journal* 49, number 2 (May 1997):169-188.

Tiersot, Julien. *Les Fêtes et les Chants de la Révolution française*. Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1908.

Tissier, André. *Les Spectacles à Paris pendant la Révolutio*n. 2 volumes. Genève: Droz, 1992; 2002.

Tocqueville, Aléxis de. *L’Ancien Régime et la Révolution*. 7th edition. Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1866.

Tourneux, Maurice ed. *Corréspondence litteraire, philosophique et critique par Grimm, Diderot, Raynal, Meister etc. Revue  sur les textes originaux comprenant outre ce qui a été publié à diverses époques.* Volume 16. Paris: Imprimerie A. Quantin, 1882.

Trahard, Pierre. *La Sensibilité révolutionnaire (1789-1794)*. Paris: Boivin et Compagnie, 1936.

Trott, David. *Théâtre du XVIIIe siècle : jeux, écritures, regards: essai sur les spectacles en France de 1700 à 1790*. Montpellier: Editions Espaces, 2000.

Turner, James Grantham. “Novel Panic: Picture and Performance in the Reception of Richardson’s Pamela.” *Representations* 48 (Fall 1994): 70-96.

Vendrix, Philippe, ed. *Grétry et l’Europe de l’opéra-comique*. Liège: Mardaga, 1992.

- ed. *L'Opéra-comique en France au XVIIIe siècle.* Liège: Mardaga, 1992.

– “Proposition pour une poétique musicale révolutionnaire.” In *Études sur le XVIIIe siècle. Fêtes et musiques révolutionnaires : Grétry et Gossec* edited by Mortier and Hasquin. Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1990.

Verba, Cynthia. *Dramatic Expression in Rameau's “Tragédie en Musique”: Between Tradition and Enlightenment.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

– “Music and the Enlightenment.” In *The Enlightenment World* edited by Martin Fitzpatrick, Peter Jones, Christa Knellwolf and Iain McCalman, 307-322. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.
– *Music and the French Enlightenment: Reconstruction of a Dialogue, 1750-1764*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Vigeant, Louise. “Les mots de la tragédie.” *Jeu* 68 (1993): 94-102.

Vila, Anne C. *Enlightenment and Pathology: Sensibility in the Literature and Medicine of Eighteenth-Century France.* London and Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.

Vincent-Buffault, Anne. *Histoire des larmes, XVIIIè-XIXè siècles*. Paris and Marseille: Rivages, 1986.

Vives, Jean-Michel. “De la haine du théâtre et du comédien: Petit traité de l'illusion.” *Insistance* 2, number 1 (2006): 53-64.

Waeber, Jacqueline. *En musique dans le texte: le mélodrame de Rousseau à Schoenberg*. Paris: Van Dieren Éditeur, 2005.

Walton, Charles. “Charles IX and the French revolution: Law, vengeance, and the revolutionary uses of history.” *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 4, number 2 (1997):127-146.

– *Policing Public Opinion in the French Revolution: The Culture of Calumny and the Problem of Free Speech*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Watson, Walter. *The Lost Second Book of Aristotle's “Poetics”*. London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Weber, Carl Maria von. *Writings on Music*. Translated by Martin Cooper, edited and introduced by John Warrack. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Webster, James. “The Eighteenth Century as a Music-Historical Period?” *Eighteenth-Century Music* 1, number 1 (2004): 47-60.

Welschinger, Henri. *Le Théâtre de la Révolution 1789-1799 avec documents inédits.* Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1968.

Werner, Stephen. *Socratic Satire: An Essay on Diderot and Le Neveu de Rameau.* Birmingham, Alabama: Summa Publications Inc., 1987.

Williams, Elizabeth. *A Cultural History of Medical Vitalism in Enlightenment Montpellier*. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2003.

Wokler, Robert. *Rousseau on Society, Politics, Music and Language: An Historical Interpretation of his Early Writings*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1987.

Wolff, Charlotta. "La musique des spectacles en Suède, 1770 – 1810: opéra-comique français et politique de l'appropriation." *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 379 (January-March 2015): 13-33.

Worvill, Romira. "From Prose peinture to Dramatic tableau: Diderot, Fénelon, and the Emergence of the Pictorial Aesthetic in France." *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 39 (2010): 151-170.

Wild, Nicole and David Charlton. *Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique Paris: répertoire 1762-1972.* (Sprimont: Mardaga, 2005).

Wygant, Amy. *Medea, Magic, and Modernity in France: Stages and Histories, 1553-1797.* Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2007.

Zimmer, Pierre. "Grétry." *Raison présente* 175 (2010): 121-122.

Zizek, Joseph. "Revolutionary Gifts: Sacrifice and the Challenge of Community during the French Revolution." *The Journal of Modern History* 88, number 2 (2016): 306-341.

Zuk, Patrick. '"Our songs are our laws…' Music and the Republic (Part 1)" *The Republic: a journal of contemporary and historical debate* 3 (July 2003):113-131.

# Appendix A: New Works Premiered at the Opéra Comique, 1789-1799

As stated previously, the information presented here is collected from my own research in the library of La Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra, where the Opéra Comique's registres for the period are kept. They can be consulted on microfilm, and the daily receipts (*recettes journalières*) from 1789-1800 are catalogued under TH OC- 73 through 83. At the time of writing, these are currently in the process of digitalisation and should be accessible for online consultation soon. In addition, relevant information can be found in the minutes (*déliberations*) of meetings of the Opéra Comique's Comité (which was responsible for administrating the Opéra Comique's daily activites). These are catalogued under TH OC- 122 through 124. All of my figures were cross-referenced against unpublished data provided by David Charlton, to whom I am extremely grateful. Other helpful sources include André Tissier, *Les Spectacles à Paris pendant la Révolution,* 2 vols. (Genève: Droz, 1992; 2002); and Nicole Wild and David Charlton, *Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique: Répertoire 1762-1972* (Sprimont: Mardag).

| **Title** | **Composer and Librettist** | **Date of Premiere** | **Number of Performances by end of year premiered** | **Number of Performan ces by Dec 1799** | **Genre** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Les Deux Petits Savoyards | Dalayrac and Marsollier | 14 Jan 1789 | 63 | 229 (→1838) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Raoul Barbe-Bleu | Grétry and Sedaine | 2 March 1789 | 16 | 59 (→1818) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| La Fausse Paysanne ou l'Heureux inconséquence | Propiac and Piis | 26 March 1789 | 14 | 14 | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Sans adieu | de Reigny (mus. vaudevilles) | 28 March 1789 | 1 | 1 | Pièce en vaudevilles |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| La Couronne de fleurs | de Reigny or de Bonyon (mus. vaudevilles) | 20 April 1789 | 1 | 1 | Compliment en vaudevilles |
| Le Destin et les parques | Chapelle and Desfontaines | 5 May 1789 | 6 | 6 | Ambigu |
| Les Savoyards ou la Continence de Bayard | Propiac and Piis | 30 May 1789 | 7 | 7 | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| La Vieillesse d'Annette et Lubin | Chapelle and d'Antilly | 1 Aug 1789 | 12 | 19 (→1790) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Le Soldat par amour | Darondeau (mus. anon.) | 26 Sept 1789 | 1 | 1 | Opéra-comique |
| Raoul, sire de Crequi (becomes Bathilde et Éloy in 1794) | Dalayrac and de Monvel | 31 Oct 1789 | 17 | 131 (→1899) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Caroline | Lefebvre and Chabeaussière | 2 Dec 1789 | 1 | 1 | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Pierre le Grand | Grétry and Bouilly | 13 Jan 1790 | 22 | 50 (→1817) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes / Comédie mise en musique |
| Le Diable à quatre ou le Double métamorphose | Porta and Sedaine | 14 Feb 1790 | 11 | 15 (→1793) | Opéra-comique |
| Les Brouilleries | Berton and d'Avrigny | 1 March 1790 | 2 | 2 | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| La Chose impossible | Chardiny (vaudevilles) and C.N.J. Favart | 8 March 1790 | 3 | 3 | Divertissement mêlé de vaudevilles |
| Le District de village | Desfontaines (mus. Vaudevilles) | 15 March 1790 | 15 | 15 | Ambigu mêlé de vaudevilles |
| Les Fous de Médine ou la Rencontre imprévue | Solié and Dancourt | 1 May 1790 | 1 | 1 | Opéra bouffon |
| La Suite du Solitaires de Normandie | Lescot and Piis | 4 May 1790 | 4 | 4 | Divertissement en vaudevilles |
| Jeanne d'Arc à Orleans | Kreutzer and Desforges | 10 May 1790 | 10 | 10 | Opéra-comique |
| La Soirée orageuse | Dalayrac and Radet | 29 May 1790 | 29 | 159 (→1822) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes / Comédie mise en musique |
| Ferdinand ou la Suite des Deux Pages | Dezède | 19 June 1790 | 15 | 16 (→1791) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Le Chêne patriotique ou la Matinée de 14 Juillet 1790 | Dalayrac and de Monvel | 10 July 1790 | 7 | 7 | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Les Rigueurs du cloître | Berton and Fiévée | 23 Aug 1790 | 24 | 71 (→1795) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes / Drame lyrique mise en musique |
| Euphrosine ou le Tyran corrigé | Méhul and Hoffman | 4 Sept 1790 | 25 | 122 (→1829) | Comédie mise en musique |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vert-Vert | Dalayrac and Desfontaines | 11 Oct 1790 | 1 | 1 | Divertissement mêlé d'ariettes |
| Le Nouveau d'Assas | Berton and Dejaure | 15 Oct 1790 | 15 | 17 (→1791) | Trait civique mêlé de chants |
| Adèle et Didier | Deshayes and Boutillier | 5 Nov 1790 | 1 | 1 | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Les Portraits | Parenti and Lœillard | 20 Nov 1790 | 3 | 3 | Comédie |
| La Famille réunie | Chapelle and C.N. Favart | 6 Dec 1790 | 2 | 4 (→1791) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Grisélide ou la Vertu à l'épreuve | De Méreaux and Desforges | 8 Jan 1791 | 3 | 3 | Comédie-lyrique |
| Paul et Virginie | Kreutzer and de Favières | 15 Jan 1791 | 36 | 146 (→1846) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes / Comédie mise en musique |
| Les Deux voisins | La Roche (mus. vaudevilles) | 25 Jan 1791 | 1 | 1 | Comédie en deux actes et vaudevilles |
| Bayard dans Bresse ou Créqui et Clémentine | Champein and de Lisle | 21 Feb 1791 | 2 | 2 | Comédie mêlée de musique / Opéra |
| Camille ou le Souterrain | Dalayrac and Marsollier | 19 March 1791 | 21 | 148 (→1842) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes / Comédie mise en musique |
| Les Deux sentinelles | Berton and Andrieux | 27 March 1791 | 6 | 6 | Comédie |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Guillaume Tell | Grétry and Sedaine | 9 April 1791 | 9 | 83 (→1829) | Drame tragique mise en musique |
| Adélaïde et Mirval ou la Vengeance paternelle | Trial fils and Patrat | 6 June 1791 | 9 | 9 | Comédie |
| Athalie | Gossec (original text by Racine) | 1 July 1791 | 5 | 5 | Tragédie |
| Lodoïska ou les Tartares | Kreutzer and Dejaure | 1 Aug 1791 | 21 | 122 (→1822) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes / Comédie mise en musique |
| Les Espiègleries de garnison | Champein and de Favières, Sedaine | 21 Sept 1791 | 6 | 9 (→1792) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Agnès et Olivier | Dalayrac and de Monvel | 10 Oct 1791 | 8 | 8 | Comédie héroïque |
| Elfrida | Lemoyne and Guillard | 17 Dec 1791 | 6 | 6 | Comédie héroïque |
| Philippe et Georgette | Dalayrac and de Monvel | 28 Dec 1791 | 2 | 185 (→1827) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes / Comédie mise en musique |
| Cécile et Ermancé ou les Deux couvents (becomes 'Clarisse et Ermancé ou les Deux couvents' and then 'Le Despotisme | Grétry and de Lisle, Després | 16 Jan 1792 | 11 | 12 (→1793) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |

| monacal' in Nov 1792) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Werther et Charlotte (also known as Charlotte et Werther) | Kreutzer and Dejaure | 1 Feb 1792 | 13 | 19 (→1798) | Drame-lyrique / Opéra |
| L'École des parvenus ou la Suite des Deux Petits Savoyards | Devienne and Pujoulx | 8 Feb 1792 | 17 | 17 | Opéra-comique |
| La Vengeance paternelle | Trial fils and Patrat | 18 Feb 1792 | 6 | 6 | Comédie |
| Stratonice | Méhul and Hoffman | 3 May 1792 | 23 | 104 (→1827) | Comédie héroïque mise en musique |
| Les Deux sous-lieutenants ou le Concert interrompu | Berton and de Favières | 19 May 1792 | 2 | 2 | Comédie |
| Tout pour l'amour ou Romeo et Juliette | Dalayrac and de Monvel | 7 July 1792 | 11 | 41 (→1799) | Comédie |
| Les Deux petits aveugles | Trial fils and Noël | 28 July 1792 | 8 | 9 (→1793) | Opéra-comique |
| Les Trois sultanes | Blasius and C.S. Favart | 25 Aug 1792 | 7 | 7 | Comédie |
| Bazile ou À trompeur et demi | Grétry and Sedaine | 17 Oct 1792 (26 Vend an I) | 2 | 2 | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Le Franc Breton | Kreutzer, Solié and Dejaure | 1 Nov 1792 (12 Brum an I) | 5 | 33 (→1801) | Opéra |
| Le Siège de Lille ou Cécile et Julien | de Joigny and Trial fils | 21 Nov 1792 (1 Frim an I) | 17 | 70 (→1795) | Comédie mêlé de chants |

| (also known as ‘Cécile et Julien ou le Siège de Lille’) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jean et Geneviève | Solié and de Favières | 3 Dec 1792 (13 Frim an I) | 9 | 58 (→1822) | Comédie mêlée d’ariettes / Comédie mise en musique |
| Ambroise ou Voilà ma journée | Dalayrac and de Monvel | 12 Jan 1793 (23 Niv an I) | 25 | 78 (→1827) | Comédie mêlée d’ariettes / Comédie mise en musique |
| Le Déserteur de la montagne de Hamm | Kreutzer and Dejaure | 6 Feb 1793 (18 Pluv an I) | 11 | 11 | Fait historique |
| Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau ou le Premier martyr de la République française | Blasius and Dantilly | 23 Feb 1793 (5 Vent an I) | 4 | 4 | Fait historique |
| Le Barbier de Séville ou la Précaution inutile | Paisiello and de Beaumarchais, Framery | 16 March 1793 (26 Vent an I) | 9 | 9 | Opéra-comique |
| Clarice et Belton ou le Prisonnier anglais | Grétry and Desfontaines | 23 March 1793 (3 Germ an I) | 11 | 11 | Comédie mêlée d’ariettes |
| Le Jeune Sage et le vieux fou | Méhul and Hoffman | 28 March 1793 (8 Germ an I) | 10 | 34 (→1802) | Comédie mêlée d’ariettes / Comédie mise en musique |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Asgill ou le Prisonnier de guerre (becomes 'Arnill ou le Prisonnier américain' in 1795) | Dalayrac and Marsollier | 2 May 1793 (13 Flor an I) | 8 | 24 (→1801) | Drame-lyrique mêlée d'ariettes |
| La Blanche Haquenée | Porta and Sedaine | 22 May 1793 (3 Prair an I) | 0 | 0 | Opéra-comique |
| Le Coin du feu | Jadin and de Favières | 10 June 1793 (22 Prair an I) | 7 | 11 (→1798) | Comédie mise en musique |
| Le Corsaire algérien ou le Combat naval | Dalayrac and de la Chabeaussière | 1 July 1793 (13 Mess an I) | 13 | 13 | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| La Cause et les effets ou le Réveil du peuple en 1789 | Trial fils and Joigny | 17 Aug 1793 (30 Therm an I) | 7 | 7 | Comédie |
| La Moisson | Solié (vaudevilles) and Sewrin | 5 Sept 1793 (19 Fruc an I) | 10 | 13 (→1794) | Opéra-comique en vaudevilles |
| La Fête civique du village | Mitelet (mus. vaudevilles) | 9 Oct 1793 (18 Vend an II) | 28 | 37 (→1794) | Divertissement |
| Urgande et Merlin | Dalayrac and de Monvel | 14 Oct 1793 (23 Vend an II) | 1 | 1 | Comédie |
| L'Homme et le malheur | Parenti and d'Avrigny | 22 Oct 1793 (1 Brum an II) | 5 | 5 | Drame mêlé de chants |
| Le Cri de la Patrie | Parenti and de Moussard | 28 Dec 1793 (8 Nîv an II) | 2 | 2 | Comédie en prose et ariettes |

| L'Intérieur d'un ménage républicain | de Puységur (mus. vaudevilles) | 4 Jan 1794 (15 Niv an II) | 49 | 54 (→1795) | Opéra-comique en vaudevilles |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Le Plaisir et la gloire | Solié and Sewrin | 19 Jan 1794 (30 Niv an II) | 19 | 19 | Scène patriotique mêlé de chants |
| La Prise de Toulon par les Français | de Corvey and Duval | 21 Jan 1794 (2 Pluv an II) | 32 | 45 (→1795) | Comédie en ariettes |
| Andros et Almona ou les Français à Bassora | de Corvey and Duval, Picard | 5 Feb 1794 (17 Pluv an II) | 18 | 18 | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Le Congrès des rois | Ève (mus. collaboration of 12 composers) | 26 Feb 1794 (8 Vent an II) | 2 | 2 | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Les Missionnaires républicains | Maréchal (mus. vaudevilles) | 4 April 1794 (15 Germ an II) | 1 | 1 | Tableau patriotique en prose et en vaudevilles |
| La Discipline républicaine | Foignet and Valcour | 20 April 1794 (1 Flor an II) | 14 | 14 | Fait historique mêlée d'ariettes |
| Mélidore et Phrosine | Méhul and Arnault | 6 May 1794 (17 Flor an II) | 17 | 22 (→1795) | Drame-lyrique |
| L'École de village | Soliè (vaudevilles) and Sewrin | 10 May 1794 (21 Flor an II) | 2 | 2 | Opéra-comique en vaudevilles |
| L'Enfance de Jean-Jacques Rousseau | Dalayrac and Andrieux | 23 May 1794 (4 Prair an II) | 20 | 24 (→1796) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Joseph Barra | Grétry and Champrion | 5 June 1794 (17 Prair an II) | 9 | 9 | Fait historique |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agricole Viala ou le Héros de treize ans | Porta and Audouin | 1 July 1794 (13 Mess an II) | 8 | 8 | Anecdote patriotique en ariettes |
| Les Épreuves du républicain ou l'Amour de la Patrie | Champein and Laugier | 4 Aug 1794 (17 Therm an II) | 9 | 9 | Essai patriotique mêlée d'ariettes |
| La Fête américaine | Walter and Peicam | 18 Aug 1794 (1 Fruc an II) | 12 | 12 | Ballet patriotique |
| Arabelle et Vascos ou les Jacobins de Goa | Marc and Lebrun-Tossa | 7 Sept 1794 (21 Fruc an II) | 13 | 16 (→1795) | Drame-lyrique |
| Callias ou Nature et Patrie | Grétry and Hoffman | 19 Sept 1794 (3 j.c an II) | 14 | 14 | Drame héroïque mêlée de musique |
| L'Écolier en vacances | Jadin, Picard and Loraux | 13 Oct 1794 (22 Vend an III) | 8 | 29 (→1797) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Les Pirates vaincus par les Français | Peicam (mus. anon.) | 24 Oct 1794 (3 Brum an III) | 2 | 2 | Divertissement -ballet |
| Encore une victoire ou les Déserteurs liégois et les prisonniers français | Kreutzer and Dantilly | 30 Oct 1794 (9 Brum an III) | 2 | 2 | Opéra-comique |
| Les Détenus ou Cange, commissionnaire de Lazare | Dalayrac and Marsollier | 18 Nov 1794 (28 Brum an III) | 15 | 35 (→1795) | Fait historique mêlée d'ariettes |
| La Soubrette ou l'Élui de harpe | Solié and Hoffman | 3 Dec 1794 (13 Frim an III) | 8 | 39 (→1796) | Comédie |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Albert et Antoine ou le Service récompensé | Grétry and Sedaine | 7 Dec 1794 (17 Frim an III) | 6 | 6 | Drame |
| La Cabaleur | Jadin and Lebrun-Tossa | 11 Jan 1795 (22 Niv an III) | 2 | 2 | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| On respire ! | Kreutzer and Tissot | 9 March 1795 (19 Vent an III) | 12 | 12 | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Doria ou la Tyrannie détruite | Méhul and d'Avrigny | 12 March 1795 (22 Vent an III) | 3 | 3 | Opéra héroïque |
| La Journée du 12 Germinal | Dalayrac and Lebrun-Tossa | 3 April 1795 (14 Germ an III) | 1 | 1 | Intermède |
| La Pauvre Femme | Dalayrac and Marsollier | 8 April 1795 (19 Germ an III) | 26 | 51 (→1797) | Comédie mêlée de chants |
| Adèle et Dorsan | Dalayrac and Marsollier | 27 April 1795 (8 Flor an III) | 18 | 46 (→1805) | Opéra / Comédie mise en musique |
| La Supercherie par amour ou le Fils supposé | Jadin and d'Avrigny | 12 May 1795 (23 Flor an III) | 17 | 36 (→1797) | Comédie mêlée de chants |
| Le Nouveau Don Quichotte | Champein and de Monvel | 14 June 1795 (26 Prair an III) | 12 | 20 (→1805) | Opéra bouffon / Opéra |
| Le Brigand | Kreutzer and Hoffman | 25 July 1795 (7 Therm an III) | 11 | 11 | Drame mêlée d'ariettes |
| La Caverne | Méhul and Forgeot | 5 Dec 1795 (14 Frim an IV) | 8 | 20 (→1796) | Comédie mise en musique |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Le Mariage de la Veille | Jadin and d'Avrigny | 2 Jan 1796 (12 Niv an IV) | 21 | 21 | Comédie |
| Le Jockei | Solié and Hoffman | 6 Jan 1796 (16 Niv an IV) | 41 | 93 (→1807) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes / Opéra |
| La Famille américaine | Dalayrac and Bouilly | 20 Feb 1796 (1 Vent an IV) | 21 | 28 (→1800) | Comédie mêlée de chants |
| Le Négociant de Boston | Jadin and d'Avrigny, Dejaure | 23 March 1796 (3 Germ an IV) | 2 | 2 | Comédie mêlée de musique |
| Le Secret | Solié and Hoffman | 20 April 1796 (1 Flor an IV) | 36 | 133 (→1824) | Comédie mêlée de musique / Opéra |
| Imogène ou la Gageure indiscrète | Kreutzer and Dejaure | 27 April 1796 (8 Flor an IV) | 4 | 4 | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Les Rendez-vous espagnols | Fay and Coffin-Rony | 10 June 1796 (22 Prair an IV) | 3 | 3 | Comédie |
| Marianne ou l'Amour maternel | Dalayrac and Marsollier | 7 July 1796 (19 Mess an IV) | 22 | 56 (→1825) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes / Comédie mise en musique |
| Les Deux lettres | Jadin and Delrieu | 4 Aug 1796 (17 Therm an IV) | 2 | 2 | Comédie |
| Bélisaire | Philidor and Dantilly | 3 Oct 1796 (12 Vend an V) | 10 | 10 | Opéra héroïque |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Christophe et Jérôme ou la Ferme hospitalière | Berton and de Favières | 26 Oct 1796 (5 Brum an V) | 1 | 1 | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Azeline | Solié and Hoffman | 5 Dec 1796 (15 Frim an V) | 8 | 28 (→1799) | Comédie mêlée de musique |
| Lisbeth | Grétry and de Favières | 10 Jan 1797 (21 Niv an V) | 28 | 52 (→1814) | Drame-lyrique |
| Ponce de Léon | Berton | 4 March 1797 (14 Vent an V) | 15 | 34 (→1807) | Opéra bouffon |
| Volécour ou un tour de page | Devienne and de Favières | 22 March 1797 (3 Germ an V) | 3 | 3 | Comédie |
| Zélia ou le Mari à deux femmes | Deshayes and Dubuisson | 4 April 1797 (15 Germ an V) | 5 | 5 | Drame mêlée de musique |
| Le Jeune Henri | Méhul and Bouilly | 1 May 1797 (12 Flor an V) | 1 | 1 | Opéra-comique |
| La Maison isolée ou le Vieillard des Vosges | Dalayrac and Marsollier | 11 May 1797 (22 Flor an V) | 17 | 44 (→1831) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes / Comédie mise en musique |
| Le Dénouement inattendu | Berton and Joigny | 10 Nov 1797 (20 Brum an VI) | 1 | 1 | Opéra-comique |
| Le Pari ou Mombreuil et Merville | Boieldieu and Longchamps | 15 Dec 1797 (25 Frim an VI) | 3 | 3 | Opéra-comique |
| Gulnare ou l'Esclave persane | Dalayrac and Marsollier | 30 Dec 1797 | 1 | 52 (→1830) | Comédie mêlée |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | (10 Niv an VI) | | | d'ariettes / Comédie mise en musique |
| Amélie | Louet and Desfontaines | 11 Jan 1798 (22 Niv an VI) | 1 | 1 | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Le Prisonnier ou la Ressemblance | Della Maria and Pineu-Duval | 29 Jan 1798 (10 Pluv an VI) | 61 | 65 (→1839) | Comédie mêlée de chants / Opéra |
| Primerose | Dalayrac and de Favières, de Vindé | 7 March 1798 (17 Vent an VI) | 9 | 9 | Opéra |
| Zoraïme et Zulnar | Boieldieu and de Saint-Just | 10 May 1798 (21 Flor an VI) | 30 | 38 (→1824) | Opéra |
| Jacquot ou l'École des mères | Della Maria and Després, de Lisle | 28 May 1798 (9 Prair an VI) | 5 | 5 | Comédie-lyrique |
| L'Opéra-comique | Della Maria and de Séygur, Dupaty | 9 July 1798 (21 Mess an VI) | 31 | 63 (→1839) | Opéra-comique / Opéra-comique mêlée d'ariettes |
| Le Rendez-vous supposé ou le Souper de famille | Berton and Pujoulx | 5 Aug 1798 (18 Therm an VI) | 6 | 12 (→1799) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| La Dot de Suzette | Boieldieu and Dejaure | 5 Sept 1798 (19 Fruc an VI) | 1 | 1 | Comédie mêlée de musique |
| La Château de Montenero (also known as 'Léon ou la | Dalayrac and Hoffman | 15 Oct 1798 (24 Vend an VII) | 19 | 45 (→1822) | Comédie |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Château de Montenero') | | | | | |
| Le Cabriolet Jaune ou le Phénix d'Angoulême | Tarchi and de Ségur | 6 Nov 1798 (16 Brum an VII) | 6 | 8 (→1802) | Opéra bouffon / Opéra |
| La Femme de 45 ans | Solié and Hoffman | 19 Nov 1798 (29 Brum an VII) | 1 | 1 | Comédie mêlée de musique |
| L'Oncle valet | Della Maria and Pineu-Duval | 8 Dec 1798 (18 Frim an VII) | 8 | 30 (→1811) | Comédie mêlée de chants / Opéra |
| Élisca ou l'Amour maternel | (Grétry and de Favières) | 1 Jan 1799 (12 Niv an VII) | 21 | 21 | Drame-lyrique mêlée d'ariettes |
| Le Rêve | Gresnick and Étienne | 27 Jan 1799 (8 Pluv an VII) | 15 | 15 | Opéra-comique |
| Adolphe et Clara ou les Deux prisonniers | Dalayrac and Marsollier | 10 Feb 1799 (22 Pluv an VII) | 72 | 72 (→1853) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes |
| Roger ou le Page | Dalayrac and de Favières, Marsollier | 10 March 1799 (20 Vent an VII) | 8 | 8 | Opéra |
| Montano et Stephanie | Berton and Dejaure | 15 April 1799 (26 Germ an VII) | 24 | 24 (→1827) | Opéra |
| Le Trente et quarante ou le Portrait | Tarchi and Pineu-Duval | 6 May 1799 (17 Flor an VII) | 41 | 41 (→1813) | Comédie avec ariettes / Opéra |
| Le Général suédois | Tarchi and de Monvel | 23 May 1799 (4 Prair an VII) | 3 | 3 | Opéra-comique |
| Le Chapitre second | Solié and Dupaty | 17 June 1799 | 22 | 22 (→1810) | Comédie mêlée |

| | | (29 Prair an VII) | | | d'ariettes / Opéra-comique |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fanny Morna ou l'Écossaise | Persius and de Favières | 22 Aug 1799 (5 Fruc an VII) | 12 | 12 (→1803) | Drame-lyrique mêlée d'ariettes |
| L'Amour bizarre ou les Projets dérangés | Berton and Lesur | 30 Aug 1799 (13 Fruc an VII) | 2 | 2 | Opéra |
| Laure ou l'Actrice chez elle | Dalayrac and Marsollier | 27 Sept 1799 (5 Vend an VIII) | 9 | 9 | Comédie |
| Ariodant | Méhul and Hoffman | 11 Oct 1799 (19 Vend an VIII) | 24 | 24 (→1806) | Drame mêlée de musique / Opéra |
| La Maison du Marais ou Trois ans d'absence | Della Maria and Pineu-Duval | 8 Nov 1799 (17 Brum an VIII) | 4 | 4 | Comédie mêlée de chants |
| Les Mariniers de Saint-Cloud | Sewrin (mus. vaudevilles) | 13 Nov 1799 (22 Brum an VIII) | 2 | 2 | Impromptu |
| La Dame voilée ou l'Adresse et l'amour | Mengozzi and de Ségur | 28 Nov 1799 (7 Frim an VIII) | 7 | 7 (→1800) | Opéra |
| Le Délire ou les Suites d'une erreur | Berton and Saint-Cyr | 7 Dec 1799 (16 Frim an VIII) | 12 | 12 (→1843) | Comédie mêlée d'ariettes / Opéra |

# Appendix B: Original French Texts (Quotations)

### Introduction

(p.10) 1. J'ai cru qu'il serait ridicule de traiter sérieusement l'histoire de l'Opéra Comique et de faire une discussion raisonnée d'une genre qui ne l'est pas ; je n'ai donc voulu procurer dans celui-ci qu'une lecture de simple amusement et propre à délasser de plus sérieuses que fournit abondamment ce siècle… (Desboulmiers, *Histoire du théâtre de l'opéra comique*, vol. 1, 1)

(p.24) 52. une puissance reduite en acte, *potentia in actum redacta*… l'impulsion qui nous porte vers ces objets, ou nous en éloigne. (Fouquet, "Sensibilité, Sentiment", 15:38)

(p. 24) 53. La sensibilité est dans le corps vivant, une propriété qu'ont certaines parties de percevoir les impressions des objets externes, & de produire en conséquence des mouvemens proportionnés au degré d'intensité de cette perception. (Fouquet, "Sensibilité, Sentiment", 15:38)

(p. 33) 91. la censure et la propagande révolutionnaire au théâtre ont sévi sur [le] public. (Nadeau, "La politique culturelle de l'An II; les infortunes de la propaganda révolutionnaire au théâtre", 74)

(p. 37) 107. la sensibilité et du goût français en cette époque où tout un monde chavire et où l'on pressent déjà les grands bouleversements futurs. (Mongrédien, "Les Mémoires ou essais sur la musique : un compositeur à l'écoute de lui-même", 26-27)

### Chapter I

(p. 42) 1. toutes les libertés se tiennent, et sont également dangereuses. La liberté de la Musique suppose celle de sentir, la liberté de sentir entraîne celle de penser, la liberté de penser celle d'agir, et la liberté d'agir est la ruine des États. Conservons donc l'Opéra tel qu'il est, si nous avons envie de conserver le Royaume… (d'Alembert, "De la liberté en musique", 397)

(pp. 45-46) 7. [La sensibilité est] la faculté de sentir, le principe sensitif, ou le sentiment même des parties, la base et l'agent conservateur de la vie, l'animalité

par excellence, le plus beau, le plus singulier phénomène de la nature, etc. La sensibilité est dans le corps vivant, une propriété qu'ont certaines parties de percevoir les impressions des objets externes, et de produire en conséquence des mouvemens proportionnés au degré d'intensité de cette perception. (Fouquet, "Sensibilité, Sentiment", 15:38)

(p. 46) 11. Les idées occupent l'Esprit, les sentimens interessent le Cœur, les idées nous amusent, elles exercent l'attention, et quelquefois la fatiguent, suivant qu'elles sont plus ou moins composées, et plus ou moins combinées entr'elles ; mais les sentimens nous dominent, ils s'emparent de nous, ils décident de notre sort et nous rendent heureux ou malhereux, selon qu'ils sont doux ou fâcheux, agréables ou désagréables. (Crousaz, *Traité du beau*, 8)

(p. 47) 16. Les mouvemens des nerfs portent dans l'ame une vive clarté qui la fait juger et applaudir ; mais puisque les émotions des sens sont ici ce qu'il y a de plus essentiel, le plaisir pur des mouvemens de l'organe sera un principe qui pourra soutenir des perfections constantes dans les Beaux Arts. (Estève, *L'Esprit des beaux-arts*, 3-4)

(p. 48) 19. La définition la plus générale du goût… est ce qui nous attache à une chose par le sentiment; ce qui n'empêche pas qu'il ne puisse s'appliquer aux choses intellectuelles, dont la connaissance fait tant de plaisir à l'âme.... L'âme connaît par ses idées et par ses sentimens ; car, quoique nous opposions l'idée au sentiment, cependant lorsqu'elle voit une chose elle la sent ; et il n'y a point de choses si intellectuelles qu'elle ne voie ou qu'elle ne croie voir, et par conséquent qu'elle ne sente. (Montesquieu, *Essai sur le goût*, 65)

(p. 49) 22. Lorsque nous voulons nous empêcher de rire, notre rire redouble… lorsqu'elle nous frappe subitement, peut exciter une certaine joie dans notre âme, et nous faire rire… Si note âme la regarde comme un malheur dans la personne qui la possède… elle peut exciter la pitié ; si elle la regarde avec l'idée de ce qui peut nous nuire… elle la regarde avec une sentiment d'aversion. (Montesquieu, *Essai sur le goût*, 64)

(p. 50) 25. C'est principalement sur les hommes plus susceptibles des différentes impressions, et plus capables de sentir le plaisir qu'excite la Musique, qu'elle opère de plus grands prodiges, soit en faisant naître et animant les passions, soit en produisant sur le corps des changemens analogues à ceux qu'elle opère sur les corps bruts. La musique des anciens plus simple, plus imitative, étoit plus pathétique et plus efficace; ils s'attachoient plus à remuer le cœur, à émouvoir les

passions, qu'à satisfaire l'esprit et inspirer du plaisir… Ils avoient distingué deux airs principaux, dont l'un, appelé phrygien, avoit le pouvoir d'exciter la fureur, la colère, d'animer le courage, etc. l'autre, connu sous le nom d'air dorique (modus doricus), inspiroit les passions opposées, et ramenoit à un état plus tranquille les esprits agités. (Chambaud, “Musique, effets de la”, 10:905)

(p. 50) 26. exciter dans l’ame les mouvemens les plus capables de ravir toutes les faculties. (André, *Essai sur le beau*, 123)

(p. 51) 27. Il y a des sons qui ont avec notre cœur une secrette [sic] intelligence, que nous ne pouvons méconnoitre : des sons vifs, qui nous inspirent du courage ; des sons languissans, qui nous amollissent ; des sons rians, qui nous égaient ; des sons dolens, qui nous attrisent… L’amour et la haine, le desir et la crainte, la colère et la pitié, l’espérance et le désespoir, admiration, terreur, audace, autant que nous avons de passions différentes, autant de sons dans la Nature pour les exprimer et pour les imprimer. (André, *Essai sur le beau*, 147)

(p. 53) 35. C’est par les différens sons de la voix que les hommes ont dû exprimer d'abord leurs différentes sensations. La nature leur donna les sons de la voix, pour peindre à l'extérieur les sentimens de douleur, de joie, de plaisir dont ils étoient intérieurement affectés, ainsi que les desirs et les besoins dont ils étoient pressés. La formation des mots succéda à ce premier langage. L'un fut l'ouvrage de l'instinct, l'autre fut une suite des opérations de l'esprit… Cette espèce de langage, qui est de tous les pays, est aussi entendu par tous les hommes, parce qu'il est celui de la nature. Lorsque les enfans viennent à exprimer leurs sensations par des mots, ils ne sont entendus que des gens d'une même langue, parce que les mots sont de convention… Ces sentimens qui remuent et agitent l'âme d'une manière vive, dûrent nécessairement se peindre dans le chant avec plus de vivacité que les sensations ordinaires; de-là cette différence que l'on trouve entre le chant du langage commun, et le chant musical… Le chant consacré par la nature pour nous distraire de nos peines, ou pour adoucir le sentiment de nos fatigues, et trouvé pour exprimer la joie, servit bientôt après pour célébrer les actions de grâces que les hommes rendirent à la Divinité; et une fois établi pour cet usage, il passa rapidement dans les fêtes publiques, dans les triomphes, et dans les festins, etc. La reconnoissance l'avoit employé pour rendre hommage à l'Être suprême; la flatterie le fit servir à la louange des chefs des nations, et l'amour à l'expression de la tendresse. (Rousseau, “Chant”, 3:141)

(p. 56) 48. Je soumets ces idées sur l'usage qu'on pourroit faire du Chant, au jugement, à la conduite, à la sagacité de nos sçavans Compositeurs; qu'ils ayent la noble ambition d'être plus que sçavans; qu'ils parviennent à nous inspirer des mœurs par les loix du plaisir… qu'ils renouvellent en nos jours les effets admirables de la Musique des premiers âges: pour les opérer, les anciens ne se servoient ni de calculs, ni de définitions; ils étoient peut-être moins instruits des regles de l'harmonie; mais ils suivoient la mélodie naturelle, et adoucissoient les Tigres et les Lions. (Mézières, *Effets de l'air sur le corps humain,* 41-42)

(p. 56) 49. Toutes ces merveilles acquerront néanmoins quelques degrés de vraisemblance, si l'on fait réflexion premièrement que ces effets étoient dus en partie à l'éloquençe des paroles mêmes, fortifiée par le chant… Nous ne sommes donc pas fondés à douter entièrement des effets attribués à la Musique des Anciens… Toutes les Loix divines et civiles, les exhortations à la vertu, les Sciences divines et humaines, les vies et les actions des hommes illustres étoient écrites en vers, qui se chantoient publiquement, en chœur, au son des instrumens, parce qu'on avoit jugé ce moyen le plus efficace, pour imprimer les sentimens de morale dans l'esprit des hommes. (d'Apligny, *Traité sur la musique*, 10-12)

(p. 58) 54. En musique, le plaisir de la sensation dépend d'une disposition particulière, non-seulement de l'oreille, mais de tout le système des nerfs. S'il y a des têtes sonnantes, il y a aussi des corps que j'appellerais volontiers harmoniques ; des hommes en qui les toutes les fibres oscillent avec tant de promptitude et de vivacité, que, sur l'expérience des mouvements violents que l'harmonie leur cause, ils sentent la possibilité de mouvements plus violents encore, et atteignant à l'idée d'une sorte de musique qui les ferait mourir de plaisir. Alors leur existence leur paraît comme attachée à une seule fibre tendue, qu'une vibration trop forte peut rompre…. Ils ressemblent à ces âmes faibles qui ne peuvent entendre l'histoire d'un malheureux sans lui donner des larmes, et pour qui il n'y a point de tragédies mauvaises. (Diderot "Lettre sur les sourds et muets", 408)

(pp. 59-60) 60. Dans Athènes, les jeunes gens donnaient presque tous dix à douze ans à l'étude de la musique; et un musicien n'ayant pour auditeurs et pour juges que des musiciens, une morceau sublime devait naturellement jeter toute une assemblée dans la même frénésie dont sont agités ceux qui font exécuter leurs ouvrages dans nos concerts. Mais il est de la nature de tout enthousiasme de se communiquer et de s'accroître par le nombre des enthousiastes. Les hommes ont

alors une action réciproque les uns sur les autres, par l'image énergique et vivante qu'ils s'offrent tous de la passion dont chacun d'eux est transporté ; de là cette joie insensée de nos fêtes publiques, la fureur de nos émeutes populaires, et les effets surprenants de la musique chez les Anciens; effets que le quatrième acte de Zoroastre eût renouvelés parmi nous, si notre parterre eût été rempli d'un peuple aussi musicien et aussi sensible que la jeunesse athénienne. (Diderot "Lettre sur les sourds et muets", 59-60)

(p. 61) 63. jugeons-en par les instrumens dont ils avoient l'usage, et l'on aura lieu de présumer qu'elle devoit être inférieure à la nôtre. (Condillac, *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*, vol. 2, 77)

(p. 62) 64. On n'avoit point trouvé de moyen plus efficace, pour graver dans l'esprit des hommes les principes de la morale, et la connoissance de leurs devoirs. (Rousseau, "Musique", 10:899)

(p. 63) 71. C'est donc au passions fortes qu'on doit l'invention et les merveilles des arts: elles doivent donc être comme le genre productif de l'esprit, et le resort puissant qui porte les hommes aux grands actions. (Hélvetius, *De l'esprit*, 297)

(p. 66) 84. Ces hommes si bien parés, bien exercés au ton de la galanterie et aux accens de la passion, n'abuseront ils jamais de cet art pour séduire de jeunes personnes ? ...L'orateur, le Prédicateur, pourra-t-on me dire encore, paient de leur personne ainsi que la Comédien. La différence est très grande. Quand l'Orateur se montre, c'est pour parler et non pour se donner en spectacle : il ne représente que lui-même… Mais un Comédien sur la Scène, étalant d'autres sentimens que les siens, ne disant que ce qu'on lui fait dire, représentant souvent un être chimérique y s'anéantit, pour ainsi dire, s'annule avec fon héros… c'est pour être le jouet des Spectateurs. (Rousseau, *J.J. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève à M.d'Alembert*, 145)

(p. 68) 92. Les impressions vives et touchantes dont nous prenons l'habitude et qui reviennent si souvent, sont-elles propres à modérer nos sentimens au besoin ? …Ne sait on pas que toutes les passions sont sœurs, qu'une seule suffit pour en exciter mille, et que les combattre l'une par l'autre n'est qu'un moyen de rendre le cœur plus sensible à toutes ? Le seul instrument qui serve à les purger est la raison, et… la raison n'avoit nul effet au Théâtre. (Rousseau, *J.J. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève à M.d'Alembert*, 23-24)

(p. 68) 93. Qu'on n'attribue donc pas au Théâtre le pouvoir de changer des sentimens ni des mœurs qu'il ne peut que suivre et embellir. Un Auteur qui voudroir heurter le goût général, composeroit bientôt pour lui seul. Quand Molière corrigea la Scène comique, il attaqua des modes, des ridicules ; mais il ne choqua pas pour cela le goût de public, il le suivit ou le développa, comme fit aussi Corneille de son côté… Il s'ensuit de ces premières observations, que l'effet général du Spectacle est de renforcer le caractère national, et d'augmenter les inclinations naturelles, et de donner une nouvelle énergie à toutes les passions. En ce sens il sembleroit que cet effet, se bornant à charger et non changer les mœurs établies, la Comédie seroit bon aux bons et mauvaise aux méchans. (Rousseau, *J.J. Rousseau, citoyen de Genève à M.d'Alembert*, 19-22)

(p. 70) 100. la raison ayant à combattre en nous des passions qui étouffent sa voix, emprunte le secours du théâtre pour imprimer plus profondément dans notre âme les vérités que nous avons besoin d'apprendre. Si ces vérités glissent sur les scélérats décidés, elles trouvent dans le cœur des autres une entrée plus facile; elles s'y fortifient quand elles y étoient déjà gravées; incapables peut-être de ramener les hommes perdus, elles sont au moins propres à empêcher les autres de se perdre… L'effet de la morale du théâtre est donc moins d'opérer un changement subit dans les cœurs corrompus, que de prémunir contre le vice les âmes foibles par l'exercice des sentimens honnêtes, et d'affermir dans ces mêmes sentimens les âmes vertueuses…. Ces mouvemens sont des secousses par lesquelles le sentiment de la vertu a besoin d'être réveillé dans nous; c'est un feu qu'il faut de tems en tems ranimer et nourrir pour l'empêcher de s'éteindre. (d'Alembert, "Lettre de M. d'Alembert à M. Rousseau", 41-42)

(p. 71) 103. Parmi les instrumens à l'aide desquels on peut agir sur les mœurs, M. Rousseau a omis le plus puissant, qui est l'habitude. Des affections répétées naissent les inclinations, et celles-ci décidées au bien ou au mal, constituent les mœurs bonnes ou mauvaises. Tel est l'infaillible effet des émotions que le théâtre nous cause : quelque passagères qu'elles soient, il en reste au moins une faible empreinte, et les mêmes traces approfondies, se gravent si avant dans l'âme, qu'elles lui deviennent comme naturelles. (Marmontel, "Apologie du Théâtre", 748)

(pp. 74-75) 94. Les spectacles y sont utiles, non pour perfectionner le goût, quand l'honnêté est perdue, mais pour encourager l'honnêteté même par des exemples vertueux et publiquement applaudis ; non pour couvrir d'un vernis de procédés la laideur du vice, mais faire sentir la honte et la bassesse du vice, et développer

dans les âmes le germe naturel des vertus ; non pour empêcher que les mauvaises mœurs ne dégénèrent en brigandage, mais pour y répandre et perpétuer les bonnes, par la communication progressive des saines idées et l'impression habituelle des sentimens vertueux ; en un mot, pour cultiver et nourrir le goût du vrai, de l'honnête et du beau moral, qui, quoi qu'on en dise, est encore en vénération parmi nous. (Marmontel, "Apologie du Théâtre", 793)

### Chapter II

(p. 76) 1. Je soutiendrai toujours… que le Théatre François, épuré comme il l'est aujourd'hui, est une école agréable des mœurs, où la jeunesse trouve des leçons continuelles de sagesse, d'honneur et de vertu, dont elle tireroit le plus grand parti, si elle y faisoit un peu plus d'attention… (Mouhy, *Les Dangers des spectacles*, vol. 1, 1)

(p. 78) 8. Rousseau, initiateur du nouvel essor de l'opéra-comique en France par Le Devin du village, ne partage cependant pas les vues des compositeurs qu'il a directement ou indirectement inspirés. Les raisons de cet rejet tiennent à ce qu'il considère la langue française comme impropre au chant et qu'il néglige la pantomime, celle-ci-rompant l'unité de langage, essentielle à l'opéra… Il s'oppose ainsi au mouvement d'adaptation de la musique italienne, dans la critique qu'il fait de Dauvergne, car selon Rousseau, la langue française, dépourvue d'accent, ne saurait se plier aux inflexions de la musique ultramontaine. De même, il critique le mélange de langues, que l'on rencontre dans l'opéra-comique de la première moitié du siècle. (Rebejkow, "Rousseau et l'opéra-comique: les raisons d'un rejet", 184)

(p. 80) 16. Qui ne sent combien la musique instrumentale est éloignée de cette ame et de cette énergie?… Pour savoir ce que veulent dire tous ces fatras de sonates dont nous sommes accablés, il faudroit faire comme ce peintre grossier qui étoit obligé d'écrire au-dessous de ses figures, c'est un homme, c'est un arbre, c'est un boeuf. (Rousseau, "Sonate", 15:348)

(p. 82) 22. La premiere règle que doit observer le poëte, en traitant les sujets qu'il a choisis, est de n'y rien insérer qui soit contre la vraisemblance. Un fait vraisemblable est un fait possible dans les circonstances où on le met sur la scène. (Jaucourt, "Vraisemblance (Poésie)", 17:484)

(pp. 88-89) 45. Tout le monde sait que la comédie est l'art d'amuser utilement les hommes par une peinture naïve et animé de leurs passions, de leurs intrigues et de leurs ridicules. Son but chez toutes les nations est de corriger les mœurs d'une manière agréable. (Favart, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, 10-11)

(p. 89) 45. La Comédie d'un air enjoué, nous présente un tableau naïf de nos ridicules… Nos faiblesses, nos folies mises en action, nous font rire de nos propres égaremens. (Nougaret, *De l'Art du Théâtre en général*, 12)

(p. 89) 47. La Comédie nous fait passer quelques heures dans des plaisirs honnêtes ; elle a l'art de nous faire préférer un amusement agréable et utile, aux désordres inséparables du jeu, et aux malheurs qui suivent le libertinage… La Comédie est l'école des hommes d'une classe ordinaire, ou pour mieux dire l'image de ce qui se passe dans les moindres actions de la vie ; et la Tragédie instruit les Particuliers et les Rois. (Marmontel, *Eléments de littérature*, vol. 2, 138-139)

(p. 90) 48. L'effet du Comique résulte de la comparaison qu'on fait, même sans s'en apercevoir, de ses mœurs avec les mœurs qu'on voit tourner en ridicule, et suppose, entre le spectateur et le personnage visible, une différence avantageuse pour le premier. Il arrive pourtant quelquefois que l'on rit de sa propre image… On se juge, on se condamne, on se plaisante, comme un tiers ; et l'amour-propre y trouve son compte. (Marmontel, *Eléments de littérature*, vol. 2, 169)

(p. 92) 57. Le parterre de la comédie est le seul endroit où les larmes de l'homme vertueux et du méchant soient confondues. Là, le méchant s'irrite contre des injustices qu'il aurait commises ; compatit à des maux qu'il aurait occasionnés, et s'indigne contre un homme de son propre caractère. Mais l'impression est reçue ; elle demeure en nous, malgré nous ; et le méchant sort de sa loge, moins disposé à faire le mal, que s'il eût été gourmandé par un orateur sévère et dur. (Diderot, "De la Poésie dramatique", 312)

(p. 94) 63. C'est l'avantage du genre sérieux, que, placé entre les deux autres, il a des ressources, soit qu'il s'élève, soit qu'il descende… Toutes les nuances du comique sont comprises entre ce genre même et le genre sérieux; et toutes celles du tragique entre le genre sérieux et la tragédie. Le burlesque et le merveilleux sont également hors de la nature; on n'en peut rien emprunter qui ne gâte. (Diderot "Troisième entretien sur Le Fils naturel", 135-136)

(p. 94) 65. On distingue dans tout objet moral, un milieu et deux extrêmes. Il semble donc que, toute action dramatique étant un objet moral, il devrait y avoir un genre moyen et deux genres êxtremes. Nous avons ceux-ci ; c'est la comédie et la tragédie : mais l'homme n'est pas toujours dans la douleur ou dans la joie. (Diderot "Troisième entretien sur Le Fils naturel", 134)

(p. 99) 86. où les enfans viendroient s'instruire, en voyant mis en action tous les évènemens qui ont illustré ou flétri la gloire de leur Nation… [Une] école où le fils d'un Pair et un Artisan, assis auprès l'un de l'autre, s'accoutumeroient à juger l'es hommes, à les voir démasqués par la Vérité aux yeux de la Postérité ; enfin à connoître les vertus véritables de tous les états et de tous les âges. (du Rozoi, *Dissertation sur le drame lyrique*, 37-38)

(pp. 99-100) 89. Cet amour inspire par la nature… l'estime, la bienveillance, la douce et tendre intimité ; d'où résulte la complaisance de soi-même dans un objet de prédilection auquel on attache son être. Quand l'affection est mutuelle… c'est le plus parfait accord qui puisse régner entre deux êtres sensibles ; c'est enfin, s'il permis de le dire, la transfusion et la coexistence de deux âmes. (Marmontel, *Contes moraux*, vol. 1, 342)

(p. 102) 96. Le sagesse du plan, le choix et la tenuë des caractères, le serveteur ad imum [observing things in their deepest sense], la création des situations les plus propres à mettre en jeu l'ame des personnages; cet art qui ne s'apprend plus, cet art qui donne aux incidens l'ensemble, le ton, et les accords de la nature et du cas fortuit, voilà les points sur lesquels j'appréhendois une juste critique, et sur lesquels il faut juger un Ouvrage de Théâtre; le style vient ensuite. (Charlton, "Sedaine's Prefaces: Pretexts for a New Musical Drama", 239)

(p.102) 97. On m'a fait un reproche… celui d'avoir employé des Scènes indécentes… moi qui, même à l'Opéra Comique, ai cherché à laisser dans l'esprit des Auditeurs des idées de morale et d'instruction. (Charlton, "Sedaine's Prefaces: Pretexts for a New Musical Drama", 239)

(pp. 102-103) 98. J'avois pris la precaution de faire announcer et afficher les moeurs du bon vieux tems; cela ne m'a pas réussi, 'auditeur n'a pas voulu se transporter au douzième siècle". (Charlton, "Sedaine's Prefaces: Pretexts for a New Musical Drama", 248)

(p. 104) 104. M. Sedaine n'avait pas sans doute formé le projet de le renverser; en travaillant dans ce genre, il comptait vraisemblablement suivre la route tracée

par ses prédécesseurs; mais son talent lui en ouvrait une nouvelle… Nous avons de lui une demi-douzaine d'opéras-comiques charmants, pleins de naïveté, de caractère, d'originalité et force comique. (Grimm, *Correspondance littéraire*, vol. 6, 71)

### Chapter III

(p. 108) 1. On peut user de ces moyens pour rappeler fortement des époques sur lesquelles il est utile de fixer l'attention des peuples, pour nourrir en eux, pour y exciter jusqu'à l'enthousiasme les sentiments généreux de la liberté, de l'indépendance, du dévouement à la patrie ; enfin, pour graver dans les esprits un petit nombre de ces principes qui forment la morale des nations et la politique des hommes libres. (Condorcet, *Cinq mémoires sur l'instruction publique*, 140)

(pp. 112-113) 13. Je crois que la liberté de la presse est la base de la liberté publique, mais il n'en est pas de même du théâtre. Je crois qu'on doit exclure du spectacle, où beaucoup d'hommes se rassemblent et s'électrisent mutuellement, tout ce qui peut tendre à corrompre les mœurs ou l'esprit du gouvernement. Le spectacle est une partie de l'enseignement public qui ne doit pas être livrée à tout le monde, et que l'administration doit surveiller. Il est aisé de donner à la censure théâtrale une forme qui en exclue l'arbitraire et qui la rende toujours juste : ce n'est point une atteinte à la liberté des uns, c'est respect pour la liberté et la sûreté morale des autres ; c'est un petit gène pour les auteurs de ne pouvoir exposer sur la scène, ou les délires de leur imagination, ou les corruptions de leur cœur ; c'est un grand repos pour moi de pouvoir mener ou envoyer mes enfans au spectacle, d'être sûr qu'ils n'y puisseront ni principes dangereux , ni mœurs dépravées. L'Assemblée nationale a pensé autrement que moi. (Bailly, *Mémoires de Bailly*, vol. 2, 286)

(pp. 116-117) 24. Enfin, la révolution était faite par la marche vigoureuse de l'Assemblée dans le mois de juin et de juillet, par la souveraineté nationale reconnue, par le renversement de la Bastille, et par la pris d'armes à Paris et dans tout le royaume; l'Assemblée nationale pouvait tout faire et tout finir par la sagesse ; elle avait assez de force pour n'avoir pas besoin d'exagérer l'opinion. Un législateur sage, un administrateur habile doit la diriger, c'est-à-dire la renforcer pour qu'elle ne plie pas, la modérer pour qu'elle ne renverse pas. Je voulais ici qu'on respectât la monarchie tempérée, au moment où l'Assemblée allait la décréter ; on avait assez fait contre la monarchie arbitraire. Mais beaucoup de

gens qui se cachaient alors, ne voulaient pas en rester là : beaucoup de partis existaient déjà, les ennemies de la constitution future, qui semaient le désordre pour l'empêcher ; les ennemies de la monarchie, qui voulaient la rendre odieuse pour la détruire… tous agissaient par des vues différentes et dans la même sens. (Bailly, *Mémoires de Bailly*, vol. 2, 285)

(p. 117) 26. l'amour des rois, et surtout celui de Louis XVI, étant dans tous les cœurs française, je pensais qu'il n'était pas d'une bonne politique d'essayer de lui faire des ennemies, au risque d'exciter un intérêt plus vif et de multiplier, dans un bien plus grand nombre, ses partisans et ses défenseurs ; je pensais encore que, près de prononcer le sort du clergé, il fallait le faire tranquillement et avec équité, et ne pas exposer sur la scène un cardinal bénissant des poignards et encourageant des assassins, pour aigrir les ressentimens et mettre la haine à la place de la justice.

(p. 121) 32. Le théâtre est d'une influence immense sur les mœurs générales. Il fut long-tems une école d'adulation, de fadeur et de libertinage : il faut en faire une école de vertu et de liberté. Les hommes n'y recevront plus de ces molles impressions qui les dénaturent. Ils deviendront meilleurs et plus dignes de votre amour : ils redeviendront des hommes… Pères des familles, laissez fréquenter à vos enfans ces spectacles sévères. Avec le respect des lois et de la morale, ils y puiseront le goût de notre histoire, étrangement négligée dans les collèges. Et vous, enfans, nation future, espérance de la patrie et d'un siècle qui n'est pas encore, vous ne serez point les hommes des anciens préjugés et de l'ancien esclavage ; vous serez les hommes de la liberté nouvelle. (Chénier, "Epître dédicatoire à la Nation française", 7)

(pp. 121-122) 33. L'influence du Théâtre sur les mœurs, n'a pas besoin d'être prouvée, puisqu'elle est indispensable… dans une belle pièce de Théâtre, le plaisir amène le spectateur à l'instruction sans qu'il s'en s'apperçoive; ou qu'il y puisse résister. L'homme est naturellement sensible. Le poète dramatique, en peignent les passions, dirige celles du spectateur. Un sourire qui nous échappe en écoutant une pièce comique, ou dans l'éloquente tragédie, des pleurs que nous sentons couler de nos yeux, suffisent pour nous faire sentir une vérité, que l'auteur d'un traité de moral nous auroit longuement démontrée. Ajoutez que notre sensibilité et même nos lumières sont infiniment augmentés par celles de nos semblables qui nous environnent. Un livre dispersé dans les Cabinets parvient à faire lentement une multitude d'impressions différentes, mais isolée, mais presque

toujours exemptes d'enthousiasme. La sensation que fait éprouver à deux mille personnes rassemblées au Théâtre François, la représentation d'un excellent ouvrage dramatique, est rapide, ardente, unanime. (Chénier, *De la liberté du théâtre en France*, 4-5)

(p. 125) 40. L'on doit établir à des jours réglés des fêtes nationales, les attacher à des époques historiques. Il y en aurait de générales et de particulières. Une ville, dont les citoyens se seraient distingués dans une occasion mémorable, en consacrerait l'anniversaire par une fête ; la nation célébrerait celles où elle a pu agir tout entière ; celles-ci ne pourraient dater que du moment de sa liberté… Une ville pourrait célébrer la naissance d'un homme illustre qui a reçu la vie dans ses murs, ou les actions généreuses de ses citoyens. Il y a de grands hommes et de belles actions sous toutes les constitutions. Repousser l'ennemi des remparts de sa ville, se dévouer pour le salut de sa contrée, quand même on n'a pas de patrie, de telles actions peuvent être encore des modèles d'héroïsme. (Condorcet, *Cinq mémoires sur l'instruction publique*, 141)

(p. 125) 41. Sans doute, une tragédie compliquée, remplie des maximes ingénieuses, offrant les développements de toutes les nuances, de toutes les finesses du sentiment, exigeant une attention soutenue, une intelligence parfaite de tous les mots… sans doute une tragédie de ce genre ne conviendrait pas à ces spectacles ; mais des pièces simples, où il y aurait plus d'actions que de paroles… où les pensées seraient fortes, où les passions seraient peintes à grands traits, pourraient y être entendues ; et de la réunion de la pantomime à l'art dramatique naîtrait un nouvel art destiné à ces nobles divertissements. (Condorcet, *Cinq mémoires sur l'instruction publique*, 141-142)

(p. 128) 49. Dans les institutions d'une nation libre, tout doit tendre à l'égalité, non seulement parce qu'elle est aussi un droit des hommes, mais parce que le maintien de l'ordre et de la paix l'ordonne impérieusement. (Condorcet, *Cinq mémoires sur l'instruction publique*, 50)

(p. 130) 56. On peut user de ces moyens pour rappeler fortement des époques sur lesquelles il est utile de fixer l'attention des peuples pour nourrir en eux, pour y exciter jusqu'à l'enthousiasme les sentiments généreux de la liberté, de l'indépendance, du dévouement à la patrie ; enfin, pour graver dans les esprits un petit nombre de ces principes qui forment la morale des nations et la politique des hommes libres. (Condorcet, *Cinq mémoires sur l'instruction publique*, 140)

(p. 135) 73. il exprime la sensibilité collective d'une société qui veut 'patriotiser l'univers'. (Bianchi, *La Révolution culturelle de l'an II*, 190)

(p. 136) 74. Ceux qui ont pu observer depuis un demi-siècle les progrès de l'opinion, ont vu quelle a été sur elle l'influence des tragédies de Voltaire ; combien cette foule de maximes philosophiques, répandues dans ses pièces, ou exprimées par des tableaux pathétiques et terribles, ont contribué à dégager l'esprit de la jeunesse des fers d'une éducation servile, à faire penser ceux que la mode dévouait à la frivolité ; combien elles ont donné d'idées philosophiques aux hommes les plus éloignés d'être philosophes. Ainsi, l'on a pu dire, pour la première fois, qu'une nation avait appris à penser, et les Français, longtemps endormis sous le joug d'un double despotisme, ont pu déployer à leur premier réveil une raison plus pure, plus étendue, plus forte que celle même des peoples libres. (Condorcet, Cinq mémoires sur l'instruction publique, 140-141)

(p. 137) 80. avis aux bons sans-culottes pour qu'ils aillent s'instruire à la comédie.

(p. 137) 81. [l'artiste] mettre à son service ses facultés de perception et d'émotion pour faire triompher l'idéal commun. (Trahard, *La Sensibilité révolutionnaire*, 233)

(p. 138) 84. Qu'on établisse dans toutes les grandes communes de la république des spectacles à l'instar des Grecs… alors ces spectacles dominés par la majeure partie de la nation, les muscadins seront forcés de se mettre au rang de la majorité des citoyens. (Schmidt, *Tableaux de la Révolution française*, 135)

(p. 138) 85. Il faut demander à la Convention Nationale, qu'elle décrète que dans toutes les villes de 4,000 habitants, il y aura une salle de spectacle où les élèves des écoles publiques et autres personnes pourrant s'exercer, et ne pourrant néanmoins donner que des pièces sentimentales et dans le sens de la Révolution… Je crois que rien ne serait plus propre à s'instruire le people, à lui faire oublier les singeries des prêtres, et enfin à régénérer les mœurs. (Schmidt, *Tableaux de la Révolution française*, 135)

## Chapter IV

(p. 144) 1. La France s'occupe à se régénérer, et l'instruction seule maintiendra l'œuvre du législateur. Quel art plus que la musique influe sur les mœurs ? Son influence bien dirigée rend aux nations l'énergie ou l'aménité dont elles ont besoin. Déjà affaibli par de longues études, et par une maladie à guérison de laquelle je ne dois plus croire, je présente cet hommage aux Français qui m'ont adopté.

Puisse ce tribut d'une âme libre leur prouver ma reconnaissance! (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, xvi-xviii)

(p. 148) 15. Quand les histoires anciennes nous parlent des prodigues opérés par la musique, je ne les révoque pas même en doute ; elle devait avoir un empire absolu sur des cœurs non corrompus. L'homme de la nature est un ; le caractère de l'homme de nos jours est un peu de tout. La musique des anciens appliquait et conservait scrupuleusement une mélodie, et surtout un rythme pour chaque chose. (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, 502-503)

(p. 151) 29. Consultez le grand livre de la nature; soyez philosophe, si vous voulez être peintre, lisez les bons auteurs qui ont traité des passions et des caractères, ils vous apprendront à connaître le cœur humain, pourvu qu'il y ait au fond du vôtre quelques dispositions qui vous portent vers cette profonde étude. (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, viii)

(p. 152) 30. La musique vocale ne sera jamais bonne, si elle ne copie les vrais accens de la parole… Lorsque j'entends un opéra qui ne me satisfait pas entièrement, je me dis que le compositeur ne comprend point sa langue, je veux dire le langage musical… Il faut donc que le compositeur sache bien sa langue musicale, pour qu'il puisse y adapter des paroles, qu'il doit aussi entendre parfaitement: c'est de l'union de ces deux idiomes que résulte la bonne musique vocale. (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, 285-286)

(p. 152) 33. L'air subtil et pur… semble jetter plus de sérénité dans votre ame, en même-temps, qu'il donne à votre corps plus de légèreté, et semble lui faciliter ta respiration. (Lesueur, *Exposé d'une musique… de la Fête de l'Assomption*, 76)

(p. 153) 35. La musique imite trop peu d'objets, et les imite d'une manière trop indécise pour devoir être considérée comme un art d'imitation. Mais elle est plus : elle est un art de sensation. C'est donc à exciter des sensations et à les déterminer, qu'elle doit employer ses moyens moraux et physiques. Toute espèce de bruit agit physiquement sur nos organes, sans le secours d'aucune opération de l'esprit. Ce bruit, qui les afflige lorsqu'il est violent et indéterminé, devient d'autant plus agréable qu'il est plus harmonique. Les sons qui en résultent, ébranlent nos fibres harmoniquement tendues, comme la percussion d'une corde sonore fait vibrer toutes les cordes voisines montées à l'unisson; ils causent en nous des sensations plus ou moins voluptueuses, en raison composée de leur douceur et de notre sensibilité. (Framery, *Discours couronné par l'institut*, 5)

(p. 154) 38. L'esprit, ainsi que le corps, a besoin d'alimens : toutes les personnes qui ont l'imagination vive sentent le besoin de l'exercer, et il est bien important de leur offrir des objets innocens, dans la crainte qu'elles n'exercent leurs forces trop actives à leur propre détriment et à celui de la société. La musique est l'art qui parle mieux que tout autre à l'imagination. (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, 109)

(pp. 155-156) 45. Pourquoi les anciens philosophes ont-ils tant recommandé l'exercice des sons? Pourquoi ont-ils regardé la musique comme le principe de toute morale ? Pourquoi ont-ils reproché publiquement à Thémistocle de ne point savoir la musique ? Parce qu'ils savaient qu'en rendant l'homme sensible à l'harmonie des sons, c'était établir en lui le principe de l'ordre qui produit le bonheur général. Ils ont saisi la cause pour parvenir aux effets. Ils ont dit : « Si nous te prêchons la sagesse avant que ton âme y soit disposée, nous perdrons notre temps ; mais si par l'harmonie des sons nous établissons l'harmonie entre tes sens, tu te rendras sans combattre. » (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, 274-275)

(p. 157) 49. Une fille, par exemple, assure à sa mère qu'elle ne connaît point l'amour; mais pendant qu'elle affecte l'indifférence par un chant simple et monotone, l'orchestre exprime le tourment de son cœur amoureux. Un nigaud veut-il exprimer son amour, ou son courage? S'il est vraiment animé, il doit avoir les accens des passion; mais l'orchestre, par sa monotonie, nous montera le petit bout d'oreille. (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, 195-196)

(p. 157) 51. en accompagnant, en soutenant, en fortifiant, quelquefois même en contrariant le chant de l'acteur, l'orchestre parle pour la multitude qui prend part à l'événement. Et si l'acteur est seul dans un prison, dans une forêt, et ne doit pas être entendu, alors que fait l'orchestre? - Il vous représente vous, spectateurs, qui devez dire tout ce qu'il dit, si la musique est bien faite. Je sais que vous allez me répondre que vous-mêmes n'êtes pas censés être présens à une action théâtrale; mais l'orchestre n'y est pas plus que vous puisqu'on le cache. Je dirai plus, jamais l'orchestre ne parle que pour fortifier l'expression et vous, spectateurs, vous la contrariez souvent par vos murmures ou vos applaudissemens. Un bis commandé par le parterre détruit souvent l'illusion pendant le quart d'heure qui lui succède. (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, 249-250)

(p. 159) 57. Les instrumens à sons soutenus, les instrumens à vent surtout, sont les plus parfaits, d'autant qu'ils se rapprochent des voix de nature… En écoutant un basson, une clarinette, on croit entendre les plaintes d'un homme ou d'une

femme l'on est presque humilié de retrouver sa voix dans un instrument. (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, 246)

(p. 163) 75. La musique a des avantages que les autres arts n'ont point; elle agit plus directement sur les mœurs. Ses accens énergiques forcissent les âmes trop amolliés ; sa tendre mélodie calme la cruauté de toutes les passions nées [de] l'orgeuil. (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, 413-414)

(p. 163) 80. La France s'occupe à se régénérer, et l'instruction seule maintiendra l'œuvre du législateur. Quel art plus que la musique influe sur les mœurs ? Son influence bien dirigée rend aux nations l'énergie ou l'aménité dont elles ont besoin. Déjà affaibli par de longues études, et par une maladie à guérison de laquelle je ne dois plus croire, je présente cet hommage aux Français qui m'ont adopté. Puisse ce tribut d'une âme libre leur prouver ma reconnaissance! (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, xvi-xviii)

(p. 164) 81. Entre tous les hommes l'artiste fut toujours l'ami le plus chaud de la liberté; l'étude continuelle de la nature le rend tel. L'homme de génie ose même en présence des despotes, annoncer la liberté de son être; il ose braver leur politique, leurs préjugés, et les usages reçus. C'est une tête exaltée, c'est un fou, disent-ils mais il a un grand talent. (Grétry, Mémoires, vol. 3, 4)

(p. 164) 82. Il n'est pas un chef-d'œuvre des arts où les despotes ne trouvent des leçons terribles : lorsqu'un tableau nous représente un roi sur son trône, environné de sa cour qui le félicite d'avoir remporté la victoire sur ses ennemis, le roi sait bien que l'on cherchera partout, dans ce même tableau, le général qui a vaincu pour lui, et qu'ensuite on demandera quel est l'artiste qui a si bien retracé son triomphe. Il n'existe pas un bon livre de science, une bonne pièce de théâtre, un bon tableau, sans morale… La vertu naît donc pour combattre le vice, de même que les arts naissent du luxe, et ne cessent d'en ridiculiser les abus. (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, 4-5)

(p. 165) 84. Supposez une pièce dont le sujet soit attachant, les situations propres à émouvoir ; qu'elle soit semée de propos séditieux, de maximes incendiaires, mais présentés avec talent, avec chaleur, avec énergie; (car sans ces caractères elle n'est plus dangereuse) supposez que l'Auteur antipatriote, possédant l'art de remuer les cœurs, d'entraîner les esprits, ait eu pour but d'ameuter les Citoyens rassemblés contre les lois sacrées de l'Etat, vous qui connoissez ce que peut le délire du moment, et combien il est facile d'égarer la multitude, craignez l'effet de cette première représentation. Elle seule est dangereuse ; l'impression des autres

s'amortirait contre la réflexion. Mais si l'explosion est une fois produite, que feront vos Juges? Ramèneront-ils le calme de la raison dans des âmes séduites, aveuglées, exaltées? Arrêteront-ils les violences auxquelles pourra se livret un peuple entraîné hors de lui ? Serait-il temps de dire : ce malheur n'arrivera plus ; les représentations de cette Pièce fatale seront interdites ? (Framery, *De l'organisation des spectacles de Paris*, 242-243)

(p. 165) 85. C'est donc au Législateur à revoir, à réformer, à completter [sic] ses lois sur les théâtres, et à en confier la garde au Gouvernement, en lui donnant le pouvoir nécessaire pour les faire exécuter… En renversant le despotisme qui pêsoit sur les Théâtres, le Législateur a voulu leur accorder le bienfait de la concurrence, si utile aux Auteurs Dramatiques, qu'elle met à l'abri des injustices et des vexations… si avantageuse au Public lui-même, qui jouit des efforts de chaque Théâtre, pour captiver ses suffrages feux dépens de son rival. (Framery, *Sur les théâtres,* 4)

(p. 166) 86. On veut enfin que les Artistes, considérés comme professeurs de morale, puissent se bien pénétrer de la grandeur de leur ministère, et soient assurés d'être toujours en état de la soutenir. Voilà ce qu'on attend du Gouvernement : voilà ce qu'il s'empressera de faire, aussi-tôt que le Corps Législatif lui en aura donné la faculté. (Framery, *Sur les théâtres*, 13)

(p. 166) 87. C'est vous, Citoyens, c'est la clameur de l'opinion publique qui peut seule articuler des plaintes et faire connoître les dangers. Plus d'une fois c'est du milieu de cette enceinte qu'est parti le premier cri d'allarmes [sic]; plusieurs fois les Législateurs , éveillés à la voix du Lycée des Arts, ont accordé à ses avis une honorable attention. Il s'agit de l'intérêt de toute la France; vous vous ; empresserez d'exprimer ses vœux à ses Représentans. (Framery, *Sur les théâtres*, 13-14)

(pp. 169-170) 97. C'est là que le musicien apprend à interroger les passions, à scruter le cœur humain, à se rendre compte de tous les mouvemens de l'ame. C'est à cette école qu'il apprend à connaître et à rendre leurs véritables accens, à marquer leurs nuances et leurs limites. Il est donc inutile, je le répète, de décrire ici les sentimens dont l'action nous a frappés ; si la sensibilité ne les conserve au fond de notre ame, si elle n'y excite les orages et ne ramène le calme, toute description est vaine. Le compositeur froid, l'homme sans passions ne sera jamais que l'écho servile qui répète des sons ; et la vraie sensibilité qui l'écoutera n'en sera point d'ému. (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, 194-195)

(p. 171) 101. c'est là que les bonnes mères de famille voudront amener leurs enfans pour y recevoir des leçons de civisme et de bonnes mœurs. (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, 35-36)

(p. 171) 102. Le théâtre devant être la première école des mœurs, la nation ne peut trop se hâter de porter son attention vers le perfectionnement de l'art dramatique. (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, 45)

(p. 174) 112. Là où il n'y a point de charmes dans les arts… l'artiste a manqué son but. Le plaisir est le but des beaux-arts et l'instruction mêlée auplaisir en est le terme commun. (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, 141)

(p. 175) 114. puisque les vices et les ridicules se reproduisent sans cesse sous des masques nouveaux, la comédie est donc essentielle aux mœurs : en ridiculisant les vices, elle les force à la retraite souvent, je l'avoue, à la dissimulation ; mais on peut croire que l'hypocrite qui a trop souvent à rougir fait quelques efforts pour se corriger. (Grétry, *Mémoires*, vol. 3, 48)

(pp. 176-177) 119. Nous voulons presser votre cœur, émouvoir votre ame, nous l'attacher et quelquefois en arracher en larmes, mais nous n'emploierons aucuns moyens héroiques pour y parvenir. Nous nous contiendrons dans les bornes de la société ordinaire. Nous vous présenterons des situations attendrissantes avec des personnage d'un état commun, des Bourgeois, des gens de Village même... Si vous vous êtes intéressé pour son innocence, si vous avez pleuré sur son malheur… si cette pièce et les autres de ce genre, ne manquent point le but qu'elles se sont proposés, si elles nous ont offert des situations vives et pathétiques ; si elles ont présenté des tableaux de passions violontes et contrastées… j'y vois tout ce que ce genre exige, et nous avons encore triomphé de la critique par le raisonnement. (Framery, "Sur le genre larmoyant dans les Drames en Musique", 703)

(p. 177) 120. [Opéra bouffon] C'est le titre que l'on donne à un certain genre de drame lyrique, en opposition avec le genre sérieux. Cette dénomination est particulièrement en usage en Italie, ou affectée aux ouvrages italiens. Les drames françois de ce genre s'appellent plus ordinairement Opéra-comiques… (Framery, "Bouffon", 174-175)

(p. 177) 175. Nous osons avancer, sans crainte d'être contredits, que l'opéra bouffon est celui que les compositeurs italiens ont le plus perfectionné. La raison en est sensible. L'expression noble est beaucoup moins variée que l'expression

comique: l'opéra bouffon peut traiter les mêmes passions que l'opéra sérieux, la tendresse, la douleur, la colère ; mais la gaîté, cette passion si féconde, mais les tableaux, les situations, les caricatures même qu'elle amène, sont interdits à ce dernier. (Framery, "Bouffon", 175)

(p. 178) 123. Dans le genre *bouffon,* au contraire, les chanteurs moins habiles, moins célèbres, et par conséquent moins insolens, se soumettent davantage à la subordination qu'ils doivent au compositeur. (Framery, "Bouffon", 175)

(p. 178) 124. Le plus habile musicien après avoir composé deux ou trois tragédies, sera forcé, s'il veut varier ses chants, d'abandonner les formes larges et nobles qui s'épuisent rapidement, pour avoir recours à la nature non exagérée, qui est inépuisable, parce qu'elle peut s'emparer sans risque de l'accent vrai des passions. L'on voit qu'il cessera d'être tragique, s'il devient naturel, ou qu'il se répétera sans cesse, s'il veut fournir une longue carrière. (Grétry, Mémoires, vol. 1, 407)

(p. 179) 127. La musique comique sera toujours plus difficile à faire que la musique pathétique, de même qu'une excellente comédie est regardée comme supérieure, pour la difficulté, à une tragédie. Il n'est rien de si difficile que de faire rire les gens de goût. (Grétry, Mémoires, vol. 2, 327)

(p. 181) 133. Que faudrait-il pour perfectionner l'opéra italien ? Diminuer les scènes trop longues, resserrer l'action en élaguant les ritournelles oiseuses, les roulades, les répétitions qui deviennent si ennuyeuses, surtout lorsque l'action est pressée ; rendre les chœurs plus dramatiques, plus harmonieux, plus modulés, suivre les Français et les Allemands pour la partie instrumentale, c'est-à-dire les ouvertures, les marches et les danses ; alors l'intérêt naîtra du fond du poème, et le chanteur, malgré lui, deviendra acteur. (Grétry, Mémoires, vol. 1, 138)

## Chapter V

(p. 183) 1. Ma bonne amie, mes chers enfans, et toi aussi respectable Antoine, vivons à jamais réunis; servons la patrie en remplissant les devoirs que la nature nous impose; ce n'est, je le sens, que par l'exercice des vertus domestiques que l'on peut se préparer à la pratique des vertus publique. (Picard and Fillette-Loraux, *L'écolier en vacances*, 36)

(p. 189) 18. Tu dédaignas d'erreur sur les rives du Tybre
Pour retracer les faits d'un Peuple vraiment libre ;

Des Romains occupés à défendre leurs droits
Ou d'un trône avili précipitant les Rois.
Mais ton art plus fatal au pouvoir despotique,
Fit mieux, en nous offrant la grandeur helvétique.
Dans un tableau frappant, dans ton Poëme altier,
Tu fis voir à la France un peuple tout entier,
Qui se lève, aux accens de la liberté fière,
Qui change ses pipeaux en trompette guerrière ;
Et laissant sa charrue au milieu des sillons
Court, de fer à la main, former des bataillons. (Sedaine, "Avertissement", ii-iii)

(p. 190) 19. Il se proposait…de mettre dans la partition de Guillaume Tell, cette couleur locale, cet élan civique, ce cri de patrie et ces chants si vrais de la Suisse, susceptibles de produire à la scène le plus grand effet, les plus vives impressions. Pour atteindre à ce but, il projetait de gagner Genève et de passer, sur les montagnes d'Helvétie, le temps nécessaire pour réaliser ses hautes inspirations. (Bouilly, *Mes recapitulations* vol. 1, 349)

(pp. 193-194) 29. Un officier anglais, commandant d'une redoute, est amoureux de la nièce  d'un aubergiste… cependant la crainte d'un siège très-prochain détermine l'Anglais à enlever sa maîtresse. Sur ces entrefaites, les armées de la République attaquent Toulon, et les forts et la place sont enlevés d'assaut. Le dénoument est d'un grand effet. (*Mercure universel*, 7 Pluviôse an ii, 112)

(p. 200) 50. les fêtes permettent la commémoration, une représentation au second degré, dans un temps qui n'est plus exactement l'Histoire mais devient celui du mythe. (Béatrice Didier, "Sylvain Maréchal et le Jugement dernier des rois", 129)

(pp. 200-201) 53. D. Philippe, gouverneur de Goa, et Vascos, son fils, sont en concurrence pour le main d'Arabelle. L'autorité du père l'emporte; et il est sur le point d'espouser la jeune Indienne. La veille du jour, où ce mariage doit être célébré, des députés Indiens viennent se plaindre à Philippe des cruautés qu'exerce, dans leur patrie, le tribunal de l'Inquisition. C'est en vain que Vascos a employé son crédit, et qu'il a plaidé la cause de ces infortunés ; leurs justes plaintes ne sont point entendues. Généreux protecteur de l'opprimé, Vascos se détermine à les suivre dans leur patrie ; mais son projet est découvert. Soudain il est arrêté, et condamné à mort par le tribunal de l'Inquisition. Enfin un citoyen courageux, las de plier sous le joug, éclaire le peuple, qui renverse dans un instant

l'autorité inquisitoriale, et Philippe avec elle. La pièce finit par l'union d'Arabelle et Vascos. (Babault, ed., *Annales dramatiques*, vol. 1, 311)

(p. 201) 54. Des prètres portugais ont juré sa ruine; leur fanatisme immole, chaque jour, de nouvelles victimes. Le poignard d'une main, l'évangile de l'autre, ils forcent les enfants de Visnou d'embrasser une religion qui leur est odieuse… défendons ensemble la cause de la justice et de l'humanité. (Sophie Delahaye, "Le théâtre n'existe pas", 1109)

(p. 206) 63. Une scène remarquable, est celle où Rousseau, qui sent la mort s'approcher, donne à M. de Girardin le manuscrit de son contrat social. Le public a applaudi avec ivresse l'espèce de prophétie que fait le propriétaire d'Ermenonville, relativement aux honneurs qui attendent dans l'avenir cet ouvrage et son immortel auteur. (L' esprit des journaux françois et étrangers, February 1791, 335)

(p. 207) 71. L'auteur a su y semer des traits intéressans, pris dans la vie de Fréderic : tel est celui-ci : le Roi demande à un grenadier : quelle heure il est ?—Sept heures, Sire.—Tu avances.—Ma montre ne retarde jamais.—Voyons-la.—La voilà, Sire.—Que vois-je, une balle de mousquet !—Elle me tient lieu de montre, Sire ; elle m'apprend à toute heure que je dois mourir pour votre Majesté. (Journal général de France 174, 708)

(pp. 217-218) 100. Citoyens, la journée du 10 août approche; des républicains sont envoyés par le peuple pour déposer aux Archives nationales les procès-verbaux d'acceptation de la Constitution.

Vous blesseriez, vous outrageriez ces républicains, si vous souffriez qu'on continuât de jouer en leur présence une infinité de pièces remplies d'allusions injurieuses à la liberté, et qui n'ont d'autre but que de dépraver l'esprit et les mœurs publiques, si même vous n'ordonniez qu'il ne sera représenté que des pièces dignes d'être entendues et applaudies par des républicains.

Le comité, chargé spécialement d'éclairer et de former l'opinion, a pensé que les théâtres n'étaient point à négliger dans les circonstances actuelles. Ils ont trop souvent servi la tyrannie; il faut enfin qu'i[ls] servent aussi la liberté. J'ai, en conséquence, l'honneur de vous proposer le décret suivant:

I. La Convention nationale décrète qu'à compter du 4 de ce mois et jusqu'au 1 er novembre prochain, sur les théâtres indiqués par le ministre de l'intérieur, seront représentées, trois fois par semaine, les tragédies républicaines, telles que celles

de Brutus, Guillaume Tell, Caius Gracchus, et autres pièces dramatiques propres à entretenir les principes d'égalité et de liberté. Il sera donné, une fois la semaine ces représentations aux frais de la République.

II. Tout théâtre qui représentera des pièces contraires à l'esprit de la révolution sera fermé, et les directeurs seront arrêtés et punis selon la rigueur des lois. (Le Moniteur 217, 924)

(pp. 219-220) 106. Une députation se présente au nom des citoyens qui se trouvaient hier à l'Opéra-Comique de la rue Favart, à la première représentation d'une pièce patriotique intitulée la Veuve du républicain ou le Calomniateur, en 3 actes et en vers. Elle demande que cet ouvrage, où l'instruction se trouve à côté du plaisir, et qui a réchauffé dans tous les cœurs l'amour de la liberté et la haine des rois, soit joué sur tous les théâtres de la République, et que la Convention décrète que son auteur, le citoyen Lesur, prêt à partir pour la première réquisition, a bien mérité de la patrie.

Cette pétition est renvoyée au Comité d'instruction publique. (Le Moniteur 65, 264)

(p. 220) 107. On avoit annoncé 'Fanfan et Colas', mais une indisposition subite arrivée à la Cit. Gontier a empêché déjouer cette pièce. On a donné 'la Veuve du Républicain', demandée par le public. (Pougin, *L'Opéra Comique pendant la Révolution*, 91)

## Chapter VI

(p. 226) 11. Frappé d'étonnement et d'admiration à la vue de la régénération de la France, j'ai cherché dans l'Histoire quelque trait qui y eût rapport, et que je pusse mettre sur la scène… D'une multitude de Barbares sans mœurs, sans principes et sans talents, Pierre-Alexiowitz en forma une société d'hommes instruits et policés ; en appellant les Français à la participation des droits de la Royauté, Louis en fait un peuple de Rois dont il devient le Dieu tutélaire… L'analogie était frappant. Aussi personne ne s'y est trompé ; et j'ai eu la douce satisfaction de voir éclater dans tous les cœurs l'amour, le respect et la fidélité, sentiments précieux dont je suis intimement pénétré pour ma Patrie et pour mon Roi. Le succès que cet ouvrage a obtenu sur la scène, m'a déterminé à le donner au public. Puisse ce juge impartial, ce guide toujours sûr le lire avec l'intérêt qu'il a daigné lui accorder jusqu'à ce moment! (Bouilly, *Pierre le Grand*, 1-2)

(p. 226) 11. J'ai vu en outre le célèbre Lefort, Genevois, conduisant l'Empereur des Russies dans tout ce que ce Prince faisait de grand et de mémorable ; comme en France M. Necker dirige et seconde les vues bienfaisantes du Moaarque [sic]. (Jean-Nicolas Bouilly, *Pierre le Grand*, 1-2)

(p. 227) 14. j'aime à vous voir sous les vêtemens, la hache à la main, guider vous-même une troupe d'ouvriers dans des ouvrages difficiles et penibles! (Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, ix)

(p. 227) 15. Je n'avais alors que dix-neuf ans; maître du plus grand Empire du monde, élevé à la façon grossière et barbare de mes ayeux, j'étais sans talens, et je puis dire sans vertus, quand le Ciel te conduisit à Moscou et t'offrit à ma vue… tu devins mon ami… tu voulus que celui qui devait gouverner des hommes, commencât par être homme lui-même. (Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, ix)

(p. 231-232) 21. Le Théâtre représente la place d'un Village. À gauche, sur le devant de la scène, est la maison de Georges, terminée par une grande porte qui est l'entrée de ses chantiers. À droite et vis-à-vis, sont des arbres formant un berceau. Au fond de la scène, on découvre la mer dont les bords sont couverts de monceaux de bois de charpente, au milieu desquels s'élève un vaisseau en construction. (Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, ix)

(p. 233) 27. Travaillons et chantons,
Redoublons de courage;
Que les fatigues de l'ouvrage
Se dissipent dans nos chansons. (Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, ix)

(p. 233) 28. Chassons la mélancolie,
Et livrons nous à la gaîté;
C'est le baume de la santé;
C'est le charme de la vie. (Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, ix)

(p. 235) 29. Trésors, honneurs, sceptre et couronne,
Vous n'offrez tous qu'un faux bonheur.
Rarement avec vous on peut livrer son cœur
Au doux égarement que le gaîté nous donne…

Mais tous ces plaisirs salutaires
Du vrai bonheur ne sont que la moitié.
Deux choses sont encore nécessaires:
L'amour et sur tout l'amitié. (Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, ix)

(p. 236) 34. En celebrant un Empereur
Que son Peuple chérit, revere,
Chacun de nous sent que son cœur
Lui nomme notre auguste Père.
Si, par ses travaux assidus,
Pierre fit fleurir son Empire
Louis, par ses grandes vertus,
Force tous les Français à dire :
Béni soit à jamais. (Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, ix)

(p. 239) 35. Célébrons cette journée
Pour nous si fortunée;
Que Catherine et ses bienfaits
De nos cœurs ne sortent jamais. (Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, xiii)

(pp. 242-243) 39. Je vais m'unir à ce que j'aime;
Sur la tête de la beauté
Je vais placer le diadème.
Quel heureux sort! Quelle félicité!
Catherine! Âme de ma vie!
Oui, je t'adorerai,
Tant que j'existerai.
O mon épouse! O mon amie,
Par tes vertus, par ton génie,
Tu me guideras,
Tu me conduiras
Au but où j'aspire.
Oui tu m'aideras
À civiliser mon Empire
À render heureux tous mes sujets,
À repandre partout le bonheur et la paix.

Je vais m'unir à ce que j'aime;
Sur la tête de la beauté
Je vais placer le diadème.
Quel heureux sort! Quelle félicité! (Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, xv)

(p. 247) 42. Eh bien, je vais vous ouvrir mon cœur. Si j'ai persisté, jusqu'à ce jour, à vous refuser ma main, c'est que je n'étais pas encore sûre de vos sentimens, c'est que je craignais que vous n'eussiez pas pour moi que de l'amour; et l'amour, sans l'estime, s'envole promptement, et ne laisse souvent après lui que les dégoûts et le repentir; mais à présent que j'ai lu dans votre âme, à présent que je suis assuré d'être autant estimée que chérie, je serai la première à hâter l'instant qui doit nous unir… mais avant j'exige de vous un service… Protéger deux êtres charmans pour lesquels je m'intéresse. Vous savez les sentimens qu'Alexis et Caroline ont l'un pour l'autre; vous savez combien ils se conviennent; il faut m'aider à les unir, et le jour de leur union Pierre, est celui que je fixe pour le nôtre. La bonne Geneviève persuadée qu'Alexis rendra sa fille heureuse, solicite tous les jours avec moi maitre Georges de consenter à leur marriage: mais il nous refuse constamment. Vous avez tous les deux sa confiance et beaucoup d'empire sur son esprit, vous seuls pouvez le déterminer à se rendre à nos prières. (Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, xi)

(p. 251) 48. Pierre: Embrassons-nous, mon cher Georges ! (Georges hésite à s'approcher de Pierre qui s'élance vers lui et le presse dans ses bras.)
Georges: Ciel! Vot'Majesté daigne s'abaisser…
Pierre : M'abaisser! Va, brave homme, va, cette position nous honore également tous les deux. Me croyant pauvre et sans parens, tu as été mon bienfaiteur ; je dois à mon tour être le tien. (Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, xxiii)

(p. 251) 49. Catherine: Oui, Pierre, votre ton, votre manière d'exister, vos sentimens enfin; tout dément en vous ce que vous m'assurez être.
Pierre: Mes sentimens, dites-vous? Les sentimens sont de tous les rangs, et ce n'est pas la naissance qui les donne; vous en êtes, Catherine, la preuve la plus convaincante.
Catherine: Cependant les vertus qui vous caractérisent, paraissent gravées trop profondement dans votre âme, pour n'y avoir pas germé dès votre enfance ; et ces vertus ne peuvent être que le fruit d'une éducation dont sont privés ces infortunés au nombre desquels vous vous placez. (Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, xvi)

(p. 252) 50. Je n'y tiens plus… Je fonds en larmes…
Quel prix pour si peu des bienfaits!...
Ah! que ce moment a des charmes!
Non, je ne l'oublîra jamais. (Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, xiv)

(p. 253) 52. J’sentons couler nos larmes

Au souvenir de ses bienfaits.

Ah ! que ce moment a de charmes !

Non je ne l’oublierai jamais

Célébrons cette journée

Pour nous si fortunée

Que Catherine et ses bienfaits

De nos cœurs ne sortent jamais. (Bouilly and Grétry, *Pierre le Grand*, xiv)