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Marching onto the Stage

The Political Significance of Women-Composed Opera of the Early French Revolution, 1789-1794

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Marching onto the Stage: The Political Significance of Women-Composed Opera
of the Early French Revolution, 1789-1794

Caroline Gleason-Mercier

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of
Music at King's College London
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Abstract

Women opera composers of the early French Revolution (1789-1794) dominated Parisian stages despite facing increasing limitations on their sex. While archival research has established the proliferation of these women composers' musical successes, their broader cultural and political significance has yet to be fully understood. Employing the political philosophies of Revolutionary sensibility and Republican Motherhood, coupled with the period's celebration of the pastoral mode, the works of Lucile Grétry (1772-1790) *Florine Dezède* (1766-1792), and Julie Candeille (1767-1834) are explored to better understand how and why women-composed *opéra-comiques* which featured women as the main drivers of its narrative found success specifically during the early French Revolution. The feminocentric worlds of *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786), *Lucette et Lucas* (1781), and *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* (1792) served two key purposes: these operas allowed their co-creators to self-fashion their identity as opera composers while simultaneously echoing the Revolution's foundational principles which were so seldomly realized within actual French society. This project ultimately reveals that *opéra-comique* during the French Revolution did not always serve as escapism. Rather, women-composed *opéra-comiques* of the early Revolution became political experiments where the French Revolution's ideological possibilities—*liberté, égalité, and fraternité*—could be lived to their fullest extent through the fictional Parisian operatic stage.

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Translations

Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations for French archives are as follows:

F-Pan, Archives Nationales

F-Pn, Bibliothèque nationale de France

AD, Archives départementales

AF, Archives de France

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Preface

*The crown imperial; lilies of all kinds,
The flower-de-luce being one!*

—William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale* (4, iv, 126-7)

In Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, the “flower-de-luce” is included in an extensive list of flowers denoting the sixteenth-century term for the lily. Now synonymous with France, the once known *Flors de Loys*, or the “Flower of Louis” after Louis VII (1120-1180), has occasionally been mistaken for an iris, a point which Shakespeare attempts to correct in *The Winter's Tale*. Pre-dating Christianity, and appearing on artifacts originating in ancient Greece, Egypt, India, and Rome, this flower was represented by either a trident, an arrowhead, or a depiction of an entirely other species of flower like the *iris pseudacorus*.¹ Considering that the yellow iris, or the *iris pseudacorus*, was native to these regions, perhaps these ancient depictions, which were mostly carved on jewelry, were true of an iris during this time. However, within French history, there is little debate: after its initial establishment as the sovereign emblem of France by Louis VII, any stylized trident flower can only be the white *fleur-de-lys*.

The *fleur-de-lys*' allegorical roots are often attributed to Christianity and its role in shaping French national identity. Countering Edward III (1312-1377) of England's challenge to the French crown, the myth was propagated that during the conversion of Clovis I of France (c.466-511)—who would eventually unite the Frankish tribes and is credited as being the first French king—angels descended from heaven carrying a banner with three *fleurs-de-lys* representing the Holy Trinity.² This transformation from a pagan to a Christian society was celebrated as France's birth.

¹ Marcia Reiss, *Lily* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 117.

² Reiss, *Lily*, 118.

During the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453), in an act of propaganda, the original crescent moon emblems on Clovis' crest, which accurately conveyed his connection to Islam, were fictionally replaced with the lily.³ As such, since the fourteenth century, the *fleur-de-lys* became not only the symbol of France but the symbol of a Christian, sovereign French nation.



Figure A: Frans Pourbus II (1569-1622), *Marie de Médicis (1573-1642), reine de France, régente de 1610 à 1614, 1600-1625*, oil on canvas, musée du Louvre, France. © 2012 RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Michel Urtado <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010064946>.

Throughout the early modern period, many French monarchs and prominent historical figures continued to embrace this symbol of Christian sovereignty. Concepts of femininity also attended the symbol. This is evident with the *fleur-de-lys*' use by two celebrated women: the Italian-born Marie de' Medici (1575-1642) and Jeanne d'Arc (1412-1431). At her coronation, after her husband's death in 1610, Marie de' Medici wore an ornate gown and robe covered in countless *fleurs-de-lys* for her coronation.

This stylized representation of the flower not only validated her power from God to rule over France as a regent, but it equally solidified her newfound French identity. Echoing Clovis' ongoing myth, the *fleur-de-lys*

countered suspicion that de' Medici was a foreign ruler. She too was granted the power bestowed by angels to rule over the French nation. These royal robes became a celebration of her

³ Reiss, *Lily*, 118.

transformation from an Italian noble to a French queen and this reputation spread throughout Europe, seen through Peter Paul Reubens' (1577-1640) notable inclusion of the *fleur-de-lys* in his coronation picture of 1610, as depicted in Figure B.



Figure B: Peter Paul Reubens (1577-1640), *Le Couronnement de la reine à l'abbaye de Saint-Denis*, 1610, oil on canvas, musée du Louvre, France. Photo by © 1989 RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Jean/Lewandowski <https://www.louvre.fr/decouvrir/le-palais/a-la-gloire-d-une-reine-de-france>.

Nearly two hundred years before Marie de' Medici's politically pragmatic adoption of this emblem, Jeanne d'Arc was said to have carried a banner into battle which was adorned with *fleurs-de-lys* during her victory of 1429.⁴ Her family was even granted the legal right to use the noble title "Du Lys" due to her efforts during the siege of Orléans (1428-1429).⁵ Considering this emblem's importance within France's belief in the Divine Right of Kings, this would have been a supreme honour. The French lily legitimized Jeanne d'Arc's actions and suggested that despite her sex, she—like a monarch—was directed by God to serve her country. Today, this connection between the *fleur-de-lys* and the Holy Trinity has become even more important within representations of the saint, following her canonization in 1920.



Figure C: Unknown author, *Johan of Arc*, 15th-century manuscript, but probably painted much later, parchment and pigment, Archives Nationales, France, AE-II-2490. Photo is Public Doman.

⁴ Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 152.

⁵ Reiss, *Lily*, 119.

As a symbol, the lily has been employed in other contexts, like being the emblem of Florence, but it has truly come to define France and its people.⁶ Beginning in the Middle Ages, lilies adorned French church alters, aiding an illiterate congregation and incorporated into the sermon to complement the Gospel readings.⁷ Symbolically, the longstanding connection between the Virgin Mary and the lily was of the utmost importance for French Catholics. Mary's pious reputation and her purity became synonymous with this delicate white flower. In artistic depictions of the Holy Annunciation during the early modern period, the Archangel Gabriel frequently brings Mary not a crown but a single white lily stem to signify her arrival into holy motherhood.⁸ Other saints who became known for their own purity, like St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552), St. Anthony of Padua (1195-1231), St. Anne (55 BC- 12 AD) and St. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380), have also been depicted through this virginal flower.

This connection between womanhood, purity, and French nation-building is made apparent through charting the *fleur-de-lys*' history. How this symbol was self-consciously written into French history to erase the first French king's Muslim roots demonstrates the country's historical foundation on fictional myth-building. Scholars have traced the importance of emblematic representations to establish nationhood, but less attention has been given to how the concept of womanhood or femininity itself is often embedded within these very symbols. But traditional, feminine characteristics like purity and virtuousness are integral to France's construction of its national identity. While the Biblical importance surrounding Marian devotion is critical to understand this intersection of femininity and the construction of France as a nation, this is not the entire story of this flower or its use in various creation myths.

⁶ See Marilyn Chase, *Italian Renaissance* (Dallas: Milliken Publishing Co., 1971), 3.

⁷ Reiss, *Lily*, 120.

⁸ Reiss, *Lily*, 122.

The roots of the white lily and its ability to represent authority, piety, and fertility are rooted not just in the Virgin Mary but are similarly found within Greek and Roman mythology. While it is a rather unmotherly story, the creation of this flower mythologically begins with Hera, or Juno to the Romans. As the wife and sister to Zeus, Hera was forced into a plot by her husband. After creating an illegitimate child with a mortal, Heracles, Zeus longed for his son to become a god, and this could only be achieved if Hera physically imparted her guidance and power by breastfeeding the half-mortal child. However, as a supposedly jealous and vengeful woman, Hera refused. Zeus, therefore, gave his wife a potion that forced her into a deep sleep. He then placed Heracles on her sleeping breast to nurse. Starving, the child suckled too harshly forcibly waking a livid Hera. As she pushed the child from her breast, Hera spilled breastmilk down from the heavens. Her milk created the stars which formed the Milky Way, while the droplets which tumbled to earth created the pure white lily.⁹ This is how the emblem, which would come to define France, was created; through breastmilk.

While this myth hints that the lily could signify an “anti-mother”, it is notable that a woman’s milk created a flower defining France’s national identity. While the *fleur-de-lys* was rejected during the French Revolution due to its strong connection with the monarchy, specifically the House of Bourbon, women’s importance within the construction of France’s nation-building was not cast aside. Breastmilk, both real and symbolic, was increasingly politicized, nourishing conceptions of French womanhood and motherhood.

Milk was crucial to the discourse of the First Republic, fostering the principles of the French Revolution (1789-1799). Mothers who fed their children from their breasts solidified their

⁹ For more information regarding the myth of Hera, see Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge and Gabriella Pironti, *The Hera of Zeus: Intimate Enemy, Ultimate Spouse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 258-260.

natural role as guardians and could therefore impart the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity directly to their offspring. From Jean-Jacques Rousseau's belief that women should nurse their children to instill revolutionary sentiments within French youths, to the fashionable trend of women exposing one breast in public to project fertility, there is a complicated and rich history regarding the breast, milk, and women's role within the formation of France's First Republic (1792-1804).¹⁰ Perhaps no emblem reflects this more than the figure of Marianne. Symbolically feeding the nation, allegories of the female form became a symbol of the Republic, at once related to and displacing the monarchical lily.¹¹ As allegories, women functioned in a very similar manner to the *fleur-de-lys* in that they too helped reaffirm Revolutionary politicians' authority to govern.

Milk, however, was not a purely philosophical matter; it held medicinal and almost magical powers. In most agrarian societies throughout the early modern period, there was a strict gendered division of labour as men worked in the fields and tended to the animals while women harvested the products. Until the twentieth century, processing milk was strictly women's domain as, inevitably, the idea arose that women were the better sex to milk animals given their own role in nursing their young.¹² However, the spiritual connection between women and milk was double-edged. As historian Lena Sommestad notes, "the feminine coding of work with milk in agrarian society was supported by mystical ideas" and, as a result, when cheese-making or producing butter failed, superstitious reasoning traced the cause to female sexuality.¹³

¹⁰ For more information on maternal womanhood and breastmilk's importance in establishing the First Republic, see Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile* (Mineola: Dover Publications, Incorporated, 2013); Mary Jacobus, "Incorruptible Milk: Breast-Feeding and the French Revolution," in *Rebel Daughters: Women and the French Revolution*, ed. Leslie Rabine and Sarah Melzer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 54-78.

¹¹ For more information on Marianne and other allegorical women of the Revolution, see Chapter Two: Unspoiled Milk: Feeding the Nation through Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786).

¹² Lena Sommestad, *Agrarian Women, the Gender of Dairy Work, and the Two-Breadwinner Model in the Swedish Welfare State*, trans. Grey Osterud (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2019).

¹³ Sommestad, *Agrarian Women*, Chapter 1: "Milk Processing as Women's Work in Agrarian society".

Ancient Babylonian religion and even the Bible carry similar ambiguity surrounding the lily. Lilith, Adam's first wife, was understood as the guardian of the underworld. Lilies were said to have adorned the entrance to this desolate final resting place. Providing a direct foil to the Virgin Mary, Lilith signified women's capacity for sexual immorality and sinful lust. While the figure has been reclaimed as a liberated, sexually autonomous figure today, the ancient Jewish myth surrounding Lilith was widely believed during the early modern period, and it served to relegate women to the peripheries of society as it was strongly believed that their sex required social containment.¹⁴ While Lilith may not necessarily come to mind when seeing the *fleur-de-lys*, this part of the flower's identity is crucial as it demonstrates that while womanhood and milk were necessary for France's creation, women themselves could not be trusted.



Figure D: Artist unknown, *La Nature offrant à la France la Déclaration des droits de l'homme*, 1793, plaster fragments, Panthéon, France. Photo by author.

¹⁴ See Timothy McCall, Sean Roberts, and Giancarlo Fiorenza, *Visual Cultures of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe* (Missouri: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 222-234.

Walking around the Panthéon, it becomes apparent just how vital symbolic womanhood was for the creation of the First French Republic. While today only plaster fragments located in the building's crypt remain, the statue "La Nature offrant à la France la Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme" originally stood at this temple's entrance guarding its main doors. After rejecting its initial use as a church for Sainte Genevieve, Revolutionaries transformed the Panthéon to become the nation's temple, a place of celebration adorned with an altar of liberty not one of Christianity.¹⁵ Nature, depicted as a woman, brings, or even births, the French Revolution's civil rights document and bestows this manuscript to its people. The idea that it was a mythologized woman who not only delivered this fundamental declaration that would come to shape the entire Revolutionary decade but who equally guarded the entrance to the nation's temple cannot be ignored.

These complex notions of milk, the breast, and lilies are part of a broader context surrounding late eighteenth-century France. Womanhood was mobilized in Revolutionary discourse, even as women themselves were regarded with suspicion. This project's case studies draw from a pool of operas composed by women of the French Revolution, all involving artificially created pastoral worlds, housing both milk and dairies. Through their public self-fashioning and their operatic creations, these women composers helped to shape a new identity of what constituted French nationalism during a time of great political upheaval. Reflecting, challenging, and even constructing the Revolution's values through pastoral representations on the Parisian operatic stage, French women opera composers serve as one way of better understanding the larger role women played in establishing France's new identity as a Republic. While no direct comparison between the *fleur-de-lys* and the three women of this project will be made, the complicated and

¹⁵ Alexia Lebeurre, *The Pantheon: Temple of the Nation* (Paris: Éditions du Patrimoine, 2000), 16.

often contradictory historic representation of this flower resonates with women opera composers' role during the early 1790s; musically nourishing Parisian audiences the Revolution's values may not be as symbolically obvious as depictions of a trident flower, but they both nevertheless comparably served their nation and, perhaps even more importantly, relied on a longstanding tradition to support the birth of a new France.

The *fleur-de-lys* and milk are therefore central, overarching themes within this study. From celebrating and reclaiming the figure of the pastoral milkmaid within Julie Candeille's (1767-1834) *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* (1792), the analogous ornamental pleasure dairy within Florine Dezède's (1766-1792) *Lucette et Lucas* (1781), to the almost Hera-like figure of Lucile Grétry (1772-1790), women opera composers of late eighteenth-century France continued the tradition of women fostering a nation's identity through feminized emblems. In other words, the flourishing of women opera composers in this historical moment rested, in part, on venerable patterns of thought. While these three composers were financially successful and culturally relevant in their own times, their larger symbolic significance has yet to be fully considered and connected to the realm of French nation-building. As such, while the iconic *fleur-de-lys* may have vanished during the Revolutionary decade, its larger political importance was not lost, and in fact was actively relied upon to advance various themes of nation building. Allegorically, women have always played a vital role in the construction of modern France.

Introduction

*We do not want to open the doors of our opera
houses to women composers.*

—Anonymous critic following the premiere of
Augusta Holmès' opera, *La Montagne noire* (1895)

Nearly every International Women's Day, a selected women composer is supposedly unearthed from history with her music triumphantly played across prominent performance halls. In 2018, it was French composer, librettist, costume designer, and close friend of César Franck, Augusta Holmès (1847-1903), whose compositions were thrust into the spotlight. Crediting themselves with resurrecting this composer's beautiful music, *The Guardian* declared that "the music written by these forgotten composers shows integrity, gravitas and invention, and [it] deserves to be heard on its merit."¹⁶ Educating the public on Holmès' disremembered musical accomplishments and declaring that one may even be lucky enough to hear her pieces throughout the day on BBC Radio 3, this newspaper framed the composer as a cautionary tale. While she was not appreciated in her respective time, today, we must reclaim Holmès and enjoy her music.

According to *The Guardian*, Holmès' opera *La Montagne noire* (1895) was ridiculed during its late nineteenth-century premiere, as highlighted through the anonymous critic's quotation in the epigraph above. The implied fear among many musical elites was that opera would suffer—artistically, musically, and financially—should women become its creator. *The Guardian* implied that, historically, all women composers were discouraged from entering the public opera house—as if Holmès' experience were universal. However, this was not always the case. Indeed,

¹⁶ Anastasia Belina, "Settling the Score: Celebrating the Women Erased from the Musical Canon," *The Guardian* (blog), 8 March 2018, accessed 21 November 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2018/mar/08/settling-the-score-celebrating-the-women-written-out-of-the-musical-canon>.

a mere one hundred years before *La Montagne noire*'s premiere, one of the most successful French opera composers in France was, in fact, a woman.

On 27 December 1792, Julie Candeille's (1767-1834) *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* (1792) premiered at Paris' Théâtre de la République during Louis XVI (1754-1793)'s trial at the height of the French Revolution (1789-1799).¹⁷ Thereafter, it became a rousing success, performed at least 150 times over the next three decades, becoming one of the most successful *comédie en prose, mêlée de chant*—or what is better understood as an *opéra-comique*—in French operatic history. In the process, Candeille herself became an important figure within prominent Revolutionary circles, cementing her place among some of the most influential people during the early Revolution.¹⁸ However, Candeille was not an outlier; she came from and was part of a much larger world of women creating French music during the long eighteenth century.

In addition to Julie Candeille, Élisabeth Claude Jacquet de La Guerre (1665-1729), Françoise-Charlotte de Senneterre Ménétou (1679-1745), Marie-Anne-Catherine Quinault (1695-1793), Julie Pinel (1710-1737), Mademoiselle Duval (1718-1775), Madame Papavoine (1735-1755-61?), Isabelle de Charrière (1740-1805), Marie-Emmanuelle Bayon-Louis (1746-1825), Florine Dezède (1765-92), Caroline Wuiet (1766-1835), Henriette Adelaïde Villard or Mlle Beaumensil (1748-1813), Marie-Elizabeth Cléry (1761-1795), Rose-Adelaïde Ducreux (1761-1802), Hélène de Montgeroult (1764-1836), Constance de Salm (1767-1845), Lucile Grétry (1772-90), Sophie Bawr (1773-1860), Jeanne-Hippolyte Devismes (1770-1836), Edmee Sophie Gail (1775-1819), Pauline Duchambge (1778-1858), and Le Sénéchal de Kerkado (1786-1805) were

¹⁷ For the complete performance history of Julie Candeille's *Catherine, ou La belle fermière*, see Appendix C.

¹⁸ For a detailed discussion of Julie Candeille's *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* and this opera's reception history, see Chapter Four: From Shepherdess to Milkmaid: Navigating the Reign of Terror (1793-94) in Julie Candeille's *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* (1792).

all respected and successful French opera creators who participated in and contributed to a century of women's musical achievement.¹⁹ In particular, French women-created opera flourished in Paris from the 1770s to the 1820s.²⁰ Prior to the 1770s, we know of only six women-created operas in France while from 1770-1820, there were over thirty three.²¹ Though not universally considered equal to their male contemporaries—in terms of their financial success, musical education, or arguably even their agency over what operatic genre they could compose—women found success as creators of French opera making, in many ways, late eighteenth-century France *the* age of women's musical achievement.

However, there was something unique about women composers specifically during the early years of the French Revolution (1789-1794). While women opera composers did find success long before 1789, with Élisabeth Claude Jacquet de La Guerre likely being the most well known, they almost always did so through personal connections to the Second Estate. De La Guerre, for example, came from a wealthy family of instrument makers and she was very much tied to the court of Louis XIV (1643-1715) with the King's mistresses even supervising her education as a teenager.²² Similarly, Ménéto, who was the youngest woman to have her music issued by a royal printer, was an aristocrat.²³ Quinault was the mistress to Louis, the Duke of Orléans (1703-1752)

¹⁹ For a complete list of all women-created opera during eighteenth-century France, see Appendix A.

²⁰ In *Women Writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution*, Jacqueline Letzter and Richard Adelson argue that women's proliferation of success as opera creators peaked from 1770 to 1820. This period of forty years is confirmed through uncovering the performance histories of women co-created opera and revealing that the number of operatic productions increased from seven operas before 1770 to over thirty-five from 1770-1820. See Appendix A for a complete list of these operas. See also Jacqueline Letzter and Richard Adelson, *Women Writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution* (London: The University of California Press, 2001), especially 15.

²¹ For a complete list of French women co-created operas before 1770, compared to those created between 1770-1820, see Appendix A.

²² See Catherine Cessac, *Élisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre: Une femme compositeur sous le règne de Louis XIV* (Paris: Actes Sud, 1995), 25.

²³ For a detailed study of Françoise-Charlotte de Senneterre Menetou, see David Chung, "The Menetou Manuscript: A Study of Styles and Repertory for the Harpsichord During Late-Seventeenth Century France," *Revue de musicology* 101 (2015): 407–36.

and later to Philippe Jules François Mancini (1676-1768), the Duke of Nevers, thus earning herself a pension on the king's privy purse. Her brother, Jean-Baptiste-Maurice Quinault (1687-1745) was even granted letters of the nobility.²⁴ Additionally, Rose-Adelaïde Ducreux was the daughter of the nobleman Joseph Ducreux (1735-1802) who was a painter at the court of Louis XVI (1754-1793). In fact, the only women who were not from the gentry or closely connected to the court who had their musical compositions performed in the *ancien régime* used pseudonyms or only their first names like Madame Papavoine, Mlle Beaumesnil, and the mysterious Mlle Duval who was the second woman to ever have her opera, *Les Génies*, performed at the Opéra in 1736.²⁵

The women who dominated the Parisian stage as opera creators during the first half of the French Revolution were different. As this project argues, they were defined through an act of self-fashioning, creating their identities as composers from within the Third Estate. This resulted in their operas embracing a political vocabulary, one which reflected Revolutionary discourses. In some ways, the history of French women composing opera can be understood through this shift in class identity. This is likely why those who were of noble birth and wished to have their operas performed during the Revolution had to usurp a bourgeoisie identity, like Baroness Sophie de Bawr who used the pseudonym M. François for her first three comedies, or Princess Constance de Salm who used the title *citoyenne* for her libretto *Sapho, tragedie melee de chant* (1794) which premiered during the Reign of Terror (1794-95) when her family's hereditary seat in Picardy would have been met with suspicion.²⁶

²⁴ Jean-Baptiste-Maurice Quinault was bestowed nobility status directly by the king. To see this letter, see "Jean-Baptiste-Maurice Quinault (1687-1745)," *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* [BNF Data, 2023], web, <https://data.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb14795814w>.

²⁵ See James R. Anthony, "Duval, Mlle" in Julie Anne Sadie and Rhian Samuel, eds. *The Norton/Grove Dictionary of Women Composers* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1994), 153.

²⁶ See Sarah Josepha Buell Halle, *Woman's Record; or, Sketches of All Distinguished Women from the Creation to A.D. 1854 ... Second Edition* (New York: Harper and Bros, 1855), 800. For a more in-depth argument as to why Constance de Salm may have taken on the title *Citoyenne* as protection against her upper-class identity during the

In addition to this class consideration, French women-composed opera of the early Revolution carries additional similarities: the works are nearly all reliant on the pastoral mode, they are exclusively *opéra-comiques*, many contain semi-autobiographical elements which serve to flatter and legitimize their creators, they feature young, often unmarried women, and they all embrace feminocentric plots which celebrate strong, autonomous women who govern their own lives.²⁷ It is these female characters—who are often painted as youthful and highly virtuous—who have come to define the wider genre of *opéra-comique* at the Comédie-Italienne, as musicologist Raphaëlle Legrand explores in her own work regarding gender and this genre.²⁸ However, less attention has been given to when women are part of the collaborative process in creating these more virtuous pastoral characters.²⁹ A study of this sort may offer new modes of understanding what, if anything, differentiated women opera composers from their male counterparts, especially considering that musically, their operas followed the same conventions.³⁰

Reign of Terror, see section 1.4 “Women in French Opera” in Chapter One: Historiography and Criticism of *Opéra-Comique* and Gender of the Early French Revolution.

²⁷ I use the term “feminocentric” to suggest that these works embrace plots which place women at the center of their narratives but, more importantly, that they primarily explore stories concerning women’s agency. For example, composer Nicolas Dalayrac’s (1753-1809) and librettist Benoît-Joseph Marsollier’s (1750-1817) *Nina* (1786) is an opera from the late eighteenth century which explores a young woman, but it does so without attributing any power to the title female character. Nina descends into madness because she suspects that Germeuil has been killed and she only recovers when he reappears. A feminocentric narrative would place Nina in a position of agency, thus making her decisions not depended on others but on her own actions. My interpretation of “feminocentric” opera is inspired by Anne Duggan’s use of this term in her exploration of the fairy-tale writer Marie-Catherine d’Aulnoy, and how d’Aulnoy’s tales may be read as “feminocentric versions of Versailles.” See Anne Duggan, “Women and Absolutism in French Opera and Fairy Tale,” *The French Review* 78, no.2 (December 2004): 302-315.

²⁸ A more complete discussion of *opéra-comique*’s conventions and its roots as a more friendly operatic genre for women musicians is discussed in section 1.4 “Women in French Opera” in Chapter One: Historiography and Criticism of *Opéra-Comique* and Gender of the Early French Revolution. See also Raphaëlle Legrand, “Libertines et femmes vertueuses: l’image des chanteuses d’opéra et d’opéra-comique en France au XVIIIe siècle,” *Émancipation sexuelle ou contrainte des corps* (2006), 153.

²⁹ As highlighted in the work of musicologist Raphaëlle Legrand regarding the history and origins of *opéra-comique* at the Comédie-Italienne, this genre began to embrace a more virtuous and eventually moralizing tone specifically through the popularization of *comédie mêlée d’ariettes* which overtook the *comédie en vaudevilles*. For a more detailed discussion of the developments of this genre and its conventions, see section 1.4 “Women in French Opera” in Chapter One: Historiography and Criticism of *Opéra-Comique* and Gender of the Early French Revolution.

³⁰ A complete discussion regarding the conventions of eighteenth-century opera is presented in section 1.5 “Aesthetics of Eighteenth-Century Opera” and 1.6 “Revolutionary Audiences” in Chapter One: Historiography and Criticism of *Opéra-Comique* and Gender of the Early French Revolution.

The main study which has previously addressed French women and their operas during this period is that completed by historian Jacqueline Letzter and musicologist Richard Adelson.³¹ Important questions including how composers of the Revolution acquired their respective musical educations, where their operas were performed, who admired their works, and how individual opera creators shaped their reputations through this act of self-determination are all addressed in *Women Writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution* (2001).³² As such, Letzter and Adelson have completed their book's objective to "set straight the historical record by rediscovering the forgotten women composers of the past".³³ However, despite this important pioneering research, French women composers and their operas' influence on the Revolutionary decade remains entirely under researched, especially within the discipline of French opera studies.

One must equally question why, considering the French Revolution's often-understood role as the catalyst for modern human rights, scholarship outside of musicology has largely overlooked this moment of great historic gendered success.³⁴ Perhaps the answer as to why women opera composers of the French Revolution remain largely neglected despite their prominence within their own time is because their actual significance—culturally, socially, and most importantly politically—has yet to be reconstructed and retrospectively understood today.

Therefore, this project seeks to offer a more holistic and politically focused interpretation of women's popularity as opera composers during the early years of the French Revolution. It is

³¹ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 15.

³² Letzter has also written about Julie Candeille and the composer's act of collapsing her identity onto that of her title character, Catherine. See Jaqueline Letzter, "The Legacy of a One-Woman Show: A Performance History of Julie Candeille's 'Catherine, Ou la belle fermière,'" *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 33, no. 1/2 (2004): 11–34.

³³ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 15.

³⁴ For scholarship on the French Revolution and the birth of modern human rights, see Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2008); Lynn Hunt, *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History* (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996).

important to recognize that with the Le Chapelier Law in 1791, where Parisian opera houses were liberated from reportorial privileges during the *ancien régime*, opera houses now had to fulfill their new role as institutions for moral and public instruction, a historical consideration which will be explored in more detail in this project's first chapter.³⁵ This project argues that women composers and their operas were not exempt from this calling, and they thus serve as one way to better understand the politics of the early Revolution and how opera, a form which is frequently understood as being deeply political in France, was central to shaping wider French politics.³⁶

In many ways, this project explores how conceptions of gender, specifically womanhood, altered in 1789 with the commencement of the Revolution; how ideas of Republican Womanhood—the stereotypical concept that women were the ideal sex to uphold and promote Revolutionary ideals—were developed and circulated before 1789 but became increasingly politicized as the means to serve the new nation-state post the Storming of the Bastille.³⁷ Through exploring successful women-composed *opéra-comiques*, this project's overarching argument is formed: as composers from within the Third Estate, French women and their works became important political entities that assisted in shaping the early years of the French Revolution, not

³⁵ Enacted upon by the National Assembly, the Le Chapelier Law allowed for free enterprise resulting in the dramatic increase of new opera houses in Paris. Post 1791, opera houses in the capital city went from 3 to over 40 by the late 1790s. For a more complete history of the Le Chapelier Law and its consequences for Parisian opera, see Mark Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution: Cultural Politics and the Paris Opéra, 1789-1794* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), especially 128.

³⁶ For a discussion of the politics of French opera, and how it has been previously read by scholars as a political medium, especially during the *ancien régime*, see section 1.4 “The Aesthetics of Eighteenth-Century French Opera” in Chapter One: Historiography and Criticism of *Opéra-Comique* and Gender of the Early French Revolution.

³⁷ The French Revolution is often considered the moment when a distinction was articulated in Europe between the sovereign state and the concept of the nation-state. A nation-state is defined as a sovereign territory where there is no separation between the state—meaning the geographical boundaries over a territory—and the nation—meaning the inhabitants of a said territory who share a commonality ranging from, but not necessarily limited to, a shared language, culture, values, culture, and history. The French Revolution saw the unification of France no longer through a shared land under the jurisdiction of one ruler—the king—but rather through the unification of a shared set of national values, beliefs, and culture. For scholarship detailing the importance of defining the nation-state during the French Revolution, see Chimene I. Keitner, *The Paradoxes of Nationalism: The French Revolution and Its Meaning for Contemporary Nation Building* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012).

necessarily because of their individual political beliefs or affiliations, but rather because as women who participated in creating feminocentric worlds in conjunction with their librettists, the ideological content of their operas reflected political discourses during the early Revolution. Crucially, through this process, women composers underwent a process of self-determination or self-fashioning in which they came to shape, reflect, challenge, and promote Revolutionary politics as the means to form and create their own identities.

At one level, this project applies historian Lynn Hunt's reading of engraving culture and "the social" to the world of women-composed *opéra-comique*.³⁸ Hunt argues that engraving culture offered a space within which the discourse of Rousseau's *Du contract social* (1762) was fully realized: something impossible within society at large. The principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity were celebrated to their fullest, most lived out extent as this art showed the theoretical possibilities of a truly liberated French nation-state. The argument is proposed that engravings were one of the only available avenues to promote this idealistic version of society, a world where "enlightenment" philosophical understandings were explored and implemented across society, specifically because engravings were fictional and there was little threat of this utopia extending into the real world.³⁹

Similarly, I argue that through the process of women claiming authorial power over their operas and co-creating these women-centric worlds, their art equally realized Revolutionary possibilities. Through balancing conceptions of artifice versus reality, in addition to promoting the

³⁸ As historian Lynn Hunt states, "the most telling indicator of the fascination with 'the social' is the proliferation of visual imagery. As might be expected, the vast majority of the 30,000 or so engraved images of the revolutionary decade concerned political figures, political events, or political allegories; they testified to an ongoing uncertainty about the narrative line that was unfolding inside the revolutionary process." Lynn Hunt, "The World We Have Gained: The Future of the French Revolution," *The American Historical Review* 108, no. 1 (2003): 1–19, 13.

³⁹ Hunt, "The Future of the French Revolution", 13-15.

larger themes of Revolutionary sentimentality, female morality, virtuousness, and obedience, French womanhood's increasing politicization during the French Revolution is one way of understanding these women composers and their less overt, yet politically significant, contribution to shaping the early Revolution itself. In simpler terms, I am interested in the self-construction of women composers as participants in Revolutionary discourses and how their participation served the politics of the early Revolution. As with most successful research of gender history, this will not be a project of restrictive structures, as Penny Corfield once declared in her own research of women in early modern Europe, but a history of creative agencies.⁴⁰

Meghan Robert's *Sentimental Savants: Philosophical Families in Enlightenment France* (2016), provides an interesting perspective on how French eighteenth-century women may have covertly challenged the boundaries of their discrimination.⁴¹ For Robert, the question is not how philosophers and politicians encouraged France to become a new nation through practising what they preached, but rather how these powerful men were preaching what was already being practised in the domestic or intimate sphere.⁴² It is not that women or the intimate sphere were the origins of Revolutionary ideals per se, but rather that some of the Revolutionary period's core values—Republican sentimentality, civic virtue, and morality—had long been practised and even celebrated by women prior to 1789. Women-composed opera offers another way of better understanding how women, through modes of soft power, influenced political discussions by embodying gendered ideals. In other words, this project will testify to the politicization of French womanhood through women-created opera within the early French Revolution.

⁴⁰ See Penelope Jane Corfield, "History and the Challenge of Gender History," *Rethinking History* 3, no. 1 (1997): 241-258, 244.

⁴¹ Meghan Roberts, *Sentimental Savants: Philosophical Families in Enlightenment France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016).

⁴² Roberts, *Sentimental Savants*, 6.

A loftier intention of this project is to also challenge the prevailing, limiting, and often the historically inaccurate perception that because women were “passive” citizens during the French Revolution, their influence over and formation of the Revolutionary decade was equally “passive”.⁴³ I argue that women’s political agency was not restricted to overtly challenging gender restrictions. Defying gender norms in grand manifestos, including those written by Olympe de Gouges (1748-1793), while important, was not the only way women exercised their political influence and agency during the early 1790s.⁴⁴

The most successful operas, in terms of the number of their continual performances, of Lucile Grétry (1772-1790), Florine Dezède (1766-1792), and Julie Candeille (1767-1834) will serve as the basis for making these arguments, though there were indeed other women composers who found success on the Revolutionary stage including de Bawr, Beaumesnil and Devismes.⁴⁵ Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille, and their respective operas *Le mariage d’Antonio* (1786), *Lucette et Lucas* (1781), and *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* (1793), have been chosen for a few reasons. The first is simply because we have the entire music for these operas. A reality of researching any underserved area of music history is, unfortunately, that archives lack complete manuscripts for most women-composed music during this period. While much could be said about musical fragments, having entire scores allows for a more complete understanding of the musical works themselves. This is a self-proclaimed feminist project that seeks to reclaim women’s musical contributions in the early French Revolution. As a cultural music historian, I believe it is necessary

⁴³ Through the 1791 French Constitution, legal terms were now attached to active citizenship. Those who were deemed “active” citizens were males over the age of 25. “Passive” citizens, a term used to define everyone else in the French nation-state, were excluded from formal political rights though they were granted civil rights. For a more complete discussion of active versus passive citizenship, and how this concerned French women, see Karen Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700-1950: A Political History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), Chapter Three: “Challenging Masculine Aristocracy: Feminism and the French Revolution”, 50-76.

⁴⁴ See Olympe de Gouges, *Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne* (Paris: Pythia, 1791).

⁴⁵ See Appendix A for a complete list of women co-creators of opera during the French Revolution.

to devote an entire chapter to one opera rather than briefly discussing fragments or multiple works. Considering no scholarly work to date offers an in-depth historicization or analysis of these operas despite their acclaim in Parisian theatres, I believe focused attention on these more accessible operas may encourage future scholarship to uncover additional examples of French women-composed works.

A personal goal of my research, in addition to reclaiming these women composers and their operas, is to change the wider canon of eighteenth-century music, both in terms of what is academically studied and performed today. By focusing on operas whose music can be easily found, which require basic sets and costuming, have small casts, and are relatively easy in terms of their musical construction, it is my hope that *Le mariage d'Antonio*, *Lucette et Lucas*, and *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* may be recreated on stages today.

The second reason why I have selected these case studies revolves around their performance histories. Even though two of these works, *Le mariage d'Antonio* and *Lucette et Lucas*, were composed before 1789, they only received one performance at their respective premieres; they remained out of circulation until the French Revolution. Grétry's opera premiered on 29 July 1786 at the Théâtre Italien (salle Favart) but it did not receive a second performance in Paris until 15 March 1789 when it was then performed seventeen times until 9 February 1791.⁴⁶ Similarly, *Lucette et Lucas* premiered on 11 November 1781 at the Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne but it received its second performance at the Théâtre Italien only on 3 March 1790 where it was performed ten times at the same theatre until 11 January 1792.⁴⁷ I believe that the fact that these two operas had a space of three and nine years between their first and second

⁴⁶ See Appendix D for the complete performance history of Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786).

⁴⁷ See Appendix E for the complete performance history of Florine Dezède's *Lucette et Lucas* (1781).

performances, and then experienced continued success, thereafter, makes these operas very much *of* the French Revolution even if their conception was during the 1780s.

Before presenting a historiography of studying *opéra-comique* and women's contributions to French opera in general, it is important to clarify my approach to studying gender history and indeed in even using the term women in the first place. Every gender scholar is confronted with the importance of terminology. Women have never been and will never be a homogenous group. As historian Joan Scott acclaims, women as a monolithic group have always been a "fantasy"; there are "shifting, multiple and often conflicting ways in which individuals who have been attributed to a specific group develop their gendered identity."⁴⁸ Comparable to discussions around defining gender today, during the early modern period, discourses around characterizing women altered. From the *querelles des femmes* in the 1400s to the 1700s, to going from the one-sex theory to the two-sex theory in the eighteenth century, conceptions of gender and what made women separate from men were constantly being defined and redefined.⁴⁹ This is why my work should not be understood as representative of all gendered experiences during the French Revolution.

I appreciate how Domna Stanton frames her own work of historical studies of French women when she stresses that feminist readings of a particular group of women do not represent all women, but they can be "symptomatic of broader issues and of negotiated gendered differences between women and men and among types within each gender."⁵⁰ Each of the sources I am

⁴⁸ See Joan Scott, "Fantasy Echo: History and the Construction of Identity," *Critical Inquiry* 27, no. 2 (2001): 284–304, 288.

⁴⁹ The *querelle des femmes* refers to an intellectual debate in France which took place between 1400–1700 regarding women and the nature of womanhood. It mainly revolved around questioning how women should be educated. For more information on the *querelle des femmes* and the one-sex model, see Lisette Steinbrügge, *The Moral Sex: Woman's Nature in the French Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). For a discussion of Thomas Lacquer's "one-sex" and "two-sex" models, see Chapter Two: Unspoiled Milk: Feeding the Nation through Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786).

⁵⁰ Domna C. Stanton, *The Dynamics of Gender in Early Modern France: Women Writ, Women Writing* (Milton Park: Taylor & Francis Group, 2019), 204.

working with, and especially the operas themselves, contain their own dynamics of gender as does my own reading of this material as a feminist music historian. I am fully aware of the problems of working within a framework which places gender considerations only through the lens of women versus men as some sort of binary choice. While I do not believe we need a hierarchy of oppression, I agree with Stanton that understanding the structural challenges white aristocratic women faced is entirely different from that of the working-class, witches, the peasantry, or women in the Caribbean colonies, for example.⁵¹

My approach to gender is fully formed through my own position as a feminist researcher. As both Stanton and Scott stress, there are ethical considerations when employing reading as a feminist.⁵² There is a presumed responsibility towards women and “their conflictual discursive and historical situatedness, when they are othered in male-dominant gender and sex systems.”⁵³ The purpose of a feminist historical understanding, and indeed I believe of all gender history, is to place marginalized genders at the centre of exploration fully knowing that in order to reclaim these groups, one must simultaneously acknowledge the “ideological moment” of the past and “the feminist reader’s own context”, both of which are likely subject to future dynamic shifts of understandings.⁵⁴ This equally means acknowledging that what was historically written about women was largely penned by men and by those within the hegemony.

Paramount to any feminist approach to studying history is the understanding that one must be far more concerned with connotation rather than denotation. In terms of methodology, this means that the use of close reading is central to much of my discussion. Moving from observing

⁵¹ Stanton, *The Dynamics of Gender in Early Modern France*, 208.

⁵² Stanton, *The Dynamics of Gender in Early Modern France*, 208.

⁵³ Stanton, *The Dynamics of Gender in Early Modern France*, 208.

⁵⁴ Stanton, *The Dynamics of Gender in Early Modern France*, 207.

facts and using this information to draw conclusions, I am much more interested in inductive reasoning and interpretation which is based on these facts. Considering that women during the early modern period were excluded from being granted active citizenship status, and they were largely restricted in what they could say, I believe this is an appropriate approach in attempting to understand their political significance.⁵⁵ This project is therefore interpretative as direct certainties cannot be faithfully made. Close reading is commonly used among feminist historians as it allows for the appreciation and cultural understanding of the significance of women's art; in other words, even if we have an abundance of sources, we cannot and should not rely exclusively on what men told us about women to understand womanhood, in its most broadly conceived sense.⁵⁶

However, as with most self-proclaimed feminist historical research, there is not a set methodological approach that I rely upon. Rather than declaring that I will use mixed methods, I tend to appreciate the idea of a feminist "promiscuous methodology", a term primarily used within the field of feminist education studies which has been coined by scholars Sara Childers, Stephanie Daza, and Jeong-eun Rhee.⁵⁷ Promiscuous methods suggest that many different perspectives must be used simultaneously yet equally in quick procession and that feminist theories and methodologies must be occasionally used in chaotic and unbridled ways.⁵⁸ Rather than mix separate methods to create a hybrid model, promiscuous methods are used within the field of gender studies as no one methodology can reclaim the history of underserved peoples. As these researchers note, the messy task of challenging the prevailing hegemony means that we cannot

⁵⁵ For a discussion of women as "passive citizens", see Paul Hanson, *Historical Dictionary of the French Revolution (Historical Dictionaries of War, Revolution, and Civil Unrest, No. 27)* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 251.

⁵⁶ This observation has been made by many feminist scholars, including Paul Salzman in *Reading Early Modern Women's Writing*. See Paul Salzman, *Reading Early Modern Women's Writing* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2006), especially Chapter Three: Mary Wroth: From Obscurity to Canonization, 60-90.

⁵⁷ See Sara Childers, Stephanie Daza, Jeong-eun Rhee, eds. *Promiscuous Feminist Methodologies in Education: Engaging Research Beyond Gender* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2015).

⁵⁸ Childers, Daza, and Rhee, *Promiscuous Feminist Methodologies*, forward.

impose any limitations or boundaries on what counts as feminist research nor in how we use methods.⁵⁹ These scholars propose the question "what can researchers do when we realize that theories are not quite enough to respond to our material experiences", and I believe this question stands when we attempt to explore women of the past.⁶⁰

This is why I strongly believe that this project cannot exclusively rely on performance statistics, reviews, and qualitative data as circulation does not necessarily reveal influence and impact, especially when we are attempting to reclaim underserved music histories of the past and understand women composers in more complex ways than simply declaring that they too wrote operas. Therefore, in terms of methodologies, this project will promiscuously switch between close readings, materiality studies, musical analysis, and quantitative primary data. Equally, as we lack sources directly from these women—aside from Candeille's unfinished *Mémoires*—it must be stressed that we can never determine with full certainty the composers' intent. We must largely rely on nineteenth-century sources as these are primarily what either remains or was ever written about women composers of the Revolution and their operas.

Since attempting to uncover women composers' symbolic importance to the Revolution is a challenging task, especially considering there is little work which has set out to achieve this goal, there will be inherent flaws with my approach. As we are not left with a robust archive of reviews and other primary materials, likely because these composers were women and women's history remains an area of immense neglect both in the early modern period and today, the best we can do at this present moment is to use the sources and methodological tools we have available to try and uncover, rediscover, celebrate, and ultimately historicize the life and selected operas of Grétry,

⁵⁹ Childers, Daza, and Rhee, *Promiscuous Feminist Methodologies*, forward.

⁶⁰ Childers, Daza, and Rhee, *Promiscuous Feminist Methodologies*, forward.

Dezède, and Candeille. However, I strongly believe that the alternative is far worse; through not exploring more nuanced political considerations of these women and embracing a flawed but necessary methodological approach, these women would forevermore be relegated to footnotes in larger studies of French opera. They would continue to be largely trivialized for being briefly popular.

I believe this is a fair assumption to make as French women-composed operas are relatively easy to uncover, and the operas of the women of this project have been published and circulated since 2001. Yet, very few scholars have even attempted to explore French women opera composers during the eighteenth century.⁶¹ As a feminist work, this project cannot, then, be centered on piecing together information which has previously been uncovered and attempt to argue that these women have been ignored by modern scholarship simply due to a lack of information. Rather, I strongly believe that the only way to rightfully reclaim Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille, in addition to all women opera composers of the French Revolution, and argue that they should be considered in any scholarship which addresses eighteenth-century opera, is through showing the potential new knowledge—cultural, political, and even musical—which becomes available through employing methodologies which shape women’s and gender history scholarship.

Chapter One expands on these considerations regarding methodological practises and previous scholarship which has explored gender and opera during eighteenth-century France. This chapter begins with exploring class considerations, the origins of the Revolution, and how, as members of the Third Estate, women opera composers’ class identity may have resonated with prominent Revolutionary political figures. A very brief approach to studying the Reign of Terror

⁶¹ For a historiography of music scholars who have looked at French women opera creators, see section 1.5 “Women in French Opera” in Chapter One: Historiography and Criticism of *Opéra-Comique* and Gender of the Early French Revolution.

(1793-1794) is also included as the means to understand the historical context of this project's three case studies, though this should not be understood as a complete historiography of this period. Much of this chapter is focused on previous scholarship of French opera with a particular emphasis on *opéra-comique* and the Comédie Italienne, women in French opera, the aesthetics of eighteenth-century French opera, Revolutionary audiences, and opera during the Revolution.

Chapter Two explores the theoretical embodiment of Revolutionary discourses through women-composed music. Breastmilk's symbolic and literal nourishment for the new French Republic is connected to Lucile Grétry and the potential of her first opera, *Le mariage d'Antonio*, to be read as an instruction for Parisian audiences in Revolutionary values and morality. Initiated within the writings of philosophers including Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and eventually politicized by Revolutionary deputies, the natural sweetness of maternal breastfeeding and the intimate act's perceived ability to inculcate the French Revolution's key ideology emerged as one-way women could exert a moralizing influence over society. As a woman composer who celebrated French womanhood through the operatic stage via pure, unspoiled melodies and virtuous female characters, through *Le mariage d'Antonio*, the argument is made that Grétry emblematically fed Parisian audiences lessons in French Republican values comparable to those found within a mother's milk.

Chapter Two also features a broad consideration of women's symbolic importance to the early Revolution's ideology. As educators and moralizers of society, women's role in the Revolution elided with the intentions and public presentation of women as opera creators. The allegories of Revolutionary muses, in particular Marianne who has come to define the French nation, are equally connected to women's symbolic importance as co-creators of virtuous operas. Therefore, this chapter not only offers a detailed analysis and history of the *Le mariage d'Antonio*,

but it equally explores the wider importance of women exerting political influence through seemingly passive or relatively undetectable, yet highly effective, means.

In Chapter Three, the young composer Florine Dezède and her successful opera *Lucette et Lucas* are understood through the lens of French pastoral pleasure dairies. These infamous institutions were bound up with the historic alliance of French female monarchs and rural soil, an alliance that, though outwardly decorative, offered them symbolic power. Throughout early modern history, French ornamental or pleasure dairies were credited for romanticizing rural life to the point where women monarchs who frequented these artificially created spaces procured an implausible sense of rustic domesticity. However, these institutions served a much more important role. Operating as pastoral retreats, pleasure dairies, including Marie-Antoinette's famous Hameau at Versailles, created a pastoral matriarchy, a phenomenon through which claiming and working the physical soil within these highly sanitized environments outwardly projected the ideal domestic labourer, thereby granting these women legitimacy as rulers over the very land.

In French opera, pastoralism took on broader import especially within *opéra-comique* post-1770.⁶² *Lucas et Lucette* is far from the only women-created French pastoral opera, and indeed all three of this project's case studies are pastoral in nature. However, this chapter offers a wider reflection regarding the specific importance of women evoking pastoralism compared to men and how, when it is women partaking in creating feminocentric rural retreats on the stage, a unique mode of political power is extended to the creators themselves. Dezède's opera is known for its use of Parisian Patois, a rustic almost comedic style of speech that was often used within French theatre to denote peasantry, yet the composer incorporates this dialect in a rather unique fashion.

⁶² For a discussion of the history of *opéra-comique* and its shift to embrace more virtuous plots, see section 1.4 "Women in French Opera" and 1.5 "Aesthetics of Eighteenth-Century French Opera" in Chapter One: Historiography and Criticism of *Opéra-Comique* and Gender of the Early French Revolution.

She bestows this vernacular language on the redemptive title character, Lucette. Through reclaiming Patois, and in the process advocating for the celebration of French ruralism, *Lucette et Lucas* serves to better understand how women's pastoral opera may be appreciated through serving a different purpose. It may have assisted in not only uniting urban Parisian audiences with notions of rural France, thus in many ways unifying the nation, but it may have equally extended the pastoral mode's ability to grant women's self-governance to all those who watched women co-created pastoral operas.

While the political importance of reclaiming French rural identity in the work of Dezède is subtle, Chapter Four highlights the more politically overt cases embedded within women-composed French opera. *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* (1792) was one of the most successful operas of its time. In many ways, Candeille's opera mirrors the polarizing and often conflicting beliefs during the first half of the Revolution. This work can be read simultaneously as support for the *ancien régime* or as a more progressive celebration of Republican, perhaps even Jacobin, ideology. This chapter suggests that this straddling of political identities was responsible for the opera's continued performances and success, especially during the Reign of Terror, despite the composer's ties to the Girondins by way of her supposedly close connection with politician Paul Vergniaud (1753-1793).

The connection of Candeille to the Girondins does not necessarily suggest that she too shared the same political beliefs, but this chapter demonstrates how this composer at least challenged the idea that women composers could only succeed if they were overtly antipolitical, a tempting truism given the lack of political avenues open to French women during this period.⁶³

⁶³ For a more complete discussion of women's political action and affordances during the French Revolution, see Lisa Beckstrand, *Deviant Women of the French Revolution and the Rise of Feminism* (Madison: Dickinson

Escaping the guillotine despite her relationship and activity with Girondists was not entirely due to *Catherine, ou La belle fermière*, but the opera's immense success and autobiographical elements do, at least in theory, advocate that this work may have partially shielded the composer from the Reign of Terror's violence. This is the only case study where a political affiliation of the composer can be comfortably proposed and, as such, it contributes to larger discussions around state politics within Revolutionary opera.⁶⁴

This final case study's goal is not to retrospectively attach a political ideology to a composer, but rather to demonstrate that we do not need to solely seek abstract or symbolic importance within women-composed French opera to determine its political value. *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* offers the rare chance to understand the direct connection between the Revolution's politics and women composers' self-fashioning. Most importantly, as this chapter argues, this opportunity was afforded specifically because of Candeille's gender; paradoxically, the assumption that women were apolitical, or "passive" citizens, shielded the composer from criticism in her "actively" political work.⁶⁵

University Press, 2013); Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); Lynn Hunt, *Family Romance of the French Revolution*.

⁶⁴ For a detailed discussion regarding state-imposed or supported politics versus more nuanced political resonances within French opera, see section 1.6 "Revolutionary Audiences" in Chapter One: Historiography and Criticism of *Opéra-Comique* and Gender of the Early French Revolution.

⁶⁵ The French Revolution is largely credited for solidifying the concept of modern national citizenship. Political historian William Rogers Brubaker's concept of French citizenship as being both a general membership status and a special membership status proves helpful in understanding how women and other minority groups were excluded from being granted "active" citizenship. As a general member of France, the "citizenry is roughly coincident with the permanent resident population of a state", meaning those not part of the state are alien and excluded from this designation. However, as equally a title attached to special membership, French citizenry considered other categories of noncitizens aside from those who were alien. While still belonging to the state geographically, though not to its sense of ruling, women fell into this category of being noncitizens through lacking special membership. In other words, as Brubaker notes, "this definition of citizenship is substantive, not formal [as] citizenship is constituted by the possession and exercise of political rights, by participation in the business of rule, not by any set of common rights and obligations." This distinction is important to note as it suggests that women were not expected to instruct their own sex *per se* as they were not citizens; their obligation became to educate men who were given this designation of citizenship. See William Rogers Brubaker, "The French Revolution and the Invention of Citizenship," *French Politics and Society* 7, no. 3 (1989): 34–36.

While visual, textual, and musical analyses are emphasized within these three case studies, these operas should not be understood as insular examples of individual women but rather as larger representations or even thematic tools to better understand how women-composed opera navigated the early French Revolution. As part of a much larger spectacle, these chosen operas help develop our understanding of what political action during the French Revolution might have looked like for women in the world of co-creating opera. This project's conclusion demonstrates that it is precisely because these women were opera composers and within certain class structures with prominent composer fathers that they were able to gain the possibility of having their operas address wider political discourses.

The importance of studying these three women as illustrations of a marginalized group is not only to celebrate their individual histories and conduct equitable historical research. What this project demonstrates is that without exploring the political possibilities of these women and their operas, we likely can not have a complete or accurate understanding of French music or even politics during the early Revolution itself. This work argues that feminist music history cannot be about including women within our understanding of French opera, but rather realizing that we cannot begin to comprehend this field of study without their inclusion.

There are additional significances and goals of this research that will be highlighted within this project's first chapter which, in addition to a historiography, almost serves as an extended introduction. However, returning to the nineteenth-century critic's comments regarding Holmès' *La Montagne noire*, the irony of this remark is that French opera houses had been open to women long before Holmès; this critic's anxiety is misplaced. Holmès was carrying on a tradition. *La Montagne noire* was but one opera which was part of a larger phenomenon of French opera fostering women's musical success.

Chapter One

Historiography and Criticism of *Opéra-Comique* and Gender of the Early French Revolution

...the French Revolution provided the necessary catalyst for women to channel their engrained social identities into efforts that resulted in the confrontation between the female status quo and female possibility.

—Sean Wright in “Insurrectionary Heroines: The Possibilities and Limits of Women’s Radical Action During the French Revolution”.

From the working-class *poissardes* to the prominent and politically influential *salonnières*, women held important roles within many political avenues during the French Revolution. Highlighting the March on Versailles in October 1789, the bread riots in 1795, the creation of the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women in 1793, and Olympe de Gouge’s (1748-1793) *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman* penned in 1791, historian Sean Wright explores how French women shaped the decade’s political climate and how, despite not holding formal positions of power, women were critical to the Revolution’s progress.⁶⁶ In countless ways, the French Revolution offered women newfound possibilities to become political activists, though there were indeed societally imposed limitations in what they could achieve.

Through the breakdown of everyday life and the rituals which help shape it, the French Revolutionary decade granted women the possibility to use their already established social identities as mothers, nurturers, and educators as the means to challenge their rejection within public political spaces. While many feminist historians of this period agree that few tangible

⁶⁶ Sean M. Wright, “Insurrectionary Heroines: The Possibilities and Limits of Women’s Radical Action During the French Revolution,” *Grand Valley Journal of History* 2, no. 2 (May 2013): 1-18, 2, https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/gvjh/vol2/iss2/3?utm_source=scholarworks.gvsu.edu%2Fgvjh%2Fvol2%2Fiss2%2F3&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages.

improvements manifested in women's lives during this political movement, it was the possibility of advancement which was truly groundbreaking.⁶⁷ Notably, despite the prospect of facing death for their activism, de Gouges, fellow Girondins sympathizer Charlotte Corday (1768-1793), Sophie de Condorcet (1764-1822), Germaine de Staël (1766-1817), Madame Roland (1754-1793), and Théroigne de Méricourt (1762-1817) all forced debates among French elites regarding women's place and prominence in society. It is these radicals who today tend to shape interpretations of French women's history and gendered political activism.

It was often through reliance upon their supposed feminine sensibilities that these prominent women entered political spaces as activists, writers, and artists. Even the famous *femme sans-culotte* Pauline Léon (1768-1838), who controversially took on more outward expressions of masculinity through her dress, was still initially encouraged by Revolutionary politicians and deputies to become publicly active.⁶⁸ Before the eventual suppression of women's political clubs by the Jacobins in 1793, Léon's political club created exclusively for women was supported, or at least not actively objected to, as it was generally believed that women's position as pillars of morality, including Léon herself, could perhaps be harnessed for Revolutionary gains.⁶⁹ Through hosting political clubs, women could foster discussions regarding their supposed duty to refine

⁶⁷ For example, see Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); Joan B. Landes, *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2018); Lynn Hunt, *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford and St. Martin's, 1996); Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1997).

⁶⁸ See Suzanne Desan, *The Family on Trial in Revolutionary France* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2006); Maxwell Raab, "Pauline Léon: The Negotiation of Radicalism and Gender Roles in the French Revolution," *Women in European History* (2017), retrieved 10 May 2023; Carla Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

⁶⁹ For further scholarship regarding women's role as educators and moral instructors during the early modern period, see Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe 1500-1800* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), especially Chapter 1: "Constructing Woman".

society and promote Revolutionary ideals. The idea was that these deliberations could then extend from women's inner circles and transcend into more public, male-dominated spaces.⁷⁰

The bread riots during the early years of the Revolution equally demonstrate instances when women entered political worlds from outside of the home.⁷¹ Women who engaged in violent action during these demonstrations faced little backlash for taking their grievances to the streets, an act that was deemed generally unsuitable for their sex. Since it was their role and duty as mothers to feed their families, these women were not punished for their radical insurgency. To successfully fulfill their position as nurturers, women who protested were deemed not only acceptable but perhaps even necessary for establishing a more equitable food market. This resulted in the bread riots becoming a catalyst for the advancement of the Revolution itself. However, this apparent acceptance of women's public political agency rested on the belief in "women's innate or socially determined incapacity for assuming political identities"; it was still inconceivable that women could become politicians or otherwise actively engage in politics itself.⁷²

It is within these confines that women often challenged the prevailing idea within the early modern period that womankind was created exclusively for domesticity and was largely devoid of political capabilities.⁷³ However, this new identity as radical insurrectionaries involved a paradox. To challenge the limitations imposed on their sex, French women often had to rely upon the very

⁷⁰ For more on women's participation within Revolutionary clubs, see Dominique Godineau, *The Women of Paris and Their French Revolution* trans. Katherine Streip (London: The University of California Press, 1998), 102-103; Olwen Hufton "Women in Revolution, 1789-1796," *Past & Present* 53 (1971): 90-108; Darline Gay Levy, Harriet Branson Applewhite, and Mary Durham, *Women in Revolutionary Paris 1789-1795* (Urbana and Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 1979), 66-68.

⁷¹ See Stanislas Maillard, "Stanislas Maillard Describes the Women's March to Versailles (5 October 1789)," *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution*, accessed July 12, 2022, Web, <https://revolution.chnm.org/d/473>.

⁷² Darlene Gay Levy and Harriet B. Applewhite, "Women and Militant Citizenship in Revolutionary Paris," in *Rebel Daughters* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 98.

⁷³ Wright, "Insurrectionary Heroines", 13.

restrictions that relegated them to the domestic sphere; the only way they could argue against essentialist ideas of womanhood was through advocating for all women.⁷⁴ It is within this paradox that women shaped their political agency during the early French Revolution.

Importantly, the history of “insurrectionary heroines” like that compiled by Wright uncovers and celebrates individualism rather than exploring the wider political importance of Republican Womanhood—the idea that women were best suited to uphold and promote the Revolution’s values.⁷⁵ While people like de Gouges are deeply important proto-feminist historical figures, this style of scholarship fails to fully consider the women who were not outliers or radicals—those who did not necessarily actively rebel against the status quo, establish political clubs, or riot in the streets, yet who were actively involved in shaping the politics of the Revolutionary decade, though not necessarily Revolutionary politics in its strictest sense. It is within this domain that womanhood and its corresponding role become politicized in and of itself, and this is precisely the space where many women opera composers existed.

It is the possibility of women opera composers influencing, contributing, reflecting, and even challenging the Revolutionary decade’s political climate that became central to their own

⁷⁴ This paradox regarding French Revolutionary women and feminism is emphasized in the work of gender historian Joan Scott. Feminist activists like Olympe de Gouges insisted that sexual difference was irrelevant for citizenship but in claiming to act on behalf of all women, de Gouges had to invoke the essentialist idea of sexual difference. In other words, to gain individual rights and declare that women were not inherently different from men, eighteenth-century gender activists had to reinforce the idea of women as a distinctive category. This overarching battle between individualism versus collectivity is paramount to any understanding of gender within the early modern period, especially within the French context. While “women have never operated as one monolithic group, and the French Revolution proved no exception,” the importance of understanding individual women versus the historical, universal concept of womanhood is both significant and essential. See Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*; Hope Spencer, “Women in the French Revolution: From the Salons to the Streets,” n.d., <https://blogs.loc.gov/international-collections/2020/07/women-in-the-french-revolution-from-the-salons-to-the-streets/>.

⁷⁵ For a discussion of “Republican Womanhood” and “Republican Motherhood”, see Annie Smart, *Citoyennes: Women and the Ideal of Citizenship in Eighteenth-Century France* (Newark: The University of Delaware Press, 2011), especially 4-18.

identity as composers. Women like Lucile Grétry (1772-1790), Florine Dezède (1766-1792), and Julie Candeille (1767-1834), who gained their initial success before 1789 and remained relatively conservative in their actions; they did not become radical political activists, yet they helped to shape the early Revolution's climate.

To understand women composers as part of a larger phenomenon regarding the politicization of French womanhood and its service to the nation-state, yet not ignore their autonomy, many fields of study that address the French Revolution must be considered. From Marxist interpretations, to revisionist, and now post-revisionist, the disciplinary domains of political, musical, and gender histories must be merged. It is within the intersection of these three distinct yet entirely connected areas of historical interpretation that a better understanding of the cultural and political significance of women opera composers during the Revolution may be uncovered. Contextual yet equally argumentative, this chapter seeks to examine and critique interpretations of eighteenth-century French opera to understand how women creating *opéra-comique* can be read as politically meaningful to its respective time and place.

This chapter begins with a very brief overview highlighting why class considerations are important to understand the Revolution's origins and indeed the women of this project. It then focuses on the Reign of Terror (1793-1794) specifically through discussing its previous interpretations. This discussion should not be understood as a comprehensive summary of the Reign of Terror, or the factors which led to this event, but rather as the necessary information required to best understand the lives and operas of Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille. Within this chapter's initial section, the argument as to why this project deems the years between 1789-1794 the "early" French Revolution is presented. Occasionally noted as the first and second phases, or more commonly the "moderate" and "radical" phases, denoting the first five years as the "early"

Revolution has been a conscious decision that seeks to challenge the use of the terms “moderate” and “radical”. As I argue, these designations carry their own complexities thus complicating their use, in addition to being historically inaccurate. Pragmatically, this project focuses on the Revolution’s first five years as this was the period in which women-created opera saw unparalleled success, as highlighted in Appendix A.⁷⁶ Correspondingly, it is equally the period where the political philosophy of Revolutionary Womanhood developed and flourished which resulted in a heightened importance for the idealization of womanhood.⁷⁷

This chapter will then turn towards feminist readings within the post-revisionist trend of French Revolutionary studies. Emphasis on how gender historians offer new insight into the Revolution itself is central to this discussion as my own work is very much inspired by their contributions. In addition to understanding women’s agency during this period, the inherent connection between femininity and sensibility, which was central to both Republican political responsiveness and conceptions of the ideal French woman, forms most of this critique. Specifically, building upon the research of Wright, as well as that of gender scholars Joan Landes, Lynn Hunt, Olwen Hufton, Darlene Levy, and Harriet Applewhite, I explore the importance of the domestic sphere and its influence over public spaces.⁷⁸

Exploring women in eighteenth-century French opera shapes the second and largest part of this historiographical chapter. After a comprehensive examination of Jacqueline Letzter and

⁷⁶ In May 1793, women’s political clubs became legally banned by the Jacobins. For more detailed information on this piece of legislation, see Hunt, *The French Revolution and Human Rights*, 135–138.

⁷⁷ “Revolutionary Sensibility” is a term largely used by historian David Andress. It explains the heightened emotional state present in Republican sentiments, notably reflected in their speeches. A further discussion of this term and its consequences for the French Revolution is discussed later in this chapter.

⁷⁸ See Landes, *Visualizing the Nation*; Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution*; Hunt, *Family Romance of the French Revolution*; Olwen Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution* (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1999); Gay Levy and Applewhite, “Women and Militant Citizenship in Revolutionary Paris.”

Richard Adelson's work, which is the only book entirely dedicated to women creating French opera from 1770-1820, I turn to the work of Hedy Law, Georgia Cowart, and Raphaëlle Legrand to capture existing research on women in French opera. This literature highlights that women were vital to the genesis and continuation of French opera but found more freedom at the Comédie-Italienne creating *opéra-comique* compared to *tragédie en musique* at the Opéra.

Separated into the aesthetics and conventions of eighteenth-century opera, Revolutionary audiences, and opera under the Revolution, the final section of this chapter offers historical and contextual information necessary to understand how the operas of Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille fit into the wider picture of French opera. Here I review the work of Thomas Downing, Georgia Cowart, Michael McClellan, Mark Darlow, Emmet Kennedy, and Elizabeth Bartlet. A brief overview of *opéra-comique* and its development during the late eighteenth-century is discussed, though this section is primarily focused on opera during the French Revolution. The overarching questions are whether Revolutionary deputies propagandized opera on the Revolutionary stage, and how we might interpret sentimental opera within this framework.

If the emblematic political significance of Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille is difficult to prove definitively, I argue that such a reading is indeed plausible through this historiography and criticism. Feminist studies of the eighteenth-century have proposed that female-authored discourses of womanhood were always and already deeply political. The intention of this chapter is to demonstrate where my own research and methodological approach builds upon this research within the wider discipline of eighteenth-century studies, specifically that on women in French opera.

1.1 Class and the Origins of the French Revolution

Despite its designation, the French Revolution was not a singular event. It involved distinctive stages with their own political nuances and degrees of radicalism. The Revolution also affected different regions of France differently. While this project is entirely focused on the Parisian operative stage, as this is where women-composed opera flourished, events that were taking place in the capital city were not simultaneously felt across the country. The reverse is equally true, as demonstrated through the War in the Vendée from 1793-96 or la Grande Peur peasant's revolt in 1789 which began in eastern France before spreading south to Provence while a simultaneous revolt occurred in southwestern France and spread to the Pyrenees.⁷⁹ Therefore, any claims being made and argued in this project are entirely dependent on the locale of the capital city and they should not, inherently, be understood as indicative for all of France.

In terms of the Revolution's origins, there is a general misperception that the events leading up to 1789 were the workings of a famished lower class. This is tempting to believe, especially with the modern popularization of events like the Storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789 or the Women's March on Versailles. However, after extensive research, it is now believed that the motivation and philosophies behind the Revolution were initiated and were the result of a largely educated section of society who had lost confidence in their monarch due to costly wars that resulted in a financial crisis, the most destructive of which was likely the Seven Years' War (1756-1763).⁸⁰ One possible reason for this confusion over who was central to the Revolution's unfolding

⁷⁹ For more information on La Grande Peur, see Georges Lefebvre, *La Grande Peur de 1789: Suivi de Les Foules Révolutionnaires* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1932).

⁸⁰ For discussion of the factors leading up to the French Revolution and why the Seven Years' War financially ruined France, see David Bell, *Lawyers and Citizens: The Making of a Political Elite in Old Regime France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) and Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution: Twentieth Anniversary Edition, With a New Preface* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2004). The grain

involves the estates system. The First Estate was comprised of the clergy; the Second, the nobility, while all those left out of these two groups were part of the Third Estate.

As such, peasants and the bourgeoisie belonged to the same social class, but this class was not homogenous. As historians Jack Amariglio and Bruce Norton remark, modern French history scholars' largest concern about this homogenization of the Third Estate is the confusion Marxist interpretations of the Revolution generate regarding class structure. Specifically, the proletariat is often remarked upon as including serfs, working-class, and non-working-class peasants across France, and little acknowledgment is given regarding the complexities of the makeup of the Third Estate.⁸¹ However, it is important to note that the ideological thought behind the Revolution, and those who were largely in control during it, came from the bourgeoisie, specifically lawyers with the most notable likely being Camille Desmoulins (1760-1794) and, after establishing the First Republic (1792-1804), Maximilien Robespierre (1756-1794).⁸²

The reason why understanding class and political power is significant is because women opera creators during the Revolution, notably Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille as well as Henriette Adelaïde Villard (1748-1813) and Jeanne-Hippolyte Devismes (1770-1836), were all part of this bourgeoisie group within the Third Estate. This fact is paramount to understanding their operas' success during the French Revolution, especially in the case of Grétry and Dezède, whose operas were not successful before 1789, aside from their initial premiers in 1781 and 1786, but were

shortage in France, which did affect the peasantry's daily life, was equally an important factor. For an overview of the events and factors which led to the French Revolution, see Appendix B.

⁸¹ Jack Amariglio and Bruce Norton, "Marxist Historians and the Question of Class in the French Revolution." *History and Theory* 30, no. 1 (1991): 37–55. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2505290>.

⁸² This argument is proposed by historian Timothy Tackett see Timothy Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary: The Deputies of the French National Assembly and the Emergence of a Revolutionary Culture (1789-1790)* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

resurrected in Paris during the Revolution in 1789 and 1790, respectively.⁸³ Unlike previously successful women creators of opera before 1789, Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille were not attached to Versailles and the Second Estate.⁸⁴

For example, Marie-Emmanuelle Bayon-Louis (1746-1825) had her *opéra-comique* *Fleur d'Épine* (1776) performed at the Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne in Paris, the same theatre where Dezède's *Lucette et Lucas* premiered.⁸⁵ Bayon-Louis was, however, very connected to Versailles through her noble patron, Madame la Marquise de Langeron.⁸⁶ *Fleur d'Épine* was even dedicated to Louise-Marie-Adélaïde de Bourbon, Madame la Duchesse de Chartres (1753-1821), one of the wealthiest heiresses in France.⁸⁷ Class is not the only reason why this opera fell out of favour and was not revived during the Revolution, as its plot centers around fairies and the *merveilleux*, which fell out of favour for more realistic pastoral representations, but it is certainly something to consider, especially as this appears to be a commonality among women composers before 1789.⁸⁸

⁸³ See Appendix D and E for the performance histories of Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786) and Florine Dezède's *Lucette et Lucas* (1781), respectively.

⁸⁴ It must be noted that Lucile Grétry's father, André Grétry, was known to have been Marie-Antoinette's favourite composer of *opéra-comique*, but we have little proof that Lucile Grétry was herself connected to the Queen or Versailles in any way. For more information on André Grétry and his relationship with Marie-Antoinette, see James Barrington, *The Musical World of Marie-Antoinette: Opera and Ballet in 18th Century Paris and Versailles* (Jefferson: McFarland, Incorporated, Publishers, 2021), especially 155-166.

⁸⁵ For the performance history of Bayon-Louis' *Fleur d'Épine* (1776), see CÉSAR *calendrier électronique des spectacles sous l'ancien régime et sous la Révolution* [Oxford: CESAR Project at Oxford Brookes University, 2001] Web, https://cesar.huma-num.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UOID=167476; See Appendix E for the performance history of Lucile Grétry's *Lucette et Lucas* (1781).

⁸⁶ Martha Furman Schleifer and Sylvia Glickman, *From Convent to Concert Hall: A Guide to Women Composers* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003), 113.

⁸⁷ See Deborah Hayes, "Introduction to Madame Louis: *Fleur d'Épine* ('Mayflower'), *opéra-comique*; excerpts from full score, 1776" in *Women Composers: Music Through the Ages*, edited by Sylvia Glickman and Martha Schleifer, 12 vols (New York: G. K. Hall/Macmillan, 1995), vol. 4, 93-154.

⁸⁸ This chapter will subsequently discuss the *merveilleux* in relation to the rise of *opéra-comique* at the Comédie-Italienne. See also Aubrey S. Garlington, Jr., "'Le Merveilleux' and Operatic Reform in 18th-Century French Opera," *The Musical Quarterly* 49, no.4 (1963): 484-497 and Raphaëlle Legrand "Libertines et femmes vertueuses: l'image des chanteuses d'opéra et d'opéra-comique en France au XVIIIe siècle," *Émancipation sexuelle ou contrainte des corps* (2006): 157-175.

Another example is the librettist and composer Isabelle de Charrière (1740-1805), who wrote nine operas and libretti, yet never had any of her works performed.⁸⁹ She was “forced to work in greater isolation than most other composers” and she had to prepare the libretti and music for her works alone which was contrary to the practise at this time.⁹⁰ In eighteenth-century France, the general process was that first, the intended libretto had to be approved.⁹¹ Music was seldomly composed at this stage as many texts were rejected. Following the libretto’s approval, a composer was appointed. It was only after the completion of these stages that the composition process could commence. A committee would then meet to hear selections from the opera, with the final step in approval being the entire production’s performance for the Théâtre’s members.⁹² It was very much a collaborative process and one which it appears de Charrière did not experience.

While there are many factors why de Charrière faced obstacles in having her works performed, one of which was her strong preference for Italian operatic styles over French which proved problematic in the 1780s and 90s, the fact that her father was “one of the most ancient noblemen in the Seven Provinces” likely did not help her have her operas performed during the Revolution, when most of her works were written.⁹³

A similar history lies with composer Caroline Wuïet (1766-1835), who had composed two operas, *L’Heureux stratagème* (1783) and *L’Heureuse erreur* (1786), which were popular until the

⁸⁹ See Jacqueline Letzter, *Belle de Zuylen: Education, Creation, Reception* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 209.

⁹⁰ See Jacqueline Letzter and Robert Adelson, *Women Writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution* (London: The University of California Press, 2001), 138.

⁹¹ Lucile Grétry, *Le mariage d’Antonio*, ed. Robert Adelson (Middleton, Wisconsin: A-R Editions, Inc., 1786), xi.

⁹² Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 138.

⁹³ James Boswell, *The Yale Editions of the Private Papers of James Boswell, Volume 1* (London: W. Heinemann, 1952), 138. For a complete list and discussion of the musical works of Isabelle de Charrière, see Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 137-218. For more on the novels of Isabelle de Charrière, see Susan Jackson, “The Novels of Isabelle de Charrière, or, A Woman’s Work Is Never Done,” *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 14 (1985) 299-306.

Revolution.⁹⁴ As a child, she was presented to Marie-Antoinette by the Princesse de Lamballe (1749-1792) and, as a staunch royal supporter, it is likely not surprising that she was forced to leave France and go into hiding during the Revolution.⁹⁵

The reason I believe it is important to consider class implications and the genesis of the Revolution is because figures like Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille were part of the same Estate and social group as many prominent early Revolutionaries, especially those who held the most power and influence like commoners Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès (1748-1836), who was a chief political theorist and published the famous “What is the Third Estate”, Jean-Paul Marat (1743-1793), a prominent politician and journalist, Jacques Pierre Brissot (1754-1793), the leading member of the Girondins, Georges Danton (1759-1794), the infamous Minister of Justice responsible for the September Massacres, and Maximilien Robespierre, the President of the French National Convention.

1.2 Historically Categorizing the Early French Revolution

I return to the complexity of class in the case-study chapters. For now, I must clarify why my work uses the term “early French Revolution”. This project focuses on when women-composed opera reached its peak in popularity, as listed in Appendix A.⁹⁶ These were correspondingly the years when the desire to create a constitutional monarchy shifted to that of forming a new republic. 1789-1794 has sometimes been separated into two phases; a moderate or “liberal” phase followed by the “radical” phase, but there is little consensus about these two stages and their labelling. The general idea is that the moderate or liberal phase comprised the abolition of the *ancien régime* and

⁹⁴ See David Charlton, "Wuiet, Caroline," Grove Music Online (Oxford University Press), accessed 20 May 2023.

⁹⁵ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 123-129.

⁹⁶ See Appendix A for a list of women creators of French opera pre and post 1789.

the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in 1789. The “radical” phase commenced in August 1792 and lasted until the fall of Robespierre in July 1794, and it has been given this title due to the Reign of Terror’s violence. However, the Terror’s origins have been reevaluated and deemed far too complex to simply suggest that it was a period that differed vastly in terms of violence from preceding and proceeding years.

For historians like François Furet in the 1970s, the Terror was the natural result of the events of 1789. Despite the National Assembly’s failure to create a liberal political entity, the creation of a state grounded in the Rousseauian concept of the general will meant that those who opposed the state were naturally detrimental to its creation.⁹⁷ A certain mistrust of those who resisted the establishment of a liberal republic began with the Tennis Court Oath on 20 June 1789 and, according to Furet, this event led inevitably to the Terror.⁹⁸ Or, as historian Michael Fitzsimmons succinctly summarizes, this historical approach insinuates that “intolerance and an inability to conceive of a loyal opposition led to a fixation with conspiracies and ultimately [resulted in] the Terror.”⁹⁹

In the 1980s, Timothy Tackett challenged Furet’s idea of suspicion leading to terror. According to Tackett, those who constructed the constitution were far more engrossed in legal thought than in that of the *philosophes*. The pragmatic necessity to create a republic far outweighed any dedication to enlightenment philosophy. As such, the idea of suspicion resulting in terror

⁹⁷ See François Furet, *Penser La Révolution Française*, ed. (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1978).

⁹⁸ Despite Louis XVI conceding and appeasing the Third Estate’s demands to increase their representation in 1789, the First and Second Estates were still exempt from paying taxes. This was deemed unsustainable by the Third Estate, considering the country’s financial status. Refusing to engage further, and declaring themselves the National Assembly, the Third Estate—banned from the chambers—met at a tennis court on 20 June 1789. They took an oath that they would not disband until a constitution had been drafted, known famously as the Tennis Court Oath. For more information, see the *Gazette Nationale, ou Le Moniteur universel*, trans. Laura Mason in Laura Mason and Tracey Rizzo, eds., *The French Revolution: A Document Collection* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 60-61.

⁹⁹ Michael P. Fitzsimmons, *Night the Old Regime Ended August 4, 1789, and the French Revolution* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 43.

cannot be faithfully traced back to the National Assembly.¹⁰⁰ More recently, historian Patrice Gueniffey has partially agreed and concluded that the Terror likely originated in a necessity to construct an entirely new social order rather than work within the existing framework.¹⁰¹ The systemic practise of violence in the Terror enabled leaders like Robespierre to maintain the necessary power to achieve this goal. However, Fitzsimmons disagrees with this interpretation as the distinction between means and ends is not made clear. For him, while the National Assembly sought reforms, as his selected case study of the Assembly's leniency for émigrés demonstrates, this legislative body never resorted to harsh policies despite their clear goal of reshaping French society.¹⁰² While the extent of the Assembly's success is debatable, the origins of their strong desire to wholly reform French politics is not, as demonstrated through the Tennis Court Oath. In this view, the Terror was not the result of ambiguous or undebatable beliefs perpetuated by those in the Assembly, but rather due to this group's internally conflicted desires. This tension resulted in polarizing violence.¹⁰³

While it is outside of this project's scope to discuss the causes of the Reign of Terror, a general knowledge of these years is needed to appreciate subsequent historical analysis. It is important to highlight scholarly disagreement because these demonstrate how the wider field of French Revolutionary studies is constantly evolving and reevaluating prior interpretations. What was once a universal term like the "moderate" phase fails to acknowledge the complex lineage between the National Assembly's formation, its desires, and violence during the Terror. The

¹⁰⁰ Tackett points out that suspicion was high in French politics long before 1789 during the *ancien régime* as per the Famine plot persecution. See Timothy Tackett, "The Constituent Assembly and The Terror," in *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture: The Terror*, ed. Keith Michael Baker (Pergamon: Oxford University Press, 1994), 39–54.

¹⁰¹ See Patrice Gueniffey, *La Politique de La Terreur: Essai Sur La Violence Révolutionnaire, 1789-1799* (Paris: Gallimard, 2003).

¹⁰² Fitzsimmons, *Old Regime*, 43.

¹⁰³ Fitzsimmons, *Old Regime*, 43.

question of if and how this so-called moderate phase resulted in the realization of the Terror is a complicated and contentious area of study. These phases also fail to account for all the other periods of violence that did not take place during this “radical” phase. For example, the White Terror of 1795 or even La Grande Peur were equally periods of violence and radical action despite being part of the so-called conservative and moderate phases, respectively.¹⁰⁴

Therefore, this project will use not the two phases but the designations of the legislative formations during the Revolution—specifically, the National Assembly (1789-1791), the Legislative Assembly (1791-1792), and the National Convention (1792-1795) as well as the overarching First Republic (1792-1804). For simplicity, the “early Revolution” will be used to refer to everything up to and including the establishment of the National Convention. While the term “early” suggests a sort of progression, which is not necessarily accurate, referring to the French Revolution’s first five years as the “early Revolution” offers a more nuanced understanding of these politically dynamic years.

1.3 Feminist Interpretations of the French Revolution

Like scholarly interpretations of the Terror, the entire field of French Revolution studies involves on-going debate. In general, research that seeks to comprehend this period often reveals more about the historian’s own time rather than that of late eighteenth-century France, and my own work proves no exception. Interpretations of this decade largely began in the nineteenth

¹⁰⁴ The White Terror occurred in 1795. It was a period of extreme violence across France largely conceived to be in reaction to the Reign of Terror (1793-94). Its victims were those who initiated or participated in the Reign of Terror, including Robespierre, and it was equally a phase of the Revolution where suspicion and anxiety reigned. It ended with the overthrowing of Robespierre and the Jacobin movement. More scholarship is needed to better understand this period of the Revolution, but Stephen Clay’s “The White Terror: Factions, Reactions, and the Politics of Vengeance” provides a good overview of this period. For more information, see Stephen Clay, “The White Terror: Factions, Reactions, and the Politics of Vengeance,” in *A Companion to the French Revolution*, ed. Peter McPhee (Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2012), 359-378.

century with historians like Thomas Carlyle, Alexis de Tocqueville, and Jules Michelet. These scholars focused on the events leading to the Revolution, which they coupled with the rise of liberalism.¹⁰⁵ However, it is within twentieth-century interpretations that the field of French Revolutionary studies further developed as a disciplinary area.

A historiography of the French Revolution from the twentieth century to present-day interpretations is generally understood within three ideologies: Marxists interpretations from the early part of the century until the 1960s, revisionism from the mid-twentieth century until the 1990s, and post-revisionist understandings from the 1990s until the present day. Political and economic ideologies tended to shape earlier understanding of the Revolution, but more recent scholarship has followed the larger field of early modern European studies by pursuing a more cultural approach. However, it should be noted that many present-day historians incorporate elements of each ideology in their interpretations so these boundaries should not be considered impermeable. Indeed, my own understanding of class relations during 1789 are owed in large part to Marxist and post-revisionist interpretations.

Nonetheless, Marxist readings of the French Revolution were dominant until the mid-twentieth century. During this era, Georges Lefebvre, Jean Jaures, Albert Mathiez, George Rudé, and Albert Soboul's histories tended to explore the idea of a "bourgeoisie" revolution.¹⁰⁶ Especially popular in France, this interpretation developed ideas generated by Marx himself; the idea was that

¹⁰⁵ See Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution: A History, Volume 3* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes & Brothers, 1890); Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, trans. John Bonner (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1856); Jules Michelet, *Histoire de La Révolution Française, Tome 4* (Paris: Chamerot, 1847), <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb30943230z>; Jules Michelet, *Les Femmes de La Révolution* (Paris: Adolphe Delahays, 1855).

¹⁰⁶ See Georges Lefebvre, *The Coming of the French Revolution, 1789* (Paris: Vintage Books, 1957); Jean Jaurès, *A Socialist History of the French Revolution*, trans. Mitchell Abidor (London: Pluto Press, 2015); Albert Mathiez, *The French Revolution* (Paris: Russell & Russell, 1928); George Rudé, *The French Revolution* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1988); Albert Soboul, *The Sans-Culottes: The Popular Movement and Revolutionary Government, 1793-1794* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

the French Revolution was predominantly about the middle class initially overthrowing the French aristocracy with the possibility of the proletariat eventually usurping this power from the bourgeoisie.¹⁰⁷

This was followed by the revisionists of the 1970s, led by Alfred Cobban, William Doyle, Colin Lucas, George V. Taylor, and François Furet.¹⁰⁸ As Cobban notes, before the French Revolution, France's feudal system was already undergoing disbandment. Without this system in place, it follows that the Revolutionary movement could not be responsible for ending feudalism. As a result, the genesis of modern capitalism, which Marxists attribute to the end of France's feudal system, can not be said to have begun post-1789.¹⁰⁹ This distinction, though complex, is important as it raises further questions regarding what we may attribute to a Revolutionary spirit and when these ideas may or may not have been initiated.

Considering its historical moment during the 1960s and 70s, it is fairly evident that the revisionists were inspired by Cold War anti-Marxist sentiments. Their desire to "return to politics" within French Revolution studies attempts to move past class conflict and socioeconomic narratives and instead focus on the eighteenth-century political landscape. To counter the established Marxist interpretations, archival researchers sought to demonstrate how those within the so-called bourgeoisie were not necessarily capital owners.

¹⁰⁷ In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx connects the 1789 Revolution to the 1848 French Revolution claiming that the latter was inspired by a "bourgeois revolution" which encouraged subsequent rebellions. See Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, ed. Saul K. Padover (New York: McGraw Hill, 1972).

¹⁰⁸ See François Furet, *Penser La Révolution Française*, ed. Éditions Gallimard (Paris: Bibliothèque des histoires, 1978).

¹⁰⁹ See Alfred Cobban, *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

From the 1990s to the present day, post-revisionist interpretations dominated the discipline. The rise of discourse analysis towards the end of the twentieth century offered more nuanced political and intellectual histories. Timothy Tackett's *Becoming a Revolutionary: The Deputies of the French National Assembly and the Emergence of a Revolutionary Culture (1789–1790)* (1996) is perhaps the largest study to use both public and private archives to uncover the lives of Revolutionary deputies as the means to discuss the Revolution's origins.¹¹⁰ While Furet argued that enlightenment ideals directly inspired Revolutionaries, Tackett proposes that despite being familiar with enlightenment philosophy, deputies were not interested in an “ideology” or a “discourse” of enlightenment.¹¹¹ Rather, Tackett focuses on the Revolutionaries' pragmatic side. According to his interpretation, those attracted to drafting laws rather than discussing abstract philosophies were central to the decade's events.¹¹² Perhaps the most important observation within this interpretation is that it is through the actual creation of the Assembly itself that Revolutionaries began to envision a new France, not the inverse.

The 1990s saw the proliferation of feminist historians and their interpretation of the Revolutionary decade. Lynn Hunt, Joan Landes, and Dominique Godineau pioneered this field where French women's everyday lives became a valid means to better understand late eighteenth-century France.¹¹³ The politics of public versus private and how these two spheres coincided permits this research to explore the family's importance, its role in creating the nation-state, and women's position as mothers within more political contexts. This scholarship's impact, aside from

¹¹⁰ See Timothy Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary: The Deputies of the French National Assembly and the Emergence of a Revolutionary Culture (1789-1790)* (University Park: Princeton University Press, 1996).

¹¹¹ Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary*, 65.

¹¹² Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary*, 48-76.

¹¹³ For example, see Hunt, *Family Romance of the French Revolution*; Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution*; Dominique Godineau, *Citoyennes Tricoteuses: Les Femmes Du Peuple à Paris Pendant La Révolution Française* (Paris: Alinéa, 1988).

celebrating a group that has been largely underserved to date, is that it highlights how the private was indeed vital for public political spaces. Salon culture and women's role as social influencers is perhaps now the most studied area within this disciplinary field.¹¹⁴

The Family Romance of the French Revolution (1992), *The Women of Paris and Their Revolution* (1998), and more recently *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (2018) all suggest the importance of soft power within larger political movements.¹¹⁵ What makes these scholars' work so vital to our understanding of women's role within the Revolutionary decade is that they often discuss all women rather than a few notable elites. Studies regarding Marie-Antoinette and Olympe de Gouges circulated long before the 1990s, but a more cultural historical approach to "womanhood", as an idealized symbol in late eighteenth-century France, is often presented within this research style.

Following Hunt's earlier research, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* highlights the importance of symbolism and ritual within French society. Focusing on the symbol of the family as representative of the France monarchy, this scholarship suggests that one constant desire throughout the entire Revolution was the effort "to imagine a polity unhinged from patriarchal authority."¹¹⁶ Using the Freudian concept of the family romance, Hunt argues that a change in ideological belief of the family structure preceded, and may have even resulted in, the unconscious removal of the king as head of the state. Her reliance on art is notably paramount to her argument. Looking at artistic depictions of "the good father" from earlier in the eighteenth

¹¹⁴ For examples of literature on French salon culture, see Antoine Lilti, *The World of the Salons: Sociability and Worldliness in Eighteenth-Century Paris*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Steven Kale, *French Salons High Society and Political Sociability from the Old Regime to the Revolution of 1848* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

¹¹⁵ Hunt, *Family Romance of the French Revolution*; Godineau, *Citoyennes Tricoteuses: Les Femmes Du Peuple à Paris Pendant La Révolution Française*; Landes, *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France*.

¹¹⁶ Hunt, *Family Romance of the French Revolution*, xiv.

century, meaning a family head who relinquishes his control for the betterment of his children's happiness, Hunt remarks that "the idea of the good father and the father's subsequent effacement fatally undermined the absolutist foundations of the monarchical regime."¹¹⁷ Hunt does not suggest these depictions resulted directly in the King's execution, but rather that their circulation before 1793 suggests a growing consciousness of the importance of paternal benevolence.

Hunt does not, however, discuss opera. This is remarkable given that, in Grétry, Dezède, and even Candeille's works, the ideal of the good father is central.¹¹⁸ What I appreciate most about Hunt's work, though, is that it highlights the possibility that discussions of the family had political significance. The scholar never suggests that depictions of the good father directly resulted in the Revolution's unfolding—such a remark would be difficult to historically prove. Instead, Hunt proposes that historians remain curious about and explore art's power over political unconscious decision-making. As part of this, she proposes that art may have projected societal beliefs before those beliefs were enacted upon.

Post-revisionist interpretations of the French Revolution continue to emerge alongside feminist histories. Within French studies, the idea that there was an emotional revolution that ran parallel to political events has particularly piqued recent scholars' interest.¹¹⁹ More broadly, historians of feeling seek new understandings of early modern France. William Reddy's *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (2010) is a pioneering study within this discipline.¹²⁰ While it is outside this project's scope to fully remark on whether this

¹¹⁷ Hunt, *Family Romance of the French Revolution*, 34.

¹¹⁸ For more information regarding the role of the good father within the operas of Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille, see this project's Conclusion.

¹¹⁹ For example, see Rachel Hewitt, *A Revolution of Feeling: The Decade That Forged the Modern Mind* (London: Granta, 2018), especially Chapter IV: The Age of Despair, "The Revolution of Feeling".

¹²⁰ See William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010).

shift in feeling could accurately be called a revolution, the knowledge this area of research generates can enrich musicological accounts of late eighteenth-century France. Women opera composers' importance within establishing the nation-state during the French Revolution may be further explained when one considers what exactly took place emotionally from 1789 until the Directory's establishment. Within the discourse of feeling, the concept of "Revolutionary sensibility" is perhaps the most fruitful area yet to be explored and discussed.

One of the most well-known uses of the term "Revolutionary sensibility" is noted by David Andress. In his 2011 article, "Living the Revolutionary Melodrama: Robespierre's Sensibility and the Construction of Political Commitment in the French Revolution" (2011), Andress links the cult of sensibility to the Revolution's politics.¹²¹ Looking directly at letters written by Maximilien Robespierre, Andress explores how political elites used sensibility as a means to reveal their loyalty to the French people and eventually the First Republic.¹²² He claims that Robespierre created a sentimental melodrama out of the French Revolution which was pertinent for fostering public support.¹²³ The public would only support fully overthrowing the monarchy, and only reject the compromise of a constitutional monarchy, if Revolutionaries could prove two things: first, that deputies, mainly the Jacobins, held a deeply passionate love for France and its citizens, and second, that any personal gains political leaders acquired were purely altruistic and for the betterment of France.¹²⁴

In its theatre of sorts, the politics of the early Revolution revolved around the projection of feeling rather than tangible actions. A desire to convince others that emotions were held

¹²¹ David Andress, "Living the Revolutionary Melodrama: Robespierre's Sensibility and the Construction of Political Commitment in the French Revolution," *Representations* 114, no. 1 (2011): 103-128, <https://doi.org/10.1525/rep.2011.114.1.103>.

¹²² Andress, "Living the Revolutionary Melodrama", 103.

¹²³ Andress, "Living the Revolutionary Melodrama", 104.

¹²⁴ Andress, "Living the Revolutionary Melodrama", 105-110.

authentically, comparable to actors' ambitions to persuade and move their audience, was deeply embedded in political language. In published letters, Robespierre spoke that he had a deep "[l]ove for the people, a people imperilled, to be saved by men who shared that love, and the dangers it subjected them to."¹²⁵ For Andress, the "remarkable language of love with which [Robespierre] reached out... and the reasons why that link was so eagerly sought" helps explain how Robespierre acquired power.¹²⁶ More than a metaphor, living the Revolutionary melodrama succinctly summarizes the politician's actions.

Andress' concept of Revolutionary sensibility raises many questions when taken outside of its strict political context. Could this idea of a fabricated sentimental narrative proving one's authenticity apply to sentimental operas? Andress does not expand on other leaders, leaving it unclear if Robespierre was an exception or a case in point. Nonetheless, I believe Revolutionary sensibility deserves recognition and further discussion as it resonates with women's histories of the French Revolution.¹²⁷

While scholarship on French women's history has not yet embraced this term, feminist commentary on other revolutionary moments has looked at sensibility in the late eighteenth century and its connection to the politicization of womanhood. In basic terms, women were often called upon to rise selflessly above their struggles and act for the betterment of the people. It is not fiction to suggest that making one's needs secondary often shapes women's roles in their homes, even today. As Sarah Knott notes in her study on sensibility within the American Revolution, as beings thought to possess a more developed nervous system, women were often encouraged by

¹²⁵ Andress, "Living the Revolutionary Melodrama", 104.

¹²⁶ Andress, "Living the Revolutionary Melodrama", 104.

¹²⁷ This theory is further explored in Chapter Four: Navigating the Reign of Terror in Julie Candeille's *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* (1792).

political figures to help unify their country, especially during times of conflict.¹²⁸ As “more susceptible to images of mind and body,” women were lent higher emotive capacity. This also suggested that they possessed a greater sense of morality.¹²⁹ American politicians called upon women to use their sensibilities for good, lead by example, and encourage virtuous and moral communities to support American Revolutionaries.¹³⁰ Acting as the moral pillars of their respective communities, women were politically useful and admired. However, individual women were largely instructed to remain within the domestic sphere, and they were only encouraged to become publicly active when there was a necessity to instruct or encourage virtue for the public’s benefit. This distinction between the political power womanhood grants versus that bestowed on individual women cannot be overstressed.

According to Knott, women played a key role in the American Revolution’s success. For the movement to triumph, public support was essential. While anger against the British Crown was the catalyst for many republicans, this emotion could quickly fade once Americans began to experience the war’s devastation.¹³¹ Another sustained and less visceral emotion was needed to unite all those opposed to the Crown and, according to Knott, sensibility could be appropriated to achieve this goal.¹³² One of Knott’s most powerful observations is that women were exclusively able to grant men true “sentimental agency”; women’s “chance to convert men was couched, not in terms of the conveyance of particular ideas or forms of knowledge, but in the more intangible

¹²⁸ Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

¹²⁹ Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*, 316.

¹³⁰ Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*, 316.

¹³¹ Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*, 316.

¹³² Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*, 316.

modelling of the ability to socialize and unite.”¹³³ It was the ability to unite or strengthen a sense of community bonding that proved vital for America’s independence.

This idea of Revolutionary sensibility, socialization, and women’s innate power to instruct men should likely also complement our understanding of French women opera composers’ success and suggest that they too used these tactics as the means to legitimize their public presence outside of the home. Knott’s ability to highlight sensibility’s complexities and multi-layered existence may prove equally essential for any meaningful discussion regarding sensibility in eighteenth-century France.

Sensibility’s different modes and their respective importance, both personally and politically, to eighteenth-century politics proves crucial to our understanding of political power during moments of grand social change, not only during the French Revolution. Women in the arts, in particular the literary arts, have often benefited from these moments of instability using societal discussions over how change may be enacted to their advantage to enter more male-dominated spaces.¹³⁴ This is precisely why one must look to women creating music before 1789 to understand how Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille fit into this larger occurrence of instability leading to gendered advancements, especially within the French context.

1.4 Women in French Opera

Turning towards the core of my research, I wish to begin discussing French opera conventions and gender by exploring women in eighteenth-century French opera directly. As I have mentioned, what truly set women composers of the French Revolution apart was their

¹³³ Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*, 316.

¹³⁴ In France, there is a precedent of women gaining autonomy and power in the arts during moments of political instability, in particular during the Fronde (1648 to 1653). For more on women’s rise in literary power during this period, see Joan DeJean, *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

bourgeoisie social class and their lack of direct sponsorship from the French Court. However, while this class consideration must shape how we approach their operas, it is important to understand Revolutionary women creators of opera through a continuum of women creating music in France.

Women Writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution (2001) is the first book to focus exclusively on French women's success as creators of opera between 1770 and 1820.¹³⁵ Divided into two parts, the first section of this work focuses on women composers during the French Revolution, and it serves as a quasi-catalogue. It succinctly documents many composers during the late eighteenth century, and it is followed by brief analyses regarding how women found their musical success. It is often the starting point for discussions of women, agency, and composition throughout the French Revolution and I am indebted to its ground-breaking work in uncovering and rediscovering Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille.

In the book's introduction, Letzter and Adelson stress that their research's goal is to rediscover lost women composers and librettists who have "suffered a double erasure from the musical cannon—because they wrote in a genre that is neglected today and because they were women."¹³⁶ This commemoration of women is largely achieved via emphasis on biography and on how women gained their musical education despite facing limitations to enter male-dominated spaces.¹³⁷ Acting as a sort of physical gatekeeper for musical knowledge, the *chapelles* and the inner workings of the opera house are examined in detail.¹³⁸ Insightfully, Letzter and Adelson discuss how familial connections were vital for women in order to compensate for not being

¹³⁵ See Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*.

¹³⁶ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 5.

¹³⁷ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 110.

¹³⁸ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 110.

offered formal educational positions.¹³⁹ The beginning chapters of this book are therefore rooted in uncovering women's authority and identity and how they overcame impediments to learn the art of composition once the traditional patron system, rooted in both the monarchy and in the Catholic Church, was disbanded.¹⁴⁰

After looking at how figures like André Grétry (1741-1813) championed women's causes by using his position as a composer to instruct women who showed musical promise, Letzter and Adelson turn towards the politics of French opera.¹⁴¹ They explain how women were able to gain financial independence for the first time as composers by securing advances from opera houses.¹⁴² This was largely due to opera itself becoming more lucrative during the French Revolution, as the demand shifted from works that had the king's approval and appealed only to those within higher society to operas that catered to the general public's taste.¹⁴³

In the book's introduction, it is noted that "public women were a lightning rod for Republican Revolutionaries, who believed that the participation of women in public life inevitably led to corruption and that to prevent this moral decay, women were to stay home, raise children, and take care of the household."¹⁴⁴ As confirmed through the work of feminist historians including Landes and Hunt, women's access to public spaces was already limited in 1789 but it became even more drastically regulated under Jacobin rule.¹⁴⁵ However, Knott's argument about the political importance of the domestic sphere during the American Revolution at least suggests a different interpretation. By reading womanhood, motherhood, and subsequently women-created operas

¹³⁹ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 48.

¹⁴⁰ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 110.

¹⁴¹ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 67-123.

¹⁴² Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 91, 22.

¹⁴³ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 19-20.

¹⁴⁴ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 3.

¹⁴⁵ See Hunt, *The French Revolution and Human Rights*; Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere*; and Landes, *Visualizing the Nation Gender*.

through a feminist lens, we may contest this idea that French women's opera was viewed negatively by Republicans.

Letzter and Adelson do address sensibility, most notably in their discussion of Candeille, yet they do not explicitly connect sentimentality to the wider discourse of political sensibility.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, while acknowledging that opera was the most political art form during the French Revolution, both scholars state that women's "connection to the theatre—one of the most political institutions of the time—acquainted them intimately with contemporary political debates, including those about author's rights, the freedom of the theatres, and the rights of women."¹⁴⁷ Should we accept the idea that opera offered women a public position, one could then assume that the content and even music of women's opera may equally speak of this newfound role within political debates. More succinctly stated, if opera was generally considered a political art form, the act of women composing operas despite facing increasing limitations on their sex would be an important political statement.

Letzter does explore a more direct connection between women and political opera in her article "La Montansier à la Monnaie: Musical Theater as French Revolutionary Propaganda" (2006).¹⁴⁸ Here, the scholar uncovers the life of opera director Mademoiselle Montansier (1730-1820) and how she toured political operas in Belgium under express guidance from the French government during the occupation.¹⁴⁹ It is clear evidence that opera was considered by politicians

¹⁴⁶ See Jacqueline Letzter and Richard Adelson, "The Legacy of a One-Woman Show: A Performance History of Julie Candeille's 'Catherine, Ou La Belle Fermière,'" *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 33, no. 1/2 (Fall-Winter - 2005 2004): 11–34.

¹⁴⁷ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 19-20.

¹⁴⁸ Jacqueline Letzter, "La Montansier à La Monnaie: Musical Theater as French Revolutionary Propaganda," *Revue Belge de Musicologie / Belgisch Tijdschrift Voor Muziekwetenschap*, Six siècles de vie musicale à Bruxelles/Zes eeuwen muzieklevende Brussel / Six Centuries of Musical Life in Brussels, 55 (2001): 193–208.

¹⁴⁹ The Belgium occupation occurred between 1794-1814 through French invasion and control. France imposed their own government and reforms onto this nation. In particular, Belgian male citizens were required to fight for France in its Revolutionary wars, and they were taxed at a higher rate than French citizens. For more information on France's occupation, see Patricia Chastain Howe, *Foreign Policy and the French Revolution* (London: Palgrave

as a political tool, even if it concerned foreign policy not Parisian practises. Gender is central to this discussion, though not just because Montansier was a woman who broke boundaries by becoming an opera director. While this is certainly an achievement, gender becomes politically important within this context because the idea was projected that it was a woman who was mounting these operas, not the French state. As Letzter notes, it was inconceivable for individual women to hold political office, so the threat of a woman being a political agent in Belgium would have been far less of a concern than had the director of the Théâtre de la Monnaie been a man mounting these pro-French works.¹⁵⁰ Gender, in this case, shielded Montansier from suspicion and, as a result, the operas that were performed could theoretically be more political in their content without attracting undesirable consequences.

Another article that explicitly focuses on opera, gender, and women in the Revolution is Hedy Law's "Composing *Citoyennes* through *Sappho*" (2016).¹⁵¹ Law explores the librettist Constance-Marie de Salm (1767–1845) and the opera *Sappho* (1794) which was set to music by Jean-Paul-Gilles Martini (1741-1816). The fact that de Salm was credited in the work as "*Citoyenne* Piplet" offers the opportunity to explore opera and the creation of the female citizen. Law makes an interesting observation when Sappho, who is consciously singing throughout the work, resorts to speaking at the beginning and end of the opera. Deemed by the author as a "lyrical residue", Sappho speaks when she admits that her lover has betrayed her and directly before she commits suicide at the end.¹⁵² This moment of speech is read as a form of agency, one which mirrors the

Macmillan, 2008), especially Chapter Two: Charles-François Dumouriez and the Belgian Revolution, 1739-1792, 23-40.

¹⁵⁰ Letzter, "La Montansier à La Monnaie", 207-208.

¹⁵¹ Hedy Law, "Composing *Citoyennes* through Sappho," *The Opera Quarterly*, 32/1 (2016): 5-28.

¹⁵² Law, "Composing *Citoyennes*", 6.

freedom of expression highlighted in Article 11 of the 1789 *Declaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*.¹⁵³

This research raises many important points regarding women attaining agency during the Revolutionary decade, in addition to insights regarding how women defined themselves in opposition to men. The latter consideration seldomly shapes how we conceive of gender during the early modern period but is, I believe, vital. This article implicates women in political messaging through Revolutionary theatre, an approach that inspires my own work. Law makes a convincing argument for how de Salm questioned the political identity of *citoyenne* through Sappho.

In this article, Julie Candaille is mentioned as a more conservative example of women creating political opera because she did not use the title *citoyenne* in her work.¹⁵⁴ I agree with this observation as I have yet to find any indication that Candaille used this title herself though, after her second marriage, she is bestowed *Citoyenne Candaille* or *Citoyenne Simons* in numerous primary sources.¹⁵⁵ However, I do not entirely concur with Law that Candaille should be understood as a more conservative example of women who aligned themselves with politics. As Chapter Four in this project explores, Candaille is a complex historical figure who was politically active among Girondins circles.¹⁵⁶ Admittingly, her most successful opera *Catherine, ou La belle*

¹⁵³ Law, “Composing *Citoyennes*”, 12.

¹⁵⁴ Law, “Composing *Citoyennes*”, 13-14.

¹⁵⁵ See, for example, Claude-Marie Louis-Emmanuel Carbon de Flins Des Oliviers, *La jeune hotesse, comédie en trois actes, en vers par le citoyen Carbon-Flins, représentée pour la première fois à Paris sur le théâtre de la République le 17 Frimaire l'an troisième* (Paris: chez les marchands de nouveautés, 1796), 19; A Bouillon, *Journal encyclopédique ou universel, Volume 1* (Paris: Publisher unknown, 1793), 532; and Olympe de Gouges, *L'Entrée de Dumourier à Bruxelles, ou Les Vivandiers, pièce en cinq actes et en prose par Olympe de Gouges, représentée sur le Théâtre de la République* (Paris: chez Regnaud, 1793), 5.

¹⁵⁶ See Chapter Four: Navigating the Reign of Terror Through Julie Candaille's *Catherine, ou la belle Fermière* (1793).

fermière may be read as being either pro-Jacobin or pro-royalist but I argue that creating a determined, liberated, and strong character like Catherine was anything but conservative.

The inclusion of Candeille in Law's article prompts me further to discuss class and why women composers who found their peak in success specifically during the early Revolution must be understood rather differently than their predecessors and indeed even de Salm. I believe it is fair to analyze how de Salm used *citoyenne* through a proto-feminist lens. However, I am inclined to think that this decision was less of an agentic claim and more due to the librettists' social class. Constance de Salm was a princess with her family's seat in Picardy and, unlike Candeille, she likely had to navigate her social class particularly during the Reign of Terror when her libretto was being written and eventually premiered. As a member of the Second Estate, de Salm would have likely been met with suspicion.¹⁵⁷ Using the identity of *citoyenne* was one way she could escape this background and align herself more with contemporary Revolutionary politics. Once the Revolutionary decade was over, she indeed returned to the title of princess declaring herself "Madame la princess Constance de Salm", which is in itself very telling.¹⁵⁸ There is certainly agency and power in usurping a bourgeoisie identity to advance a more Revolutionary one, and I do not entirely discredit the findings of Law's article, but the fact that de Salm felt the need to do so in the first place is likely the result of the nobility's ostracization and less a feminist claim on the author's part.

The reason I raise this point is because I strongly believe that class was a major factor in why women-composed opera in general, and the women of this project specifically, became so

¹⁵⁷ See Sarah Josepha Buell Hall, *Woman's Record; or, sketches of all distinguished women from the Creation to A.D. 1854 ... Second edition* (London: Sampson Low, Son & Company, 1853), 800.

¹⁵⁸ See Constance de Salm, *Œuvres complètes de Madame la princesse Constance de Salm* (Paris: Didot Frères, 1842).

successful during the early Revolution. De Salm's embrace of a more Republican identity and rejection of her native title suggests that she too was trying to align herself more with the Third Estate and with other women creators of opera who found success before her. However, this does not mean that we should overlook previous women composers from the Second Estate and their contributions to French opera. Rather, we must understand women-writing French opera and those who found success before the Revolution, and indeed during, with class considerations in mind and why post-1789, women whose operas were consistently performed tended to align themselves with the Third Estate.¹⁵⁹

Numerous studies have explored women, gender, and opera in France before 1789. Georgia Cowart's work on women in the Old Regime is of particular importance when looking at the intersection of gender and opera conventions. In "Of Women, Sex and Folly: Opera Under the Old Regime" (1994), the authors reveals how women were central to and associated with French opera from its very beginnings.¹⁶⁰ Through charting the origins of opera in France, Cowart connects the idea that the "insanity" of opera, as a genre compared to the classical norm, was criticized through gendered language which equated opera to women and classical drama to men through the "natural superiority of masculine reason over feminine sensuality."¹⁶¹ The idea of opera and its emotive capabilities was thought by some to be responsible for the degradation of women, a topic of great importance during the *querelle des femmes*.¹⁶² The central reasoning of such ideas was rooted in the belief that opera encouraged "passions of the wrong kind."¹⁶³ This was only furthered by the

¹⁵⁹ See Appendix A for a complete list of women co-created opera, pre and post 1789.

¹⁶⁰ Georgia Cowart, "Of women, sex and folly: Opera under the Old Regime," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 6, no. 3 (1994): 205-220.

¹⁶¹ Cowart, "Opera under the Old Regime", 206.

¹⁶² Cowart, "Opera under the Old Regime", 207.

¹⁶³ Cowart, "Opera under the Old Regime", 208.

fact that sex workers and “unsavoury characters” would roam theatres, in addition to the long precedent of women stage actors and singers not being of the “highest moral repute”¹⁶⁴

The history of women enjoying the theater is well-documented in this work and, as Cowart rightfully points out, women’s love of opera was likely less due to their “lubricious nature” and more because the theatre offered them a place for socialization outside of the home.¹⁶⁵ Regardless, showing how women were embedded within and central to French opera from its origins through the art form’s supposed ability to awaken the senses, how gender is central to understanding the Lullist-Ramist controversy, and how the character of La Folie must be read through gender considerations places physical women and the idea of womanhood very much at the centre of the scholar’s understanding of French opera.

Similarly, Raphaëlle Legrand complements Cowart’s study through looking more specifically at the image of *opéra-comique* singers in France during the eighteenth century, in addition to adding to Letzter and Adelson’s discussion of women opera composers specifically.¹⁶⁶ In “Libertines et femmes vertueuses: l’image des chanteuses d’opéra et d’opéra-comique en France au XVIIIe siècle” (2006), the scholar explores the rise in women opera singers and connects this to the idea of their private lives becoming a spectacle, which in turn shaped their operatic roles on the stage and subsequently their own reputations. The question is posed if we can retrospectively understand women opera singers collapsing their identity onto the characters they played as a form of emancipation.¹⁶⁷ This is an important question and relevant to my own work. Since composers

¹⁶⁴ Cowart, “Opera under the Old Regime”, 208. See also Anna Bellavitus, *Women’s Work and Rights in Early Modern Urban Europe* (New York: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 105.

¹⁶⁵ Cowart, “Opera under the Old Regime”, 210.

¹⁶⁶ See Legrand “Libertines et femmes vertueuses”; Legrand “Femmes librettistes et compositrices à l’Opéra et à la Comédie-Italienne sous l’Ancien régime”, *prépublication à paraître dans Polymatheia, Les cahiers des Journées des musiques anciennes de Vanves*, 3, Colloquium Presentation, 2015.

¹⁶⁷ Legrand “Libertines et femmes vertueuses”, 157.

like Candeille sang the title role in their operas, it could be argued that her opera and life may equally be read in a comparable way to opera singers who collapsed their identity onto fictional characters.¹⁶⁸ There was a precedent for women musicians blurring the lines between their private and public lives, and any women composer who performed on the stage, and indeed who created opera, must be understood through this history which Legrand unpacks.

In her article, Legrand also highlights the importance of understanding that musicians were hired and at the service of their respective theatre, which during the *ancien régime* meant the Comédie Française for comedies and tragedies where music played a more marginal part, the Académie royale de musique or the Opéra which focused on the *tragédie en musique* and *opéra-ballet*, and the Comédie-Italienne which mounted plays in Italian and French as well as *opéra-comiques*. I believe it is important to note that female roles in the *tragédie en musique* tended to be comprised of characters like princesses in love, jealous queens, goddesses and priestesses, Greeks, Phrygians, or Carthaginians, shepherdesses and highly allegorical characters like nymphs.¹⁶⁹ While these types of roles are not common in post-1770s *opéra-comique*, as we will subsequently see, there was nevertheless a long precedent of women representing emblematic roles within French opera.

While the *comédie en vaudevilles* originally began as a “*comique souvent gaillard et misogyne*”, Legrand argues that through composers like Charles Simon Favart (1710-1792), *opéra-comique* slowly embraced young, ingenuous peasant women, a topic which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Three.¹⁷⁰ By the 1760s, after the *Querelle des Bouffons*, *opéra-comique* was

¹⁶⁸ Letzter has also written about Candeille’s self-fashioning through becoming her title character Catherine on the stage, as do I in Chapter Four of this project. See Letzter “One Woman Show” and Chapter Four: Navigating the Reign of Terror in Julie Candeille’s *Catherine, ou La belle fermière*.

¹⁶⁹ Legrand “Libertines et femmes vertueuses”, 158.

¹⁷⁰ “A comedy often jolly and misogynistic”. Legrand “Libertines et femmes vertueuses”, 158. See also Chapter Three: Beyond the Dairy: Employing Gendered Pastoralism in Florine Dezède’s *Lucette et Lucas* (1781).

primarily comprised of *comédie mêlée d'ariettes*.¹⁷¹ While the original genre of comic opera was based on parodies of Italian opera buffa, *comédie mêlée d'ariettes* used newly composed music. It also came to embrace the vaudeville final, a strophic piece where each character sings a solo closing remark before the entire cast comes together, which was a marked feature of the *comédie en vaudevilles*.¹⁷² This shift in genre expectation and construction may be observed from comparing Favart's *Le caprice amoureux, ou Ninette à la cour* (1755), which was a parody of Carlo Goldoni's (1707-1793) *Bertoldino e Cacasenno* (1748) and contained no new music, to André Grétry's (1741-1813) *Zémire et Azor* (1771), for example, which was entirely composed by André Grétry.

In addition to these genre specific considerations, all singers at the Opéra were under the employment of the institution while those at the Comédie-Italienne were *sociétaires* meaning that they had much more power in selecting repertoire and shared in the theater's profits.¹⁷³ This distinction cannot be overstressed, especially considering that Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786) and Dezède's *Lucette et Lucas* (1781) premiered at the Comédie-Italienne.¹⁷⁴ The fact that this genre and its corresponding theatre were progressive in terms of women actor's agency and remuneration helps account for why the genre of *opéra-comique* was relatively welcoming for women.

Another crucial difference between the Opéra and the Comédie-Italienne was that women were not prevented from marrying at the latter. As Legrand notes, due to the possibility of pregnancy

¹⁷¹ Legrand "Libertines et femmes vertueuses", 158-159.

¹⁷² See Clifford Barnes, "Vaudeville" in Grove Music Online, 2001, accessed May 2023, Web., <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000029082?rskey=5Sylxr&result=1>.

¹⁷³ Legrand "Libertines et femmes vertueuses", 159.

¹⁷⁴ See Appendix D and E for the complete performance histories of Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786) and Florine Dezède's *Lucette et Lucas* (1781), respectively.

which could result in setbacks of productions, women were restricted from marrying at the Opéra.¹⁷⁵ At the Comédie Italienne, however, many female actors married fellow male musicians or actors, perhaps the most notable being actors Marie-Thérèse Laruette (1744 –1837), who married fellow singer Jean-Louis Laruette (1731–1792), and Louise-Rosalie Dugazon (1755-1821), who married Jean-Henri Gourgaud (1746-1809).¹⁷⁶ However, the Comédie-Italienne could not shield women from being excluded from partaking in other religious sacraments. The connection between immodesty, women, and the stage was heightened by the Catholic Church, which imposed precautionary restrictions on female singers and actors. The most extreme of these was that a performer had to renounce her performing past to be given a Christian burial.¹⁷⁷ Part of this is explained by Legrand as being connected to the fact that women at the Opéra were no longer legally under the control of parental or spousal guardianship and protection. While theoretically this meant that women could escape the abuse of their fathers by becoming an actor of the king, Legrand suggests that, in reality, this only resulted in many women being forced into sex work, which in turn furthered the negative connotations the Church had of women on the stage, especially at the Opéra.

Overall, actresses were regarded ambivalently. Because women of the Comédie-Italienne could marry and due to this genre's plots, which tended to feature a more virtuous and moralizing tone, women involved in the production and performance of *opéra-comique* appear to have faced less harsh critiques of their reputations.¹⁷⁸ The libertine, hyper-sexualized woman of the Opéra was often contrasted with the more virtuous actress at the Comédie-Italienne, though of course

¹⁷⁵ Legrand "Libertines et femmes vertueuses", 159.

¹⁷⁶ Legrand "Libertines et femmes vertueuses", 159.

¹⁷⁷ Legrand "Libertines et femmes vertueuses", 159.

¹⁷⁸ Legrand "Libertines et femmes vertueuses", 159-160.

there were exceptions, especially with more well-known and celebrated singers.¹⁷⁹ What Legrand manages to thoughtfully suggest is that women were conscious of these stereotypes to which they became attached through performing on the stage.

For the purposes of my project, it is important to realize that *opéra-comique* carried connotation of moral virtue long before 1789. This may be one reason why women composers of the Revolution composed in this genre. More importantly, moral credentials of *opéra-comique* allowed—and allows—them to be read as reflecting Revolutionary discourses. As we will see in the next section of this historiography, Revolutionary politicians did restrict certain operas from being performed; censorship, while complicated, did occur on the Revolutionary stage.¹⁸⁰ The fact that women-composed opera was not censored or restricted, but indeed unearthed and resurrected in the case of Grétry and Dezède, at least suggests that the content of their works aligned with—or did not run counter to—Revolutionary vocabulary and ideals. This consideration is explored in my next three chapters, where I argue with Patrice Higonnet that “moral regeneration through association to virtuous citizenship” was central and cherished ideology of early Revolutionaries, particularly the Jacobins.¹⁸¹

I appreciate that Legrand’s study of women singers and their potential agency creates a disciplinary space where gender scholarship can present possibilities, not certainties. As the singers of Legrand’s study are not well-documented, speculation forms a large part of the scholar’s analysis. I believe this should not discredit this work, though. It is this style of scholarship which

¹⁷⁹ Legrand “Libertines et femmes vertueuses”, 162.

¹⁸⁰ One of the better-known cases of Jacobin leaders censoring opera occurred with Etienne Méhul’s *Adrien* (1792). For a complete discussion on this act of censorship, see section 1.7 “Opera During the Revolution” of this historiography. See also Elizabeth Bartlet, “On the Freedom of the Theatre and Censorship: The *Adrien* Controversy (1792)” in Antoine Hennion ed. *1789-1989 Musique, Histoire, Démocrate*, 1 (Paris: Maison de Sciences de L’Homme), 15-30.

¹⁸¹ Patrice Higonnet, *Goodness Beyond Virtue: Jacobins During the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998) 87.

I believe my own project contributes to. Much of Legrand's article attempts to balance the idea of women's own agency versus the wider social and cultural climate that defined their identity. In my work, this balancing act presents itself as women's own agency as composers of opera versus how their operas reflected Revolutionary discourses. I believe understanding women musicians through this duality is crucial in understanding the social, cultural, and political forces at play during the early Revolution.

1.5 Aesthetics of Eighteenth-Century French Opera

As a feminist music historian who is primarily interested in changing our current music scholarship to include French women composers of the past, I have reservations about setting their work within a predominantly male, canonical framework. I agree with historian Karen Offen that we must be cautious when exploring gender in underserved areas of history; we must not contribute to the hegemonic narrative.¹⁸² However, the conventions of male-authored operas are relevant because I do not argue that Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille created their operas out of thin air. The goal of this discussion is to merely demonstrate that women composers were indeed aware of the wider musical and genre specific conventions of their time and that at least stylistically, women-composed opera did not differ from those created by men.

There is no universally agreed definition of *opéra-comique*. At its simplest, it is a work that features spoken French dialogue and various musical elements.¹⁸³ Controversy surrounds its origins. During the eighteenth century, there were attempts to distinguish this genre from its more

¹⁸² See Karen Offen, "Challenging Male Hegemony: Feminist Criticism and the Context for Women's Movements in the Age of European Revolutions and Counterrevolutions, 1789-1860," in *Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective*, ed. Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2004).

¹⁸³ For a more complete history of this art form, see Maurice Barthélemy, "L'opéra-comique des origines à la Querelle des Bouffons," in *L'Opéra-comique en France au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Philippe Vendrix (Liège: Mardaga, 1992), 9-78.

humble and populist beginnings as fairground music. In Pierre Jean Baptiste's *Nougaret, De l'art du théâtre* (1769), he stressed its supposed noble, antique origins.¹⁸⁴ It is outside of this chapter's scope to present a complete history of *opéra-comique*, and indeed the fascinating battles that took place between various troupes trying to establish themselves in Paris, but what I wish to highlight is that by the 1770s, *opéra-comique* had become far more melodramatic and emotionally "excessive" when compared to earlier versions of this genre; in other words, the trajectory of this genre moved from relatively restrained or contained modes of expression to more explicit emotional display. This is most easily demonstrated by comparing André Grétry's *Raoul Barbe Bleu* (1789) or Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny's *Felix ou l'Enfant trouve* (1777) to Charles Simon Favart's more emotionally modest *opéra-comiques* of the 1730s and 40s, as explored by musicologist Janet Kristen Leavens.¹⁸⁵

The reason why I highlight this shift to emotional excess is because it is one way to explain and justify why this project will occasionally rely upon Revolutionary political speeches and the emotional sentiments expressed within them to explore women-composed *opéra-comique*. The goal of making such a connection is to simply reveal that there was a wider climate that encouraged and fostered heightened emotional responses, one which was encouraged by earlier philosophers such as Jean-Baptiste Dubos (1670-1742), Pierre de Marivaux (1688-1763), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and Denis Diderot (1713-1784), and it would be unwise to view this cultural shift in the 1780s and 90s solely through the lens of the emotional trajectory of *opéra-*

¹⁸⁴ Pierre Jean Baptiste Nougaret, *De l'art du théâtre* vol.1 (Paris: Chez Cailleau, 1769), 49. For additional example, see Barthélemy, "L'opéra-comique des origines".

¹⁸⁵ Janet Kristen Leavens, *Figures of Sympathy in Eighteenth-Century Opera Comique*, PhD Thesis, The University of Iowa, 2010.

comique. Specifically, at times this project will connect modes of political sensibility to operatic sensibility as neither occurred in a cultural or political vacuum.

This change in genre to create a more emotive style of *opéra-comique* has also been argued by music historian Julia Doe.¹⁸⁶ Through using archival resources, and specifically focusing on the opening of the Salle-Favart for the Comédie-Italienne in 1783, Doe suggests that *opéra-comique* became grander through more intricate staging and “serious” plots.¹⁸⁷ Importantly, her work suggests that the genre distinctions between *opéra-comique* and *tragédie en musique* were blurred towards the end of the century, at least in terms of their capacity to contain and project political messaging for the state.¹⁸⁸ Essentially, the argument is proposed that by the 1770s, *opéra-comique* came to embrace more heroic and historical plots, thus making this form of opera a “legitimate and legitimately national, lyric form.”¹⁸⁹ One example of this style of heroic, historic *opéra-comique* is André Grétry’s *Richard Cœur-de-lion* (1784) which served as the prequel for Lucile Grétry’s *Le mariage d’Antonio*.

Doe’s work raises an important consideration regarding the study of gender and French opera. Since women were largely excluded from composing *tragédies en musique*, though there were exceptions like Jacquet de La Guerre’s *Céphale et Procris* (1694) and Mlle Duvals’ ballet *Les Génies* (1736), if we do not take comic opera seriously, we would be essentially not taking women’s opera seriously, at least in terms of its potential political agencies. Women composers seldomly declared their political ideology in outright terms through their operas, but this does not

¹⁸⁶ See 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 (2015): 317–74.

¹⁸⁷ Doe, “Opéra-comique on the Eve of Revolution”, 321.

¹⁸⁸ See Julia Doe, *The Comedians of the King: “Opéra Comique” and the Bourbon Monarchy on the Eve of Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021).

¹⁸⁹ Doe, “Opéra-comique on the Eve of Revolution”, 320.

mean these operas lacked political resonance. By “resonance” I mean that the themes embedded within women-created opera sometimes connected to wider Revolutionary discourses. To put things differently, I suggest that *opéra-comique* had the potential to be politicized.

This concept of politicization will be explored more in subsequent chapters. For now, I wish to return to aesthetic considerations regarding *opéra-comique*. I believe Thomas Downing’s *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647-1785* (2002) serves well to clearly explain the conventions of French opera.¹⁹⁰ In what Downing calls a cultural history of French opera up to the Revolution, he explores the political propaganda machine of Louis XIV and how opera functioned within this framework. Downing’s book is divided into two sections, “French Opera in the Shadow of Tragedy” and “Opera and Enlightenment: From Private Sensation to Public Feeling”.¹⁹¹ The first half looks at how *tragédie en musique* under the Académie Royale de Musique had to refashion itself as a respectable alternative to neoclassical spoken drama. The second section is devoted to understanding opera’s power to “create sympathetic responses in the listener-spectator”.¹⁹²

Downing explores the rise of *opéra-comique* through the idea of sympathy arguing that this genre roused the spectator emotionally by eliciting sympathetic response to a character’s struggle. While Downing focusses on Rousseau’s *Le Devin du Village* (1752) and Étienne Mehul’s *Stratonice* (1792), Janet Kristen Leavens has now built upon this work to explore the role of sympathy within *opéra-comique*, specifically in the years directly preceding the French Revolution. In her thesis, it is argued that there are three types of sympathy that arise in this genre:

¹⁹⁰ Thomas, Downing, *Aesthetics of opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647-1785* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹⁹¹ Downing, *Aesthetics of opera*, 10.

¹⁹² Downing, *Aesthetics of opera*, 180.

- 1) a worldly-sensuous sympathy most typically found in the common subgenre of the sentimental pastorate and characterized by a happy blending of moral and sensual connections
- 2) an amorous intersubjectivity found occasionally in sentimental comedies and characterized by a sometimes empowering, sometimes trying encounter with another experienced as a site of subjective freedom
- 3) a sacrificial sympathy found most frequently in Michel-Jean Sedaine's sometimes pointedly anti worldly, morally sober lyric dramas and characterized by an obstacle-triggered leap into an identificatory, affective imagination.¹⁹³

It is this first type of sympathy that aligns most with the world of women-created opera, especially *Le mariage d'Antonio, Lucette et Lucas*, and *Catherine, ou La belle fermière*.

While Downing's work is primarily interested in *tragédie en musique* and how it become a political tool to propagandize Louis XIV's sovereignty, his work raises an important point concerning the consciousness of singing versus speaking in French opera. In particular, he uses one of the earliest operas to be staged in France, Luigi Rossi's (1597-1653) *Orfeo* (1647), as an example of self-conscious singing and the "performativity of song".¹⁹⁴ This is important as it demonstrates early debates in France over spoken versus sung drama, and indeed the very limitations of song. Music's restriction as an aesthetic and aural art form, and its need to occasionally release itself from these chains to advance drama, is crucial in understanding how eighteenth-century French opera was understood. How a librettist and composer decided to advance plot, either through music or through spoken word, was not a haphazard decision.

In Chapter Four of this project, discussions around Candeille's title character Catherine's *romance* aria, "Au temps orageux des folies", must be understood in the context where it was not text but rather singing that advances the plot. In this *romance*, where the composer's identity collapses onto her character as she takes to the stage to sing the title role, the audience becomes

¹⁹³ Leavens, *Figures of Sympathy*, 1.

¹⁹⁴ Downing, *Aesthetics of opera*, 26.

aware that Catherine, and effectively Candeille, are knowingly singing this aria, a song which informs the audience about Catherine's tragic past at the hands of her abusive husband. This moment, echoing that in *Orfeo*, suggests that the composers' decision to use a moment of self-conscious singing to advance the intimate feelings of her title character as well as the plot's drama was very much a mindful decision and indeed one which has roots within the origins of opera performance in France.

Another influential work within French opera studies is Georgia Cowart's *The Triumph of Pleasure: Louis XIV & the Politics of Spectacle* (2008) which turns towards exploring the politics of power and pleasure. In particular, I appreciate the author's methodological approach, especially her understanding that there was a "polyphony of ideological voices within a single theatrical work" as this is something which my own project equally supports.¹⁹⁵ In each of this project's three examples of women creating opera, the multiple voices, or as I would be more inclined to call them the multiple political resonances, are explored as both a process of self-fashioning and a reflection of Revolutionary politics.

Musical genre is extremely important in Cowart's book, with a particular emphasis on *opéra-ballet*. One of the major takeaways from this research is the discussion that a "system of imagery centered on pleasure and its artistic expression at times resisted, challenged, and undermined an iconography of sovereign power."¹⁹⁶ In many ways, this is what my project is attempting to uncover, but rather than focus on sovereign power as being Louis XIV or the French Crown, I shift this understanding to the more pluralistic and complicated change in head of state to that of a nation-state under the direction of Revolutionary deputies from 1789-1794. Perhaps

¹⁹⁵ Georgia Cowart, *The Triumph of Pleasure: Louis XIV & the Politics of Spectacle* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 2008), xv.

¹⁹⁶ Cowart, *The Triumph of Pleasure*, xvii.

more fully stated, the *ancien régime* can, and often is, summarized through absolutism and the idea of *l'état c'est moi*, especially under the reign of Louis XIV. However, the complexities of the shifting legislative assemblies and political landscape during the early Revolution cannot be condensed to one movement, ideology, or figure. Rather, what I argue, is that women-composed opera may be read today as resisting, challenging, and undermining, in addition to propagating and developing principles which were central to the Revolution itself like civil morality, virtue, and Revolutionary sensibility. What Cowart's work demonstrates is that French theatre can and did contain a multiplicity of challenging discourses. I believe this serves as an ideal way of approaching French opera, likely during any period, but especially during the French Revolution.

In addition to exploring moments of subtle resistance within the highly political *tragédie en musique*, Cowart provides an alternate understanding of Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) through exploring the composer's work aside from *tragédie en musique*. Her questions of who controls pleasure on the stage and who this is available to are extremely interesting.¹⁹⁷ The idea of control or institutional power is often explored in musical research of this period, especially through the work of French historian Mark Darlow.

An important work in the field of French theatre and opera, *Staging the French Revolution: Cultural Politics and the Paris Opera, 1789-1794*, (2012) explores the complicated relationship between opera and French politics in terms of state control post-1789.¹⁹⁸ This study's historicization of French opera during the Revolution is significant as it charts the complicated

¹⁹⁷ Cowart specifically asks, "while the ballet continued to serve as entertainment and recreation for the king and court in the 1660s, then, it also reflected some deeply encoded questions as to who would control pleasure, and who would be represented, and how." See Cowart, *The Triumph of Pleasure*, 47-48.

¹⁹⁸ See Mark Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution: Cultural Politics and the Paris Opera, 1789-1794* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

shift in power from a Royal Opera to a National Opera, and every moment in between.¹⁹⁹ I agree with Darlow that it is dangerous to believe that just because the Revolution was a politically tumultuous time, no new non-political operas were performed between 1789-1799. Furthermore, the idea that all operas and their creators were explicitly propagandists in their intent is equally likely false.²⁰⁰ As Cecilia Feilla notes in her own extensive archival work, the theatrical works that proved the most popular during the French Revolution were largely sentimental and not necessarily overtly political though, as we have seen through Cowart and Downing's research, this does not necessarily mean that they cannot be understood as politically significant in more nuanced ways.²⁰¹

Darlow's appropriate hesitancy to connect artists and their creations to political motives allows for a greater understanding of opera's complexity, especially during 1793-1794; opera was not always an overt vehicle for the Reign of Terror's policies.²⁰² This research provides a fundamental basis for my study, as I agree that not all operas directly opposed or supported the state. I believe there was a difference between state propaganda and subtler, more nuanced modes of political expression, an idea which is again supported by scholars like Cowart and Downing.

In his introduction, Darlow charts how eighteenth-century theorists comprehended opera's power to morally instruct and to socially guide.²⁰³ The historian suggests that opera was the convergence between politics, society, and economics.²⁰⁴ Darlow's main argument is that while the Le Chapelier bill of 1791 forced opera to become a free enterprise with limited state control, opera could still be used to influence the masses, though this became more difficult due to the

¹⁹⁹ Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution*, 21-28.

²⁰⁰ Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution*, 31. Darlow also explains that it is incorrect to attribute the designation of propaganda to operas of the French Revolution as this term poses two methodological problems as noted on page 31.

²⁰¹ See Cecilia Feilla, *The Sentimental Theatre of the French Revolution* (Burlington: Routledge, 2013).

²⁰² Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution*, 31.

²⁰³ Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution*, 28.

²⁰⁴ Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution*, 128.

French Revolution's doctrines and its outward encouragement of free expression.²⁰⁵ The complexities of managing opera's messages are one reason Darlow argues this art form was not propagandist.²⁰⁶ While he does admit that culture always reflects the ideas of its time, the fact that leaders had to appear to respect "transparent public expression" meant that the political world could not, at least overtly, be attached to the theatre.²⁰⁷ It must be noted that this idea of the Republican state not directly controlling opera is not universally upheld within the discipline, or is at least presented in a more complicated way, as we will see in the next section of this historiography through the work of Michael McClellan and Emmet Kennedy.

Darlow's idea is that composers were not a tool of the French state, and, in theory, they could express their messages within their music due to Revolutionary politicians needing to appear to support ideologies like liberty. This realization of Revolutionary opera's lack of explicit central control is crucial to his understanding and I do not counter Darlow's conclusions. I do, however, propose within my study that when we consider women composers during this period, our understanding of the state's place within opera is not as neat; the need to control public women likely far outweighed the need to appear tolerant of public expression.

1.6 Revolutionary Audiences

One study which offers a case study of the state's direct political interference in controlling opera during the Revolution is found within Michael McClellan's "Counterrevolution in Concert: Music and Political Dissent in Revolutionary France" (1996). In this article, the author focuses on the Théâtre Feydeau during Year III (1794-5) and Year IV (1796-7) and the politicization of

²⁰⁵ Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution*, 128, 30.

²⁰⁶ Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution*, 30.

²⁰⁷ Darlow, *Staging the French Revolution*, 30.

Parisian opera houses.²⁰⁸ The primary focus is on the exploitation of cultural signs by royalists, conservatives, and radical Revolutionaries. McClellan does a good job of charting the political complexities of the post-Terror years when counterrevolutionaries gained power post the Thermidorian reaction.²⁰⁹ He also provides a compelling exploration of the *guerre des chansons* during the early Revolution, adding to understanding of songs' importance to the Revolution, a topic also explored in Laura Mason's *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics, 1787–1799* (1996).²¹⁰

At its core, McClellan's article argues that the Théâtre Feydeau became a "locus of anti-Terrorist and even counterrevolutionary activity".²¹¹ Certainly, he demonstrates how this theater promoted "political ideal[s] largely in opposition to the politics of the government of the Terror" and how the political shift to the right post-Thermidorian reaction served the theater's own political goals. However, it is his remark on opera during the Terror that I find most pertinent.²¹² McClellan states that the government during the Reign of Terror "had encouraged the production of political dramas that would generate republican enthusiasm among French citizenry."²¹³ He then uses this to suggest that audiences were politicized.

McClellan's view seems to counter Darlow's idea that the state did not overtly control opera during 1793-1794, but I do not think that their understandings drastically differ. Darlow's recognition that the Jacobins had to appear democratic when it came to theatrical performances, and not only support pro-Jacobin sentiments on the stage, does not automatically discredit

²⁰⁸ See Michael McClellan, "Counterrevolution in Concert: Music and Political Dissent in Revolutionary France," *The Musical Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (1996): 31–57. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/742527>.

²⁰⁹ McClellan, "Counterrevolution in Concert", 49-52.

²¹⁰ See Laura Mason, *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics, 1787–1799* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

²¹¹ McClellan, "Counterrevolution in Concert", 34.

²¹² McClellan, "Counterrevolution in Concert", 49.

²¹³ McClellan, "Counterrevolution in Concert", 33.

McClellan's understanding that the Jacobins encouraged political dramas to generate Republican support. To me, it appears as if Darlow is speaking about state control and overt state messaging in theatrical works while McClellan's understanding allows for a more nuanced appreciation of what may constitute a political drama.

Considering all women-composed operas are sentimental *opéra-comiques* during this time, and that it is difficult to find any overt political messaging in them, it is likely more useful to turn towards playwrights and how their works demonstrate that Jacobin leaders were not interested in overt political messaging within the theater.²¹⁴ Olympe de Gouges' most political plays of the 1790s—*Le Nécessité du Divorce* (1790), *Mirabeau aux Champs Elysées* (1791) and *L'Entrée de Dumouriez à Bruxelles ou Les Vivandiers* (1793)—all largely fell out of favour during the Terror and ceased to be performed.²¹⁵ This was evidently because of her political ideology and public support for Louis XVI, and she was eventually guillotined for her writings against the Montagnards and Robespierre in November 1793.

Maurin de Pompigny's (1766-1828) plays equally confirm this idea of politically explicit theatrical works falling out of favour by 1793, and indeed being largely unpopular during the French Revolution in general. While the playwright did create *L'Epoux républicain: drame patriotique en deux actes et en prose* in 1794, a play whose plot is exactly what you would expect from such a title, this work only received 21 performances at the Palais des Variétés.²¹⁶ This is in comparison to *L'Artisan philosophe ou l' école des pères* (1787), which received over 46 performances during the Terror alone and more than 160 during the Revolutionary decade or

²¹⁴ See Appendix A for a list of women co-created opera during the long eighteenth-century.

²¹⁵ For the complete performance history of Olympe de Gouge's plays, See CÉSAR, https://cesar.huma-num.fr/cesar2/people/people.php?fct=edit&person_UID=100651

²¹⁶ For a complete list of performances for the works of de Pompigny, see CÉSAR, https://cesar.huma-num.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UID=205169

L'Héritage ou l'épreuve raisonnable (1789), which was performed 196 times during the entire French Revolution.²¹⁷ All of this is to simply say that we must be careful in how we define politically relevant theatrical works during the Revolution as misunderstandings may arise between state controlled politics and more subtle political resonances. I have used the example of de Pompigny not to suggest that *L'Artisan* and *L' Héritage* did not serve a political purpose, but rather that their plots were not formed through an obvious and explicit political lens when compared to *L'Epoux républicain*.

Emmet Kennedy's work may offer additional insights to this discussion regarding political repertoire during the Revolution.²¹⁸ Through two Parisian newspapers, Kennedy and Marie-Laurence Netter have established a repertory of Revolutionary theater, a feat which proved challenging due to the Le Chapelier Laws which allowed for the dramatic increase in privately owned opera theaters and thus many papers publishing theatrical premieres. In conjunction with André Tissier's *Les Spectacles à Paris pendant la Revolution, 1789-1792* (1992), this is an excellent source for French theater performance history, despite its potential inaccuracies due to last minute changes that were not advertised in these Parisian newspapers, a fact which Kennedy notes himself.²¹⁹

What I wish to focus on in Kennedy's work is that the author suggests that popular theatre during the early years of the Revolution was not as propagandist as we may be tempted to assume. The claim is made that theatre during the Revolution allowed audiences to "survive the Revolution

²¹⁷ For a complete list of performances for the works of de Pompigny, see CÉSAR, https://cesar.huma-num.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UOID=163131

²¹⁸ See Emmet Kennedy, *Theatre, Opera, and Audiences in Revolutionary Paris: Analysis and Repertory* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996).

²¹⁹ See André Tissier, *Les Spectacles à Paris pendant la Revolution, 1789-1792* (Paris : Droz, 1992).

through laughter and pity” with theatre being more “Rabelaisian than Robespierist.”²²⁰ This observation is made through uncovering which theatrical works were performed when and most often, with the revelation that sentimental works dominated the stage. This work directly supports that of Fella and Darlow who agree that Revolutionary theatre was largely devoid of overt politics. However, I believe deducing that because these works were seldomly “Robespierist” in their content they were in opposition to his politics or politically irrelevant to the early Revolution is false. As I have stressed throughout this historiography, nuanced modes of political messaging are a valid approach to understanding French opera, and indeed it is one which has already offered many important insights to this field.

As Jeffrey Ravel notes in his review of Kennedy’s work, the problem with a serial approach to understanding French opera is that one cannot fully determine cultural and political importance by exclusively accounting for performance histories.²²¹ Ravel suggests that looking at performance history as the sole method of a work’s cultural importance would be analogous to looking for the spread of “enlightenment” thought by only tallying and charting the sales and press runs of Rousseau and Voltaire’s work.²²² I tend to agree that there are inherent limitations of exclusively using quantitative studies to approach questions of cultural dissemination. In the case of this study of Revolutionary theatrical performances, it cannot account for more holistic understandings. This is why, while my project does engage with performance histories, I strongly believe that performance runs alone cannot be the sole method we use to determine theatre’s influence on society.

²²⁰ Kennedy, *Theatre, Opera, and Audiences*, 89-90.

²²¹ See Jeffrey S. Ravel, “Theatre, Opera, and Audiences in Revolutionary Paris: Analysis and Repertory,” *Theatre Survey* 1997: 197–200.

²²² Ravel, “Theatre, Opera, and Audiences”, 197.

Perhaps more illuminating is the study of listening and audience behaviour in James Johnson's *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (1995).²²³ Particularly fruitful in Johnson's study is the concept of opera as a "spectacle". The seemingly minor details, which scholarship had previously underplayed, like a stage's layout, the audience's clothing, and retellings of the audience's dramatic reactions to premieres, opens formally hidden histories of French opera. Yet, Johnson's goal is firmly focused on audiences; how they became more "modern" through silence. The development of a more unvoiced, physically passive, yet actively listening audience, with the arrival of Gluck in the 1770s, is regarded as proto-Revolutionary, because it involved a turn away from responses sanctioned by the king to the promptings of individual sensibility and taste.

1.7 Opera Under the Revolution

Building upon this idea of repertoire at the opera during the Revolution, Elizabeth Bartlet's work has been influential. Her chapter on new repertoire during the Reign of Terror in Malcolm Boyd's edited book explores how, with the reign of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette, going to the opera was "once again the fashionable thing to do".²²⁴ Bartlet begins by noting that during the early Revolution (1789-92), nothing seemed to change in terms of the repertoire being played.²²⁵ However, after the fall of the monarchy in 1792, Bartlet concludes that opera, while still very much being attended by the elites, shifted from serving a royal purpose to that of "the new order."²²⁶ Much of the early part of her argument is focused on the content of opera, which, during the Revolution, she argues began to reflect more Greek and Roman heroic tales.²²⁷

²²³ James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

²²⁴ See Elizabeth Bartlet, "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 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 107–56), 107.

²²⁵ Bartlet, "The New Repertory", 108.

²²⁶ Bartlet, "The New Repertory", 108.

²²⁷ Bartlet, "The New Repertory", 110-114.

The idea of opera plots reflecting contemporary politics forms Bartlet's argument. One of the most interesting topics Bartlet highlights is the use of public gestures, specifically the patriotic gift and how this was connected to gender.²²⁸ It would be interesting to connect this work to that completed by Mona Ozouf regarding Revolutionary festivals where gender, gesture, and song were very much linked.²²⁹

What I wish to focus on is Bartlet's idea of the choruses coming to reflect *le peuple* or, as the author states, "authors in the 1790s, too, were conscious of the shift in emphasis to the sovereignty of the people and the musical consequences for the chorus."²³⁰ The idea of the collective act of singing mirroring the public oath taking, which became popular during the Revolution especially at festivals, is a compelling argument and one which has been further developed by David Charlton.²³¹ The idea that an oath chorus would only be deemed successful if it aroused strong emotions in the heart of the audience furthers this idea of sentimental opera becoming increasingly popular during late eighteenth-century France. It also links operatic emotions to politics through analogy with emotive speeches.²³²

In "On the Freedom of the Theatre and Censorship: The Adrien Controversy (1792)" (2010), based on archival discoveries, Bartlet argues persuasively that opera was as political during the early Revolution as it was during the *ancien régime*.²³³ This scholarship explores the overt censorship in 1792 by the Commune de Paris, which forbid the performance of Méhul's *Adrien*

²²⁸ Bartlet, "The New Repertory", 116.

²²⁹ See Mona Ozouf. *Festivals and the French Revolution*. trans. Alan Sheridan. (London: Harvard University Press, 1988).

²³⁰ Bartlet, "The New Repertory", 138.

²³¹ See David Charlton, *Opera in the Age of Rousseau: Music, Confrontation, Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), especially 383.

²³² For the innate sensibility within Revolutionary political speeches, see Sophie Wahnich in *Defence of the Terror: Liberty Or Death in the French Revolution* (London: Verso, 2012).

²³³ See Bartlet, "Theatre and Censorship".

(1792) at the Académie Royale de Musique. Through charting the history of *Adrien* and those who opposed it, both in 1792 and its edited version in 1799, Bartlet's scholarship allows us to better understand the anxieties and concerns of opera in French Revolutionary society. Through the case study of *Adrien*, Bartlet reaffirms something I believe is central to understanding opera during the early French Revolution; theatre did not just "passively conform to Revolutionary tenants, but [it] also actively [taught] patriotic lessons."²³⁴

This idea is central to my own argument as to why it is appropriate to consider women-composed opera and its rising popularity during the French Revolution through a political lens, specifically one that is tied to Revolutionary discourses during the early Revolution. The fact that women-composed operas were not censored and remained largely unrevised suggests that unlike *Adrien*, *Le mariage d'Antonio*, *Lucette et Lucas*, and *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* were at least somewhat appealing to Revolutionary politicians during the 1790s. Furthermore, the fact that *Le mariage d'Antonio* and *Lucette et Lucas* were initially performed in 1786 and 1781, fell out of favor, then experienced a renaissance during the start of the Revolutionary decade argues that something within these operas must have aligned with the political agenda of the early Revolution, or at least did not directly oppose it like the 1792 version of *Adrien*.

I wish to conclude this historiography by addressing Victoria Johnson's *Backstage at the Revolution: How the Royal Paris Opera Survived the End of the Old Regime* (2008).²³⁵ This work is centered around the notion that during the final decades of the eighteenth century, French society, culture, and indeed politics were completely transformed, and it provides an ideal starting point for reading the case studies of this project. This book explores why, despite its history and

²³⁴ John A. Rice, *Essays on Opera, 1750-1800* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2017), 323.

²³⁵ Victoria Johnson, *Backstage at the Revolution: How the Royal Paris Opera Survived the End of the Old Regime*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008).

reflection of the *ancien régime's* opulence and privileged status, the Paris Opéra managed to successfully navigate the tumultuous period of the Revolution; specifically, why Parisian officials voted to “maintain its privileged status by new means”.²³⁶ This research primarily focuses on the Opéra’s foundations, and it offers a convincing case for why poet Pierre Perrin (1620-1675), and not Jean-Baptiste Lully, was the institutions founder.²³⁷

For the purposes of my own study, I believe Johnson’s second chapter, “The Storming of the Opera,” is the most useful to explore.²³⁸ After noting that the Opéra, where arms were held, was implicated in the Storming of the Bastille, Johnson offers a complex account of how a royal opera was maintained in the context of the newfound freedom of theatres. The primary question was should the actors run the theatre themselves, should the Parisian government assume this property, or should the Opéra be run as a private enterprise.²³⁹ This debate over the Opéra’s future neatly encapsulates wider discussions concerning how a new French society might function and who should control it; this is a perfect example of where a distinctively “musical” history may offer new insights into wider political ideologies.

The Opéra’s monopoly on through-composed music, and the *readvances* it collected from smaller theatres, are important to note.²⁴⁰ Johnson does a remarkable job in showing the great lengths lesser established theatres underwent to perform “unsuitable” works. For example, the fact that the Théâtre des Associes was legally allowed to perform any genre, but only if the works were preceded by a marionette show, is an important part of French theatre history.²⁴¹ What this chapter

²³⁶ Johnson, *Backstage at the Revolution*, 1.

²³⁷ Johnson, *Backstage at the Revolution*, Chapter 4, especially 91-95.

²³⁸ Johnson, *Backstage at the Revolution*, Chapter 2, 37-61.

²³⁹ Johnson, *Backstage at the Revolution*, 38.

²⁴⁰ Johnson, *Backstage at the Revolution*, 39-45.

²⁴¹ Johnson, *Backstage at the Revolution*, 39.

demonstrates is that many playwrights, composers, and actors who were not part of the Opéra had many reasons to support the Le Chapelier law and advocate for a freer market of French theater. However, it is likely more accurate to describe the growth in late eighteenth-century theatre and this newfound freedom in selecting repertoire as being an oligopoly rather than a truly open market.

I believe it is important to keep Johnson's sociological history of the Opéra in mind throughout reading my entire project. While none of the women I explore had their operas performed at the Opéra as they were *opéra-comiques*, the overarching history of the Académie Royale de Musique and its struggle to remain profitable despite its royal privileges and eventual placement under the jurisdiction of the Parisian government must shape how we understand the inner dynamics of all opera houses. In other words, while I do not directly address the institutional history of French opera in this project, as I am more focused on gender politics, broadly conceived, the fact that French opera was very much a business which, regardless of the theatre, had struggles between artists, directors, and politicians is an important part of French musical history. Johnson's research reminds us that there were debates regarding how opera houses should be managed and by whom, and it firmly places the world of opera within the political domain of the Revolution.

While this chapter has been separated into what is effectively the history of gender and musical interpretations of the French Revolution, my goal is to blur these boundaries. The only reason I can suggest a more nuanced appreciation of what constitutes women's political French opera is because feminist and music historians have been challenging how we define political agency for decades. The world of women-creating French opera cannot be understood in isolation; it was very much a product of its respective political, cultural, and musical time.

It is my goal that the information presented in this chapter will situate and historicize the lives and operas of Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille. Knowing that the Comédie Italienne and *opéra-*

comique carry a long history as a more welcoming place for women in opera, that there were overt cases of opera's censorship during the early Revolution, and that there was an overarching period of increasing sentimental awareness and expressiveness leading up to and during the French Revolution—both in opera and in the world of politics—are among the most important considerations which will shape how I approach reading the political significance of women-created opera during the early French Revolution.

Chapter Two

Unspoiled Milk: Feeding the Nation through Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786)

*If children must absorb with their milk the
principals [sic] of the Constitution, who can
and who must catechize them in this case? Who
can develop their liberty in their still and tender
hearts and minds, if not you?*

—*Lettres bougrement patriotiques de la Mère Duchêne*, letter
5, probably 1791

The *lettres bougrement patriotiques* were a series of pamphlet correspondences that appeared every Tuesday and Saturday in Paris throughout the French Revolution.²⁴² ²⁴³ While the issues remain undated, and we do not know their author, these pamphlets indicate that political writings intended for women were present during the *guerre des pamphlets* of the early Revolution.²⁴⁴ Calling upon women to embrace their supposedly innate positions as educators and nurturers was one-way womanhood was constructed as a political necessity during the early French Revolution, as these responsibilities were purportedly vital in guiding boys and men to their own higher sense of morality.²⁴⁵ It was also widely believed that these sentiments would in return spark a Revolutionary spirit in the hearts of all French citizens. While this call to womanly action was not

²⁴² Dominique Godineau and Katherine Streip, *The Women of Paris and Their French Revolution* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2019), 24.

²⁴³ In eighteenth-century Paris, pamphlets were a popular form of journalism intended to distribute current news and opinion pieces well before the commencement of the French Revolution. Created for the wider public, with both sexes in mind, before 1789, pamphlets were read by both men and women. However, with the increasing political action taken by working-class women following the March on Versailles on 5 October 1789, there was an increase in women's only pamphlets—meaning those which followed the style of popular women's magazines like the *Journal des Dames* from earlier in the century. *Les Lettres Bougrement Patriotiques* was one of the first women-readership pamphlets that clearly spoke to the newfound political action many working-class women underwent during the early Revolution. Its contents highlight the various ways women could continue to encourage societal change by pressuring the government. For more information regarding the history of women's pamphlets and *Les Lettres Bougrement Patriotiques*, see Ouzi Elyada, "La Mère Duchêne et les Poissardes: Naissance de La Presse Destinée Aux Femmes Du Peuple Pendant La Révolution Française," *Nouveau Monde Éditions* no. 12 (2009): 11–27.

²⁴⁴ Monnier Raymonde, "Lettres Bougrement Patriotiques de la mère Duchêne, suivi de Journal des Femmes (1791)," *Annales Historiques De La Révolution Française* no. 278 (1998), 495.

²⁴⁵ Godineau and Streip, *The Women of Paris*, 20–40.

unique to Revolutionary France—women throughout eighteenth-century Europe and North America were often encouraged to use their skills as moralizers of public spaces to construct a more upright society—the early French Revolution had an even deeper calling for women.²⁴⁶

Political discourses during the early Revolution largely centred on how France could become a nation, meaning a country not defined under the monarchical rule of a king but rather through the unification, both geographically and symbolically, of its citizens.²⁴⁷ Since women were excluded from active citizenship, their overt contribution to France becoming a nation-state has often been overlooked.²⁴⁸ Yet, women were not necessarily exempt from political involvement. Women's political role, which only occasionally extended into more public avenues like Charlotte Corday's trial or Olympe de Gouges' *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen* (1791), was often confined to the home or the intimate sphere.²⁴⁹ However, this did not automatically devalue their importance in shaping future French Republican citizens. The widely circulated pamphlet quoted in the epigraph above highlights how women could exert their authority as nurturers to mould a new France, through both the symbolic and literal nourishment of maternal breastmilk.

Within early modern France, a woman's breast was often considered both a symbol of power and emancipation.²⁵⁰ Today, the most common association between French liberty and the breast likely lies with the Revolutionary emblem of Marianne, who is often depicted bare-breasted,

²⁴⁶ Linda Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment—An American Perspective," *American Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1976): 187-205, 191.

²⁴⁷ For more information on the "nation-state", see Introduction, fn. 23. See also Chimene I. Keitner, *The Paradoxes of Nationalism: The French Revolution and Its Meaning for Contemporary Nation Building* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012).

²⁴⁸ For a discussion on active versus passive citizenship, see Introduction, fn. 27.

²⁴⁹ Olympe de Gouges, *Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne* (Paris: Pythia, 1791).

²⁵⁰ See Mary Jacobus, "Incorruptible Milk: Breast-Feeding and the French Revolution," in *Rebel Daughters: Women and the French Revolution*, ed. Leslie Rabine and Sarah Melzer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 54.

wearing a Phrygian cap, and who stands as the official logo of the current Fifth French Republic.²⁵¹ She was born out of two iconic maternal figures, Marie for the Virgin Mary and Anne for her mother.²⁵² Marianne was an amalgam of the Revolutionary goddesses of Reason, Liberty, and Virtue.²⁵³ Often depicted as a commoner, she stood “as a foil to aristocracy” thus perpetuating the myth that the Revolution empowered the lower class.²⁵⁴ However, there are only traces of Marianne in the early Revolution despite her genesis in 1789; she can be found on a few coins marking the Storming of the Bastille, as historian Maurice Agulhon’s work has uncovered, but it was Minerva and Mercury who were more commonly used to represent *la République* during the early years of the Revolution.²⁵⁵

The allegory of women representing the feminine-gendered *la République* is a topic which forms a large portion of feminist French historical research.²⁵⁶ The supposedly fairer sex personifying liberty, justice, wisdom, and charity is not unique to France. As historian Marina Warner reveals through the history of sculpture and painting, there is a long Western tradition of female allegories as political ideals.²⁵⁷ Indeed, even the concept of Republican Motherhood, the general idea—highlighted in *the lettres bougrement patriotiques*—that mothers were better suited to cultivating moral and virtuous citizens, was conceived long before 1789 and remained popular

²⁵¹ The neo-classical figure of Marianne—proud, stoic, and donning a Phrygian cap—remains a powerful political symbol. Marianne is the official logo of the French Government. She is found on French euro currency and postage stamps, and more recently woven into the medals and marketing scheme for the 2024 Paris Olympics. For a more detailed account of her symbolic importance to the French nation-state and myth building, see Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne Into Battle: Republican Imagery and Symbolism in France, 1789-1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

²⁵² Wendy Nielsen, *Women Warriors in Romantic Drama* (Newark: The University of Delaware Press, 2013), 136.

²⁵³ Nielsen, *Women Warriors*, 136.

²⁵⁴ Nielsen, *Women Warriors*, 136.

²⁵⁵ Maurice Agulhon, *Marianne au combat: l'imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1789 à 1880* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979), 102-103.

²⁵⁶ For example, see Madelyn Gutwirth, *The Twilight of the Goddesses: Women and Representation in the French Revolutionary Era* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 355.

²⁵⁷ See Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form, 1st Edition* (Oakland: The University of California Press: 1985).

even after the Restoration.²⁵⁸ Therefore, the meaning of this idealized version of women's maternal nature was not fixed. Rather, as historian Jennifer Popiel suggests, Republican Motherhood was attached to the wider "republic of virtue" which became increasingly important during the early Revolution.²⁵⁹ Nonetheless, once domesticity and modes of maternal nurturing received heightened ideological emphasis in the early 1790s, mothers became "important as the primary source of moral education" and their role within the family became vital in the process of "developing ideals that are often tied to liberalism", one of the core ideological principles discussed during the early Revolution.²⁶⁰

It is through the early Revolution's wider discourses on domesticity, womanhood, motherhood, and virtue that I wish to explore the successful opera composer Lucile Grétry (1772-1790) and her first opera, *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786). As the well-known daughter of the famous composer André Grétry (1741-1813), Lucile Grétry learned the art of composition from within the home and, in many ways, lived an uneventful life, aside from composing two operas and tragically dying from consumption at the tender age of eighteen. However, *Le mariage d'Antonio*'s success reveals something important about women composers, Republican

²⁵⁸ For more on "Republican Womanhood" and "Republican Motherhood", see Lynn Hunt, "Male Virtue and Republican Motherhood," in *The Terror*, vol. 4 of *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, edited by Keith Michael Baker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4:195-208; Annie Smart, *Citoyennes: Women and the Ideal of Citizenship in Eighteenth-Century France* (Newark: The University of Delaware Press, 2011).

²⁵⁹ Jennifer Popiel, *Rousseau's Daughters: Domesticity, Education, and Autonomy in Modern France* (Lebanon: The University of New Hampshire Press, 2008), 13. For a complete discussion of the "Republic of virtue" pre and post 1789, see Carl Blum, *Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue: The Language of Politics in the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

²⁶⁰ Popiel, *Rousseau's Daughters*, 13. For a discussion of Maximilien Robespierre's speeches where the politician addresses women and motherhood, see Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, "Robespierre, Old Regime Feminist? Gender, the Late Eighteenth Century, and the French Revolution Revisited," *The Journal of Modern History* 82, no.1 (March 2010), 1-29.

Womanhood, and the political significance of women co-depicting virtuous female characters on the Parisian Revolutionary stage.

Le mariage d'Antonio premiered on 29 July 1786 at the Théâtre Italien (salle Favart) in Paris.²⁶¹ While it was played an additional seven times in 1787 in Toulouse, after its initial performance in Paris in July, it was not re-shown in the capital city until the Storming of the Bastille. This opera's initial lack of success may have been what prompted Lucile Grétry to compose her second and last opera, *Toinette et Louis* (1787), which also premiered at the Théâtre Italien on 22 March 1787, though this opera only ever received one performance.²⁶² However, on 6 August 1789, less than one month after the Storming of the Bastille, *Le mariage d'Antonio* was revived at the Théâtre Italien, four years after its last performance in Paris. It was continuously played in the capital city until February 1791, almost an entire year after the composer's death in March 1790.

This opera's revival during the early Revolution is even more notable when we consider that *Le mariage d'Antonio* was written as a sequel to Lucile Grétry's father's opera, *Richard Cœur de Lion* (1784). However, *Richard Cœur de Lion* carries a different performance history. It was mostly performed before July 1789, with forty-three productions compared to just twenty-three from 1789 to 1792.²⁶³ Simply stated, André Grétry's *Richard Cœur de Lion* slowly declined in popularity during the early Revolution while its sequel, *Le mariage d'Antonio*, was unearthed and grew in popularity.

²⁶¹ For the complete performance history of Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786), see Appendix D.

²⁶² For the complete performance history of Lucile Grétry's *Toinette et Louis* (1787), see CÉSAR *calendrier électronique des spectacles sous l'ancien régime et sous la Révolution* [Oxford: CESAR Project at Oxford Brookes University, 2001] Web, https://cesar.huma-num.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UID=162080.

²⁶³ For the complete performance history of André Grétry's *Richard Cœur de Lion* (1784), see CÉSAR *calendrier électronique des spectacles sous l'ancien régime et sous la Révolution*, https://cesar.huma-num.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UID=124122.

There are many reasons why a young female-composed opera grew in popularity post-1789, and why *Richard Cœur de Lion* did not. André Grétry was supposedly one of Marie-Antoinette's favourite composers and he was partly responsible for popularizing *opéra-comique* at Versailles, especially its performances at the Petit Trianon.²⁶⁴ This has been suggested by music historians like David Charlton to be a reason for the composer's eventual demise during the Revolution.²⁶⁵ However, André Grétry's operas were still generally popular from 1789-1793, it is only after the Reign of Terror when his works appear to have slowly vanished from Parisian theatres. This is made evident through the continuous success of his other well-known *opéra-comique*, *Zémire et Azor* (1771) which flourished at the Théâtre Italien during the early Revolution.²⁶⁶

I believe there is one important difference between *Le mariage d'Antonio* and *Richard Cœur de Lion* which has yet to be explored and which may provide additional explanation for their contrasting performance histories. *Richard* is set in the Middle Ages; it is a work of historical fiction about an English king. *Le mariage d'Antonio*, on the other hand, is a contemporary French pastoral, moral, feminocentric story that places female virtuousness at its centre. The opera unfolds through the main character, Colette, who is a young, upright, and virtuous woman. She spends the entirety of the opera educating her parents and lover, Antonio, in lessons about remaining steadfast to one's own desires as the only true way to gain individual liberty, a theme that had resonances during the early Revolution.

²⁶⁴ See R.J. Arnold's *Grétry's Operas and the French Public: From the Old Regime to the Restoration* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2017), 109-124; John Duron, *Regards sur la musique: Grétry en société* (Paris: Mardaga, 2009), 84-88.

²⁶⁵ See Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique*, 213-214.

²⁶⁶ For the complete performance history of André Grétry's *Zémire et Azor* (1771), see CÉSAR *calendrier électronique des spectacles sous l'ancien régime et sous la Révolution*, https://cesar.huma-num.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UID=159272.

Le mariage d'Antonio also chimed with notions of Republican Womanhood. Known to be the creation of the “youthfully innocent” Lucile Grétry, its reception was shaped by a letter by the composer’s father that linked her melodic invention to the idea of female purity. In this letter from the Journal de Paris on 29 July 1786, André Grétry described his daughter’s music as being “pure” in both its declamation and melodic expression.²⁶⁷ This may help to partially explain why *Le mariage d'Antonio* became more celebrated on Paris’ Revolutionary stage than during the *ancien régime*. André Grétry stressed that he “did not interfere with [his daughter’s melodies as] it is up to nature to create a pleasant aria that springs directly from the declamation”.²⁶⁸ This chapter argues that it is remarks such as these, which imply a connection between female-created natural melodies and nature, which may suggest that something deeper was at play between the act of female composition, natural music, moral female characters, and the early Revolution’s ideology around Republican Womanhood.²⁶⁹

Taking these hints seriously, this chapter links *Le mariage d'Antonio* and its composer to Revolutionary discourses around womanhood. While Lucile Grétry could not physically breastfeed her audience lessons in liberty, she reveals how women composers took their roles as daughters, wives, and mothers onto the stage. In doing so, they marshalled idealized understandings of Republican Womanhood. Importantly, to demonstrate how *Le mariage d'Antonio* may be read in this way, this chapter will place the opera within the wider genre of *maternités*, a popular late eighteenth-century style within literature, art, and pastoral opera where

²⁶⁷ André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry to the Journal de Paris, 29 July 1786 in Georges de Froidcourt, *La correspondance générale de Grétry, augmentée de nombreux documents relatifs à la vie et aux oeuvres du compositeur liégeois, rassemblée et publiée avec une introduction et des notes critiques* (Brussels: Brepols, 1962), 132-33. Translation provided by Richard Adelson in *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786) (Middleton: A-R Editions, 2008), XIV.

²⁶⁸ Adelson, *Le mariage d'Antonio*, XIV.

²⁶⁹ See Appendix F for the complete letter.

domestic womanhood and female innocence are celebrated as political ideals precisely because of their apolitical appearance.

To understand Lucile Grétry and her opera through the politics of Republican Womanhood, this chapter begins by exploring Rousseau's *Émile* as many of the early Revolution's values surrounding maternal womanhood were initiated within the *philosophes'* writings.²⁷⁰ Questions of how, as a feminist music historian, I interpret Rousseau and his problematic writings on women are considered as is Thomas Lacquer's theoretical model for understanding the period's shift from a "one-sex" model to that of a "two-sex".²⁷¹ As part of this groundwork, I explore the French Revolution's wider idealization of womanhood and motherhood and how the *maternités* genre became central to women-created art (despite, or perhaps because of, its currency among male painters and opera composers).

Turning towards *Le mariage d'Antonio* and its composer, this chapter's second half addresses Lucile Grétry's musical education, the opera's plot, its celebration of natural, authentic melodies, the rise of youth culture during the early Revolution, and the librettist's, Madame de Beaunoir's, use of a female penname. As highlighted in this project's introduction, this is a feminist interpretation of how women-composed opera may be read as being politically significant to the early Revolution. My goal is to not praise this opera as being revolutionary or to suggest that *Le mariage d'Antonio* was somehow a precursor to the Revolution itself, as Republican Womanhood indeed owes its roots to an ideology present before 1789. Rather, I build upon scholarship which

²⁷⁰ See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2013).

²⁷¹ See Thomas Lacquer, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), especially Chapter Five: Discovery of the Sexes, 145-188.

has already recognized the importance of gender to the politics of French opera including the work of Olivia Bloechl, Anne Duggan, Hedy Law, Raphaëlle Legrand, and Julia Prest.²⁷²

2.1 *Émile* and the Genesis of Unspoiled Milk

Any discussion of gender in the early Revolution must consider how womanhood became a form of service to the state. In Thomas Lacquer's influential *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (1990), he succinctly outlines how conceptions of gender shifted pre and post the eighteenth century.²⁷³ Lacquer separates this ideology into the "one-sex" model versus the "two-sex" model. Essentially, the "one-sex" model suggests that in Western cultures from the Ancients to the 1750s, the consensus was that there was one body, which was normatively male. The female body was understood as having the same reproductive organs, but in inverted and internal form.²⁷⁴ The thought was that women were a less developed version of the male body, distinguished from it in degree of perfection but not kind.²⁷⁵

A shift, both epistemological and political, took place during the eighteenth century.²⁷⁶ Now, it was proposed that the female body was different from the male; not an inversion of it. To justify this new understanding, primary accounts during this period relied upon linking one's sex

²⁷² See Olivia Bloechl, "Gendered Geographies in Proserpine" in *Seachanges: Music in the Mediterranean and Atlantic Worlds, 1550-1800* ed. Kate Van Orden (Florence: I Tatti - The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, 2021); Anne E. Duggan, "Women and Absolutism in French Opera and Fairy Tale," *The French Review* 78, no. 2 (2004): 302-15. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25479770>; Hedy Law "Composing *Citoyennes* through Sapho," *The Opera Quarterly*, 32, no. 1 (2016): 5-28; Raphaëlle Legrand, "Libertines et femmes vertueuses: l'image des chanteuses d'opéra et d'opéra-comique en France au XVIIIe siècle," *Émancipation sexuelle ou contrainte des corps* (2006): 157-175; Julia Prest, *Theatre Under Louis XIV: Cross-Casting and the Performance of Gender in Drama, Ballet and Opera* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

²⁷³ Lacquer, *Making Sex*, 145-188.

²⁷⁴ Renaissance illustrations of the female human body believed that the vulva was an underdeveloped, inwards turning penis. They believed that the labia was the foreskin, the uterus was an underdeveloped scrotum, and the ovaries were smaller, less formed testicles. See Lacquer, *Making Sex*, 4, 24, 26, 65.

²⁷⁵ Lacquer, *Making Sex*, 26.

²⁷⁶ See Penny Weiss, *Gendered Community: Rousseau, Sex, and Politics* (New York: NYU Press, 1993), Chapter Four, Families and Politics: Sex Roles and Community, 54-74.

to physical attributes.²⁷⁷ Gender thus became linked to one's biological sex. Philosophers were at the forefront of these discussions, the most prominent being Jean-Jacques Rousseau who argued that women should be relegated to domestic spaces because of their innate sexual differences.²⁷⁸ Political discussions, largely inspired by Rousseau's writings, began to embrace this new gender theory often using it to bolster arguments for the exclusion of women from public life. These polemics, which climaxed in the early Revolution, turned on the question of women's potential role within the Revolutionary movement.²⁷⁹

To better comprehend the politicization of this new, gender-sex linked womanhood, one can turn to Rousseau and his philosophy of unspoiled milk in *Émile*. In this work, the young boy's wet nurse figures as a source of potential corruption.²⁸⁰ Uniting breastfeeding with the pastoral and nature's redemptive qualities, the philosopher decrees that wet nurses should come from the countryside and display good morals. They must eat a vegetarian diet as "the milk of herbivorous females is sweeter and healthier than that of carnivores...[as] it preserves its nature better and becomes less subject to putrefaction."²⁸¹ The connection between the countryside and simple, rural life cannot be overemphasized in Rousseau's characterization of this ideal of uncontaminated, healthful milk. Vegetarianism may seem like a rather odd request but abstaining from meat was a contentiously debated political topic during the eighteenth century with some revolutionaries and philosophers even believing that liberty should also extend to animals' autonomy, while others

²⁷⁷ Lacquer, *Making Sex*, 192.

²⁷⁸ See Dena Goodman, "Difference: An Enlightenment Concept" in Keith Michael Baker and Peter Hanns Reill eds. *What's Left of Enlightenment? A Postmodern Question* (Stanford: Stanford University Press):129–147, 137.

²⁷⁹ For the recurring debates on sexual difference during the early French Revolution, and the importance of Rousseau in shaping these discussions, see Susan Foley, *Women in France Since 1789: The Meanings of Difference* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), Introduction: The French Revolution and Gender Politics—Creating a World of Difference, 1-25; Geneviève Fraisse, *Reason's Muse: Sexual Difference and the Birth of Democracy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), especially Chapter Four: The Politics of the Exception, 103-137.

²⁸⁰ Rousseau, *Émile*, 14.

²⁸¹ Rousseau, *Émile*, 29.

embraced this diet simply to challenge aristocratic lifestyles that were largely based on consuming animal products.²⁸² Regardless of the politics of eating vegetables, the fact that Rousseau encouraged women to resort to this type of diet for sweeter milk is rooted in both a physical benefit for the child and in a moral, metaphorical one which came to alter women's role during the early Revolution.

Pure, unspoiled milk's significance is explored further in *Émile* where it becomes evident that nursing is the first social act that shapes and guides young minds. And yet, there is an unresolvable paradox in Rousseau's thinking as a wet nurse can never be morally upright, as any woman who feeds another's baby is deemed to have abandoned her motherly duties to her own biological child.²⁸³ Therefore, by deserting her child to feed another, a wet nurse is perceived as being incapable of imparting to children the necessary morality and, as a result, a devotion to the liberal nation-state cannot be established through her milk. This inescapable contradiction not only reconfirms the necessity that infants should be fed directly from their mothers but that those who fail to do so are contributing to the overall moral decay of their society. This is precisely how the private act of breastfeeding became intertwined within larger political discourses.²⁸⁴

At the heart of *Émile* is the idea that "one who internalized the values of the ideal society would be freer than someone who did not."²⁸⁵ As historian Joseph Reiser states, "what Rousseau presents in *Émile* as human virtue is in fact the most important virtue required of citizens in liberal

²⁸² Jessica Stoller-Conrad, "Let Them Eat Kale: Vegetarians And The French Revolution," July 14, 2012, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2012/07/13/156722719/let-them-eat-kale-vegetarians-and-the-french-revolution?t=1632732775169&t=1636540687601>.

²⁸³ Stoller-Conrad, "Vegetarians and The French Revolution".

²⁸⁴ See, for example, the writings of Marie-Jeanne Roland (1754-1793) where the author notes in her letters to her husband how she appropriated the discourses around Republican Motherhood for her own advantage. See Annie K. Smart, "Breastfeeding and Scientific Motherhood: The Case of Marie-Jeanne Roland," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 39, no. 1 (2020): 13-38. doi:10.1353/tsw.2020.0020.

²⁸⁵ Popiel, *Rousseau's Daughters*, 10.

regimes: the Rousseauian ‘man’ of virtue steadfastly respects the rights of others, even at great cost to himself.”²⁸⁶ Maternal self-sacrifice forms a large part of the philosopher’s rhetoric around womanhood and while the language of Rousseau upheld gendered essentialism, the philosopher does suggest “that women, like men, had the crucial civic characteristic of self-control and were thus in a unique position to shape the future.”²⁸⁷ Female virtue, as it is presented in *Émile*, is less centered on chastity and more focused on self-sacrifice to reward others.

Like Rousseau, the author of the *lettres bougrement patriotiques* deems maternal breastfeeding a personal responsibility as well as a public necessity. As a potential educational source for the French Republic, breastfeeding was considered vital to the nation’s success; you could not have educated, liberated citizens who were not brought up with the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity in mind as infants.²⁸⁸ To inspire republican virtue, this meant that “patriots sought to create a political community in which citizens subordinated their private interests to the welfare of the public”.²⁸⁹ The quotation within the *lettres bougrement patriotiques*, which specifically was intended for a female readership, takes Rousseau’s theoretical ideas explored in *Émile* and extends them into the lived experiences of French women during the early Revolution. Owing in part to these Revolutionary pamphlets, a politicization of French womanhood was no longer being solely explored through grand philosophical ideologies in writing but bore upon women’s actual lives—no longer abstract, but a direct call to womanly action.

²⁸⁶ Popiel, *Rousseau’s Daughters*, 10

²⁸⁷ Popiel, *Rousseau’s Daughters*, 9.

²⁸⁸ See Mary Jacobus, “Incorruptible Milk: Breast-Feeding and the French Revolution,” in *Rebel Daughters: Women and the French Revolution*, ed. Leslie Rabine and Sarah Melzer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 54.

²⁸⁹ See Rousseau, *Émile*.

²⁸⁹ John Shovlin, *The Political Economy of Virtue: Luxury, Patriotism, and the Origins of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 5.

2.2 Reading Rousseau as a Feminist Music Historian

It may appear insensitive to use Rousseau as a guide to read women in the eighteenth century considering the philosopher wrote arguably the most defamatory remarks about women during this period.²⁹⁰ However, I find Jennifer Popiel's justification in her book *Rousseau's Daughters: Domesticity, Education, and Autonomy in Modern France* (2008) for using this philosopher in feminist historical research rather compelling.²⁹¹ Popiel's work explores the rising emphasis on the maternal woman during the long eighteenth century as the means to understand French educational reforms. The author, along with fellow feminist historians Helena Rosenblatt and Lori Jo, declares that despite Rousseau's desire to restrict women to a passive function, we must "move beyond accusations of misogyny and instead [draw] finer historical and literary distinctions within Rousseau's work."²⁹² The fact that many eighteenth-century women were compelled by Rousseau and used his writings to their own advantage, like Olympe de Gouges (1748-1793), is likely enough to suggest that we should attempt to better understand his gendered conceptions, despite their obvious sexism.²⁹³

What Popiel reveals through her extensive archival work is that while Rousseau addressed how "maternal love was necessary to teach the crucial civic characteristics of self-control", concurrently, in the arts, there was a rise in women as depictions of virtue, or indeed virtue as being a feminine trait.²⁹⁴ The idea that women were central figures in nurturing virtue and self-

²⁹⁰ For a discussion of the sexist ideology behind Rousseau's work, see Paul Thomas, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Sexist?" *Feminist Studies* 17, no. 2 (1991): 195–217, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178331>; Penny A. Weiss, "Rousseau, Antifeminism, and Woman's Nature," *Political Theory* 15, no. 1 (1987): 81–98, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/191721>.

²⁹¹ Popiel, *Rousseau's Daughters*, 2.

²⁹² Popiel, *Rousseau's Daughters*, 2.

²⁹³ See Mary Seidman Trouille, *Sexual Politics in the Enlightenment: Women Writers Read Rousseau* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), Chapter Six: The Influence of Class and Politics on Women's Response to Rousseau: Stéphanie Genlis and Olympe de Gouges, 237-292.

²⁹⁴ Popiel, *Rousseau's Daughters*, 165 -166.

control in order to create truly liberated French citizens inspired “new genres of literature, new forms of clothing, and new approaches to schooling” which reached their climax in popularity during the early Revolution.²⁹⁵ It is this creation of a maternal genre which resonates most with *Le mariage d’Antonio*.

2.3 Maternités as a Genre

As Leslie Walker notes in *A Mother's Love: Crafting Feminine Virtue in Enlightenment France* (2008), women’s self-sacrifice to generate a more moral and liberal society became embraced within late eighteenth-century art and literature.²⁹⁶ The domestic genre of *maternités* centered on narratives of domestic and maternal education. Novelists Jean-Marie Le Prince de Beaumont (1711-1776) and Madame d’Epinay (1726, 1783), writer Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis (1746-1830), portrait painter Élisabeth Vigée le Brun (1755-1842), writer and salonnière Marie-Jeanne Roland (1754-1793), and woman of letters Germaine Staël (1766-1817) are some of the most successful examples of women employing this genre within their respective artistic outputs. As Walker stresses, by the late 1780s, there was a large enterprise of women publishing and creating works which promoted the ideal virtuous French woman.²⁹⁷ We know this style of art was appreciated as in 1782, the Académie Française asked Madame de Genlis to join its ranks for her work on women’s pedagogy while in 1783, Madame d’Epinay won the Académie’s Montyon Prize for *Conversations d’Émilie* (1774), a novel about a woman educating her granddaughter in female self-sacrifice and virtue.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁵ Popiel, *Rousseau’s Daughters*, 2.

²⁹⁶ See Lesly Walker, *A Mother's Love: Crafting Feminine Virtue in Enlightenment France* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2008).

²⁹⁷ Walker, *Crafting Feminine Virtue*, 30.

²⁹⁸ Walker, *Crafting Feminine Virtue*, 27.

An example of the early Revolution's *maternités* literary style, which neatly summarizes how women were depicting themselves through art, occurs in the novel *Zélie Dans Le Désert* (1793) by Madame Daubenton (dates unknown).²⁹⁹ In this work, education through the maternal breast is depicted not as a chore but rather as something which ultimately brings women pleasure. After giving birth, the main character exclaims "I recovered quickly because I was nursing, and besides, I was content, happy, well cared for, and I was constantly the recipient of Monsieur d'Ermancour's [her husband's] attentions."³⁰⁰ The implied idea is that through the main character showing maternal love and guidance to her child, Monsieur d'Ermancour becomes the dutiful husband.

The most successful visual artist to use the *maternités* genre was painter Marguerite Gérard (1761-1837).³⁰¹ Women and their domestic pursuits take centre stage in Gérard's art. "Une femme allaitant



Figure 2. 1: Marguerite Gérard, *Maternités*, between 1775 and 1802. Musée des beaux-arts, Lyon. Photo is Public Domain originally held in the Musée des beaux-arts, Lyon, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/80/Motherhood%2C_by_Marguerite_G%C3%A9rard.jpg.

²⁹⁹ Marguerite Daubenton, *Zélie Dans Le Désert* (Paris: Brouard-Arends, 1997).

³⁰⁰ Daubenton, *Zélie Dans Le Désert*, 347.

³⁰¹ For more information of the life and works of Marguerite Gérard, see Carole Blumenfeld, *Marguerite Gérard, 1761-1837* (Paris: Gourcuff Gradenigo, 2019).

son enfant regardée par son amie” (1802) and “Maternité” (date unknown) are some of her better-known paintings (Figures 2.1 and 2.2). As art historians Sir Claude Phillips and Bette Wyn Oliver note, Gérard commonly placed young women in the foreground of her works, dressed in light colours and engaging in the daily activities of womanhood.³⁰² Aside from her art’s frequent presentation in salons, we know Gérard’s creations were widely circulated during the early Revolution due to the large number of engravings which remain as artifacts in the Louvre Museum today.³⁰³

Gérard was not alone in painting scenes of maternal breastfeeding, as men also depicted this intimate act as in the paintings of Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725-1805), Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806), Louis-Roland Trinquesse (1746-1800) and Jean-Laurent Mosnier (1743-1808). Most importantly for the present discussion, women composers were not the only musicians who created or co-created young, virtuous, and moral women on the stage. Nicolas Dalayrac’s (1753-1809) operas of the Revolution, like *Les Deux Petits Savoyards* (1789), *Asgill, ou Le Prisonnier de guerre* (1793), and most notably *Marianne, ou L’amour maternel* (1796),



Figure 2. 2: Marguerite Gérard, *Une femme allaitant son enfant regardée par son amie*, 1802. Image is Public Domain, currently held at the Musée Jean-Honoré Fragonard, Paris, France, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Une_femme_allaitant_son_enfant_regard%C3%A9e_par_son_amie_-_Marguerite_G%C3%A9rard.jpg#/media/File:Une_femme_allaitant_son_enfant_regard%C3%A9e_par_son_amie_-_Marguerite_G%C3%A9rard.jpg.

all explore this feminine trope through depictions of an idealized form of motherhood. *Marianne*,

³⁰² See Sir Claude Phillips, *French Art of the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1914), 117; Bette Wyn Oliver, *Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, Jean-Baptiste Pierre LeBrun, and Marguerite Gérard and their roles in the French artistic legacy, 1775-1825*, Ph.D. Thesis (The University of Texas at Austin, 1997), 145-190.

³⁰³ Bette Wyn Oliver, *French artistic legacy*, 157.

ou L'amour maternel even places the importance of maternal education and guidance at its forefront through its title. And yet, though male composers embraced this theme, *maternités* was frequently the genre in which women composers found their success during the early Revolution.³⁰⁴

Many of Dalayrac's other operas composed during the early Revolution do not revolve around young women and their nurturing roles, like *Raoul sire de Créqui* (1789), *Philippe et Georgette* (1791), *Le Chêne patriotique ou La Matinée du 14 Juillet 1790* (1790), *L'Enfance de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1794), *La Prise de Toulon* (1794) and *Les Détenus ou Cange, commissionnaire de Lazare* (1794).³⁰⁵ Written before the Revolution, but remaining popular throughout it, even his popular *Nina* (1786), while about a young woman, is not part of the genre of *maternités*. The fact that Dalayrac wrote successful operas within the feminine genre of *maternités* is important to recognize, as it suggests that there was a wide appeal for this style of opera. However, as I will argue throughout the rest of this chapter, women who created or co-created *maternités* underwent a process of self-fashioning, collapsing their own identity onto that of their highly virtuous characters and this, I believe, is what truly separates their work within this genre from men's.

2.4 Lucile Grétry's Incorruptibility

As the daughter of the renowned opera composer André Grétry (1741-1813), Lucile Grétry received an enviable education from her father and his fellow composers like Jean-François Tapary (1738/39-after 1810).³⁰⁶ Her entire upbringing and identity were shaped by French opera. Born in

³⁰⁴ See Appendix A for the complete list of women co-created opera during the French Revolution.

³⁰⁵ For the complete performance histories of Dalayrac's operas, see CÉSAR, https://cesar.humanum.fr/cesar2/people/people.php?fct=edit&person_UID=102785.

³⁰⁶ Lucile Grétry, *Le Mariage d'Antonio*, ed. Robert Adelson (Middleton: A-R Editions, Inc., 1786), ix.

Paris on 15 July 1772, Lucile was the eponymous name of Angélique-Dorothée Louise, yet she went by Lucile in honour of her father's successful opera, *Lucile* (1769).³⁰⁷ This eponymous naming after an operatic heroine suggests that, from the beginning, Lucile Grétry's identity was already being shaped by external and figurative concepts of femininity. The opera *Lucile* is about womanhood's redemptive qualities which are explored through the title character. In a classic tale of mistaken identity, which uses characters based on multiple *contes* by Jean-François Marmontel (1723-1799), *Lucile* is about a young maiden who is set to marry a wealthier man, Dorval. On her wedding day, it is revealed to her father, Timante, that Lucile is the daughter of a peasant village wet nurse who switched her child with Timante's when she died. Lucile can no longer marry Dorval as her peasant background has been exposed. Yet, because of Lucile's redemptive qualities that have educated and moralized Dorval, Timante begs Dorval's father to let the marriage proceed, which it indeed does at the end of the opera. Lucile's virtuousness overcomes her modest background.³⁰⁸

The theme of the dishonest wet nurse who swapped the babies raises additional political possibilities. Perhaps the title character is redeemed by Dorval because, in a roundabout way, she was fed her biological mother's milk and thus avoided any corruption despite her mother's actions. Admittingly, this may be a strained interpretation, but the connection between unspoiled milk and a person's ability later in life to remain loyal and virtuous is at least worthy to note given its prominence elsewhere in the period. More likely, the young girl's character is the reason for her restoration, and this is presumably why André Grétry decided to call his daughter Lucile after this role and why Lucile Grétry decided to use this name on her composition rather than Angélique-

³⁰⁷ Grétry, *Le Mariage d'Antonio*, ed. Robert Adelson, ix.

³⁰⁸ See "A Tale of Two Luciles and Two Composers: Grétry, Père et Fille," The University of Melbourne: Archives and Special Collections (blog), April 28, 2016, <https://blogs.unimelb.edu.au/librarycollections/2016/04/28/a-tale-of-two-luciles-and-two-composers-gretry-pere-et-fille/>.

Dorothée Louise. Arguably, Lucile Grétry was suggesting that by relying upon her innate feminine virtue she too could overcome any barriers.

Lucile was highly successful in the 1770s at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels, but it only became popular in Paris in 1789, correspondingly with the start of the French Revolution.³⁰⁹ The revival of *Le mariage d'Antonio* corresponds with *Lucile's* return to the Parisian stage as both operas were resurrected in 1789, thus suggesting that sentimental operas that placed young, moral, female characters at their centre were indeed popular during the early Revolution.³¹⁰

Dubbing his daughter the “image of feminine sensitivity and genius”, André Grétry not only bestowed Lucile her name but also, as mentioned, provided her musical education.³¹¹ Teaching proper counterpoint and declamation was his ultimate educational task, and he ensured that his daughter did not lack support. Musical education is understandably a topic of interest among feminist musicologists as women learning one-way of composition could theoretically open themselves up to scrutiny; the male-dominated spaces of the opera house or the *académie* were often restricted spaces deemed unfit for women’s activity.³¹² Understanding the mechanics of how each instrument was played was vital for a composer and, considering many instruments were deemed unbecoming for women to play, women composers often composed for solo instruments

³⁰⁹ For the complete performance history of *Lucile* (1769), see CÉSAR *calendrier électronique des spectacles sous l'ancien régime et sous la Révolution*, https://cesar.humanum.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UOID=132100.

³¹⁰ For a more detailed discussion of sentimental opera during the French Revolution, and the popularity of sentimental works versus more overtly political operas, see section 1.5 “Aesthetics of Eighteenth-Century Opera” and 1.6 “Revolutionary Audiences” in Chapter One: Historiography and Criticism of *Opéra-Comique* and Gender during the Early French Revolution.

³¹¹ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 25, 55–56.

³¹² See Tari Lujza, “Women, Musical Instruments and Instrumental Music,” *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, no. 3 (1990): 95–143, 118; Rita Steblin, “The Gender Stereotyping of Musical Instruments in the Western Tradition,” *Canadian University Music Society / Société de Musique Des Universités Canadiennes* 16, no. 1 (1995): 128–44.

like the harp, piano, or the voice.³¹³ However, as musicologist Richard Adelson stresses, the family was one way women could bypass this indiscretion, enter these “forbidden” places, and learn how to compose for other instruments without subjecting themselves to scrutiny or blemishing their reputation.³¹⁴

For Lucile Grétry, learning from her father and his friends allowed her to gain the necessary skills to compose a full-length *opéra-comique* without having to navigate this boundary between public and private institutions. Both the successful women composers Florine Dezède (1766-1792) and Caroline Wuiet (1768-1834) are also noted as being André Grétry’s students.³¹⁵ According to André Grétry, Rousseau’s writings on women and music were crucial in shaping his own teaching beliefs and he championed women’s musical education as they were believed to be the ideal sex to birth a “natural melodic style that was unattainable for men”.³¹⁶ It is this idea of feminine “natural” sentiments thought to be “unattainable” for men which largely shapes my interpretation of *Le mariage d’Antonio*.

2.5 *Le mariage d’Antonio* as a *Maternité*

As mentioned, *Le mariage d’Antonio*’s premiere took place at the Théâtre Italien on 29 July 1786. While we may never know to what degree André Grétry assisted his daughter in having her opera performed, as this was the same theatre in which he was attached to, we can be sure that the theatre had a rigorous process where nepotism was unlikely to greatly speed up the long procedure of having one’s opera performed. As explored in this project’s first chapter, creating an

³¹³ See Lujza, “Women, Musical Instruments and Instrumental Music,” 118; Steblin, “The Gender Stereotyping of Musical Instruments,” 128.

³¹⁴ Grétry, *Le mariage d’Antonio*, ix.

³¹⁵ For a complete list of works by Florine Dezède and Caroline Wuiet, see Appendix A.

³¹⁶ For the complete letter, see Grétry ed. Adelson, *Le Mariage d’Antonio*, xiv and Appendix F.

opera in the eighteenth century was a highly collaborative process with many steps in approval before music could even be composed.³¹⁷

Of note on the score itself is the dedication Lucile makes to Monseigneur le Duc de Cereste-Brancas. There is not much known about this man, but historian Frédéric Régent's research regarding the French Revolution's connection to the Americas suggests that de Cereste-Brancas was extremely wealthy.³¹⁸ We know that on 18 July 1788, de Cereste-Brancas was selected as a committee member for planters and that his assets were more than a million livres on Saint-Domingue.³¹⁹ This dedication would have likely encouragingly shaped *Le mariage d'Antonio*'s initial performances, but dedicating a work to a rich, aristocratic slave owner would have quite possibly also posed a problem with the Revolution's onset, especially considering the complexities of the Haitian Revolution in 1791 and the temporary abolition of slavery by France in 1794.³²⁰

This dedication raises many questions as it is difficult to establish a connection between Lucile Grétry and le Duc de Cereste-Brancas. As Emily Green notes, the late eighteenth century marked a dramatic rise in no longer dedicating musical works to patrons but rather to one's peers.³²¹ Instead of acting as “gestures of homage”, dedications were now calculated advertisements used to either advance a composer's career or with the intent of some future

³¹⁷ See section 1.1 “Class and the Origins of the French Revolution” in Chapter One: Historiography and Criticism of *Opéra-Comique* and Gender during the Early Revolution. See also Grétry, *Le Mariage d'Antonio*, ed. Adelson, xi. For a more complete description of the process of mounting an *opéra-comique*, specifically, see David Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 17-18.

³¹⁸ Frédéric Régent, in *The Routledge Companion to the French Revolution in World History*, ed. Alan Forrest and Matthias Middell (New York: Routledge, 2016), 63.

³¹⁹ Régent, *French Revolution*, 63.

³²⁰ For more on the abolition of slavery during the Revolution, see Chapter Four: Navigating the Reign of Terror in Julie Candelle's *Catherine, ou la belle fermière* (1793).

³²¹ See Emily Green, *Dedicating Music, 1785-1850* (Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2019), 38. See also Emily Green, *Dedications and the Reception of the Musical Score, 1785-1850* (Rochester: The University of Rochester Press, 2019).

reciprocation.³²² This is precisely why there is an increase in composer-to-composer dedications during this period. And yet, de Cereste-Brancas was neither a composer nor, from what we can tell, Lucile Grétry's close ally. Acting as her patron cannot be rejected as, despite its decline in the second half of the century, formal patronage did still occur. However, Green's theory of trading in symbolic capital seems to best fit this situation. While a patron often uses a composer to elevate their status as a benevolent, rich, connoisseur, the composer could equally elevate their reputation by dedicating their composition to a particular elite.³²³ Obscuring the monetary exchange, as Green notes, was often the norm in these situations where the symbolic exchange of power became more important.³²⁴ Despite her close connection to André Grétry, I believe this may be the reason why Lucile Grétry felt inclined to dedicate her opera to de Cereste-Brancas despite not having an apparent relationship with this slave owner; in short, through this dedication, she may well have sought to legitimize her position as a composer in 1786.

Le mariage d'Antonio is comprised of an overture, two solo arias, two duos, one trio, a quartet, three choral pieces, and a concluding vaudeville. The opera begins in the village of the old farmer Mathurin where Colette, the young daughter of the farmers Nicolas and Madame Nicolas, and her sister Thérèse are alone inside their cottage. From its onset, this pastoral work celebrates French ruralism and the simplicities of everyday life.³²⁵

The *andante pastorale* overture is one of the opera's only purely orchestral moments, which makes sense considering this is an *opéra-comique* and, even by the 1780s, the genre was

³²² Green, *Musical Score*, abstract.

³²³ Green, *Musical Score*, 38-40.

³²⁴ Green, *Musical Score*, 41.

³²⁵ For a detailed discussion of the politics of women co-creating pastoral opera, see Chapter Three: Reclaiming the Pastoral in Florine Dezède's *Lucette et Lucas* (1781).

still generally understood as “a play with music more than an opera with spoken dialogue”.³²⁶ Compared to André Grétry’s overture in *Richard Cœur-de-lion*, which is dramatic and descends into a very serious chorus, this opening is rather light-hearted. Its structure is simple as it is in ternary form, with a notably lengthy introduction. One moment which slightly challenges the overture’s straightforwardness is that there is a prominent change in time signature from cut time, as first introduced in the introduction, to $\frac{2}{4}$.³²⁷

What is unorthodox about this time signature change is that the overture still manages to feel continuous. This is likely due to Lucile Grétry’s clever use of tonic pedal drones, succinct yet fluid transitions, and her reliance on suspensions in upper voices. This compositional decision is one that other composers used in their own pastoral *opéra-comiques* to generate a sense of temporality. One such case is in Dalayrac’s *Les Deux petites savoyards* (1789), again a *maternités*, where the composer also begins his overture in cut time, but switches seamlessly to $\frac{2}{4}$ through using tonic pedal drones.³²⁸

This sense of continuity enhances pastoral temporality in which nothing changes, and time is “not experienced as a historical or developing process.”³²⁹ While I suspect this idea of the pastoral by Raymond Monelle resonates more with opera plots, as time is generally suspended in pastoral operas where one day may seem like an entire year, this concept of the pastoral not generating stark changes is heard musically throughout the entire overture. Aside from its pleasantness, having an overture which directly contrasts André Grétry’s *Richard* was likely a wise

³²⁶ Charlton, *Grétry*, 7.

³²⁷ Grétry, *Le mariage d'Antonio*, “Overture”, m. 23.

³²⁸ See Nicolas Dalayrac, *Les Deux petits savoyards, comédie en un acte*. Libretto by Benoît-Joseph (Paris: Le Duc, 1789), <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9067444p/f5.item.r=dalayrac%20savoyard.zoom>, “Overture”, especially m. 17.

³²⁹ Raymond Monelle, *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 195.

decision on the composer's part. Unlike her father's opera which is tragic, melodramatic, and historical, *Le mariage d'Antonio*'s music remains light-hearted and carefree throughout. Its complexities and gravitas are found within its moral teachings and its dialogue, rather than its music.

As the overture closes, Colette arrives on the stage and places the *chapeau de mariée* or wedding veil on top of her sister Thérèse's head. "Que ce chapeau" is an ariette sung by Colette and it sees the young woman exclaim that this veil will bring her sister total happiness from the *hameau* to the *village*. The music is light and playful, and it portrays Colette's youth; the brief colouratura passages signify her adolescence, a technique also employed by other composers to project youthful carefreeness, as demonstrated in André Grétry's *Lucile*, where his title character sings the coloratura ariette "Qu'il est doux de dire en aimant" to project a similar feeling.³³⁰

Musically, "Que ce chapeau" is marked by its use of dotted notes which occur on metrically weak beats. Musicologist Peter Le Huray has many thoughts regarding this style's performance practise, but this notably makes the vocal line feel rather coquettish, a characteristic which comes to define Colette's character.³³¹ Giddy with excitement, the sisters are quick to attribute Thérèse's *bonheur* to a mutual friendship that has turned into love. Thérèse reaches this conclusion first, stating that "*C'est l'amitié qui me la pose, c'est l'amour qui me donne.*"³³² This

³³⁰ André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry, *Lucile, comédie en un acte, mêlée d'ariettes* (1769). Libretto by Jean-François Marmontel (Brussels: Breitkopf & Haertel, 1769), "Qu'il est doux de dire en aimant", <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b520010634/f42.item.r=Lucile%20opera>, 11-16.

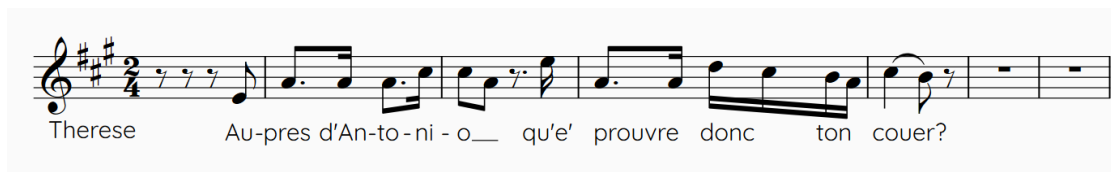
³³¹ See Grétry, *Le mariage d'Antonio*, "Que ce chapeau", mm. 160-165.

³³² "It's friendship that asks me, but it's love that gives me." Grétry ed. Adelson, *Le mariage d'Antonio*, 12.

is the first important Revolutionary theme to be highlighted in the opera as mutual companionship was beginning to be encouraged over arranged marriages.³³³

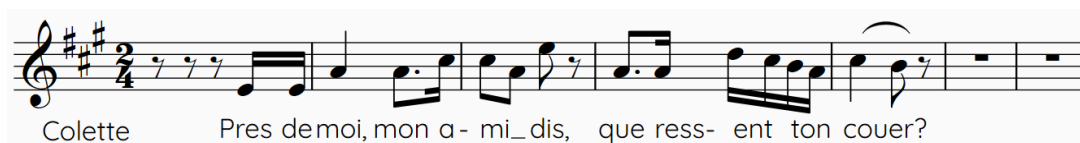
And yet, Thérèse's happiness only saddens Colette. Initially blaming Mathurin and his wife's vow renewal, Thérèse informs Colette that her unhappiness is because she cannot be with her own love, Mathurin's grandson Antonio. The audience learns that Antonio is assisting a blind man, which requires him to leave the village and not spend time with Colette, who is impatiently waiting for his promised return. The two sisters then begin a *duo* where Thérèse asks Colette to search her heart and determine her feelings for Antonio as she needs clarity over her situation.

In "Auprès d'Antonio", Colette is ultimately judged to be in love as when Antonio is not present, she is miserable; her happiness depends on his presence. Colette takes this confirmation as the determination that she should marry. However, Thérèse reminds her sister that she is still very young and that she should wait until she is older. They agree to go to Mathurin's and Thérèse tries to leave her sister happy, despite her caution over marriage, as Thérèse reminds her that Antonio likely reciprocates her love. This duet is important to the overall opera as its theme reappears when Colette and Antonio eventually reunite, demonstrated in Musical Examples 1 and 2, respectively.



Musical Example 1: Melody reduction from "Auprès d'Antonio", mm.5-9, *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786). Lucile Grétry, *Le mariage d'Antonio*, 1786. <https://imslp.org/wiki/Special:ImagefromIndex/31056/torat>.

³³³ See Chapter Four: Navigating the Reign of Terror (1793-94) in Julie Candelle's *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* (1793) for a longer discussion of divorce and the importance of mutual companionship in marriages during the early French Revolution.



Musical Example 2: Melody reduction from “Pres de moi”, mm.5-9, *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786). Lucile Grétry, *Le mariage d'Antonio*, 1786. <https://imslp.org/wiki/Special:ImagefromIndex/31056/torat>.

This reoccurring melody, in which Colette confirms her love, links the young woman (who is determining her feelings, her inner dialogue as it were) to Antonio because later in the act she instructs him to do the same. “Auprès d’Antonio” is largely syllabic and acts as plot development rather than showcasing Lucile Grétry’s musical abilities, though her use of double dotting rhythms or *notes inégales* follows conventional techniques, which indeed highlights her musical awareness of such techniques.³³⁴

The opera’s second scene sees Colette alone on the stage as she is left to her thoughts. Her love is steadfast and never fickle as she sings “Ah! quel plaisir!”³³⁵ I cannot help but relate André Grétry’s remarks in the Journal de Paris about women’s natural gift to compose melody to this aria. From Colette’s sighing octave leaps to the melismatic passages which highlight *voalge* and *ravage*, as demonstrated in Musical Example 3, this aria is the first to feature the composer’s truly lyrical vocal setting.³³⁶ While Colette’s “Que ce chapeau” is jovial and it displays her youth, this aria is the character’s most serious moment on the stage. The maturity, both vocally and in terms of character development, to sustain four to six-measure phrases at *allegro non troppo* requires

³³⁴ For a discussion of notes inégales, see Chapter Two: Beyond the Dairy: Employing Gendered Pastoralism in Florine Dezède’s *Lucette et Lucas* (1781).

³³⁵ Grétry, *Le mariage d'Antonio*, 18-23.

³³⁶ Grétry, *Le mariage d'Antonio*, 18.

stamina and connectivity in the chest register which suggests that Colette may not necessarily be written for a soubrette, but rather for a light lyric soprano.

Perhaps seemingly inconsequential, Colette's *fach* categorization may be significant. If we look at Mozart's traditional soubrettes of Zerlina, Despina, and even Susanna and Barbarina, while all are marked by innocence and youth, there is an element of mischievousness, cheekiness, or even youthful ignorance characterizing these roles. Colette, who serves to educate all those around her, lacks such qualities despite her youth. Characterization aside, while no upper extension is required for this role, vocally, Colette commands sustainment in the *passagio*, which suggests a heavier vocal weight could be appropriate.³³⁷



Musical Example 3: Melody reduction from " Ah! quel plaisir ", mm. 65-74, *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786). Lucile Grétry, *Le mariage d'Antonio*, 1786. <https://imslp.org/wiki/Special:ImagefromIndex/31056/torat>.

Coupled with the various melismatic passages that are often rather challenging, most notably in the repetition of *qui me toujours ravage* where the singer must complete eight measures of

³³⁷ Richard Miller, *Training Soprano Voices* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 8.

colouratura sixteenth notes and complete an octave leap to finish the initial phrase, “Ah! quel plaisir” (shown in Musical Example 3) is, in many ways, the opera’s musical highlight.³³⁸

This is easily the opera’s most difficult piece to sing, and its inclusion early in the work rather than towards the climax deserves exploration. One plausible reason for this decision is that by having Colette’s second aria within the second scene, the foundation has been laid that she is fully in control. Despite her lighter timbre and smaller vocal range, the role of Colette carries a certain influence, intensity, and power comparable dramatically, at least, to Donna Anna, Rosina, Pamina, or Ilia rather than the traditional secondary character roles of soubrettes.

“Ah! quell plaisir!” leaves Colette feeling deeper in love and sure that Antonio must reciprocate these feelings. Despite her youth, there is certainty in Colette’s words; she is unwavering.³³⁹ This aria’s importance is not necessarily to impress audiences with its numerous coloratura passages and vocal agility but rather to serve as moral instruction on how to question one’s heart, determine if love is true, and understand the consequences of fulfilling this commitment. In many ways, that is the same dedication and allegiance that was outwardly needed to be displayed for the new French Republic.³⁴⁰

Upon this aria’s completion, Antonio enters the stage, and the third scene sees his long-awaited reunion with Colette. Despite their meeting, Colette is outwardly angry that Antonio failed to arrive sooner due to his duty to the blind man. Rather unsurprisingly, Antonio reveals that this man was neither poor nor blind and was, in fact, a rich troubadour whose king had been captured. This rich man had to disguise himself as a blind man to free the king. With the help of a young,

³³⁸ Grétry, *Le mariage d’Antonio*, 22.

³³⁹ Grétry, *Le mariage d’Antonio*, 20.

³⁴⁰ See Jefferson Flanders, *The Republic of Virtue* (Lexington: Munroe Hill Press, 2014).

beautiful woman, the troubadour was able to liberate the king and once this duty was completed, Antonio was free to return to Colette. Antonio's mission to assist the supposedly poor man connects *Le mariage d'Antonio* to *Richard Cœur-de-lion* as the man Antonio aids is Blondel, a squire of Richard's. Notably, it is Blondel who sings an aria which would eventually become a royalist anthem during the early Revolution, "Ô Richard! Ô mon roi!"³⁴¹

Now that Colette is privy to the truth regarding Blondel's identity, she asks if Antonio understands love and if he knows what it feels like. She then tests his affection in "Près de moi" where she simply asks, "*que ressent ton coeur*" to which he responds "*un trouble, un embrace extreme, un plaisir, un bonheur supreme*".³⁴² Antonio passes the test and, since his love is verified, the music returns to the same melodic passage both Thérèse and Colette sang during their *duo* when it was Colette who had to prove that her feelings were steadfast and true (see Musical Examples 1 and 2). As with the duet between the sisters, this *duo* serves to morally instruct the audience, and it highlights the importance of uncovering one's desires and remaining faithful to them.

Importantly, it is Colette who tutors Antonio on how to access his inner longings, but she does so in a nurturing and encouraging way rather than by demanding that he does so. She does not ask him to write a letter and explore the pros and cons of marrying her, nor does she even ask him to think logically about love. Instead, her main question is asking what lies within his heart, and it is through this prompt that Antonio determines his fate. The relationship between the two is

³⁴¹ See Laura Mason, *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics, 1787–1799* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 46–47.

³⁴² "What is in your heart", "a trouble, an extreme embrace, pleasure, supreme happiness", Grétry, *Le mariage d'Antonio*, 26.

not that of a mother and child, but Colette's gentle, private prompts slowly feed Antonio; ultimately, he makes his self-discovery and decides whom he loves.

Colette does not sing about her love for Antonio as a method of persuasion here, which may appear rather strange considering this would likely sway the young man's decision. Despite deeply loving Antonio, Colette's role is to educate him on the importance of following one's own inclinations and remaining true to them, even if this were to result in her unrequited love. This is her self-sacrifice. She is willing to become heartbroken as her purpose is to morally guide those around her so that they can become liberated. This is quite possibly why the opera was titled *Le mariage d'Antonio* and not *Le mariage de Colette*.

This almost passive method of teaching can be connected to the moral instruction garnered via Republican Motherhood, in general, and maternal breastfeeding, more specifically. The coaching that Colette provides does not come from her knowledge. What Colette achieves, notably during an intimate, private moment, is the ability to encourage Antonio to uncover his own sense of reason, in this case through determining his feelings of love. When the Mère Duchêne wrote in the *Lettres bougrement patriotiques* "[w]ho can develop their liberty in their still and tender hearts and minds, if not you", the author did not mean that women should actively educate their children during nursing through reading Revolutionary manifestos, but rather that this development of liberty and knowledge passively occurs through women's self-sacrificial maternal encouragement.³⁴³

After Colette and Antonio's *duo*, Colette's mother, Madame Nicolas, arrives on the stage and catches the two lovers together. She accuses Antonio of abandoning Blondel, but Antonio

³⁴³ Godineau, *The Women of Paris and Their French Revolution*, 30.

announces that he is in love with her daughter and that he must marry her and accompany Colette to Thérèse's wedding. Madame Nicolas strongly rejects this idea, but Antonio declares that his love has been proven true and that this must be enough. Madame Nicolas reveals that the only reason she has allowed Thérèse to marry Antonio's brother, Antoine, is because he has been given a farm and has financial stability, so she forbids poor Antonio from approaching her daughter.

There is the potential to read Madame Nicolas as a representation of the old regime and a form of motherhood which focused on social status and financial gains. At its first revived performance on 13 March 1789, *Le mariage d'Antonio* was the last opera shown at the Théâtre Italien after Jean-Baptiste Bréval's (1753-1823) *Inés et Léonore, ou la Sœur jalouse* (1788) and Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny's (1729-1817)'s *Rose et Colas* (1764).³⁴⁴ *Inés et Léonore* is a type of Don Juan story, and a “*précieuse ridicule*”, according to historian Robert Ignatius Letellier.³⁴⁵ *Rose et Colas*, on the other hand, is an opera which celebrates youthful women. The opera has a character in it called La mère Bobi who is ninety-four and she is a caricature.³⁴⁶ La mère Bobi spends the opera complaining about young people and she is used to make the title character, Rose, appear wise, despite her youth.³⁴⁷ La mère Bobi represents, according to David Charlton, regret for the past; she is a portrayal of “old age connoted with stupidity”.³⁴⁸ It was rather unusual for Michel-Jean Sedaine (1719-1797), the librettist of *Rose et Colas*, to have written such a character

³⁴⁴ For the Comédie Italienne's programme on 13 March 1789, see DEZÈDE *Les archives de l'Opéra-Comique* [Université de Rouen Normandie, Université de Montpellier III, Institut de Recherche sur la Renaissance, l'Âge Classique et les Lumières, Groupe de Recherche d'Histoire, and Centre d'Études et de Recherche Éditer/Interpréter, 2022] Web, https://dezede.org/evenements/?lieu=%7C1260%7C&dates_0=1789&dates_1=1789&page=17.

³⁴⁵ Letellier, *Opéra-Comique*, 197

³⁴⁶ David Charlton and Mark Ledbury, *Michel-Jean Sedaine (1719-1797): Theatre, Opera and Art* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2019), Chapter Three “The Representations of the Female in the Dramas of Sedaine”.

³⁴⁷ Charlton and Ledbury, *Michel-Jean Sedaine*, Chapter Three.

³⁴⁸ Charlton and Ledbury, *Michel-Jean Sedaine*, Chapter Three.

as “contemporary society [in the 1760s when the opera was written] generally respected old age, not youth.”³⁴⁹

Given that some of the audience watched *Rose et Colas* immediately before *Le mariage d’Antonio* it is plausible to relate Madame Nicholas—who is essentially the villain in *Le mariage d’Antonio*—and La mère Bobi. Employing old characters as representations of the *ancien régime* was a common trope in operas of the early Revolution. An example that comes to mind is composer Henri-Montan Berton’s (1767-1844) *Les rigueurs du cloître* (1790), an opera that reflected Revolutionary society’s anti-religious sentiments and has its young female lead nun “saved from entombment at the hands of a corrupt mother superior.”³⁵⁰

Regardless of how Madame Nicolas is interpreted, Colette sings that her mother must control her anger, but she tells Antonio not to worry; they will reunite at Mathurin’s renewal of vows and join hands there. Nicolas, Colette’s father, enters the stage and Colette’s mother informs him about the situation. At the end of the quartet “D’où vient ce bruit”, Nicolas encourages Antonio not to worry, predicting that his wife will likely allow the marriage in a few years. It is not that Nicolas is powerless, but this scene makes it clear that Madame Nicolas’s approval will be required for any union to take place between Colette and Antonio.

As with many French pastoral eighteenth-century operas, the drama is briefly, and rather abruptly, pushed aside for a chorus of *paysans* who sing that the young love between Thérèse and

³⁴⁹ Charlton and Ledbury, *Michel-Jean Sedaine*, Chapter Three.

³⁵⁰ David Charlon, “Berton, Henri-Montan” in *Sadie* (2001). For the complete score of *Les rigueurs du cloître : comédie en deux actes en prose, mêlée d’ariettes*, see Henri Berton, *Les rigueurs du cloître : comédie en deux actes en prose, mêlée d’ariettes*. Libretto by Joseph Fiévée (Paris: chez Lepetit, 1790), <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k48274t>.

Antoine must be celebrated.³⁵¹ Following Elizabeth Bartlet's idea of the chorus representing *le peuple*, one could read this moment as a reflection of the people's sovereignty or will.³⁵² While the joyful chorus is directly about Thérèse and Antoine, perhaps the reason these peasants have burst into song is to show their objection to Madame Nicolas's intent to separate Colette and Antonio. The choir shouts "*Chantons, chantons ces jeunes amants, Célébrons ces époux constants*," highlighting the importance of praising faithfulness and youth.³⁵³ Composed as a homophonic chorus, this compound meter ensemble piece is a gigue, and the rhythmic pulse dictates the text and drives the chorus forward through the characteristic use of an anacrusis. This show of support only makes Colette and Antonio want to marry even more.

Though seemingly decorative, this chorus gains significance when compared to *Richard Cœur-de-Lion*'s peasants' chorus in Act 3 Scene 8. In *Richard*, after Mathurin and his wife's vow renewal takes place, a chorus of peasant villagers also erupts. Plot-wise, both choruses occur during similar moments. However, the peasant chorus in Act 3 of *Richard* is vastly different.³⁵⁴ Written in a minor key and inducing a medieval feeling to reflect its historical context, the chorus "Quand les bœufs vont deux à deux" projects a contrasting moral stance regarding love when compared to "Chantons ces jeunes amants".

Lucile Grétry's chorus emphasizes pleasure, happiness, and friendship through lines like "*le plaisir mène au bonheur*" and "*chaque âge à son avantage, chaque saison a sa douceur*."³⁵⁵

³⁵¹ Examples of peasant choruses in late eighteenth-century *opéra-comique* include André Grétry's *Richard, Cœur du Lion* (1785), Luigi Cherubini's *Les deux Journées* (1800), and Etienne Méhul's *Mélidore et Phrosine* (1794), to name but a few.

³⁵² See Elizabeth 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.

³⁵³ "Sing, sing to these young lovers, celebrate this faithful couple". Grétry, *Le mariage d'Antonio*, 41-44.

³⁵⁴ André Ernest Modeste Grétry, *Richard Cœur-de-Lion*, (1786), <https://imslp.org/wiki/Special:ImagefromIndex/05661/pnba>, 115-118.

³⁵⁵ "Pleasure brings happiness"; "each age brings its own advantage, each season its own sweetness."

In André Grétry's chorus, feeling and passion are never mentioned and instead, the repeated line is "*Quand les bœufs vont deux à deux, La labourage en va mieux*".³⁵⁶ This understanding of love paints it as being laborious and devoid of real sentiment; marriage is arduous but necessary. Admittingly, André Grétry's chorus is for the vow renewal of an old couple, while Lucile's is for Thérèse and Antoine. Yet, how marriage is presented is remarkably different in these two operas.

Following this chorus, Nicolas takes pity on Antonio and Colette, and he tells his wife that they should support their youngest daughter's marriage, mainly because he thinks that they can save on the cost of another wedding if both of their daughters get married on the same day. Antoine says he will share the farm and its earnings to support Antonio, but this does not convince Madame Nicolas who declares that any further discussion about this marriage will result in a minimum of three years of abstaining from mentioning the subject again. However, a page enters and informs everyone that the blind, supposedly poor Blondel wishes to financially reward Antonio which means that Madame Nicolas can no longer oppose the union. Everyone breaks into song, and they celebrate how much gold has been given to Antonio. Traditionally, with Antonio's wealth confirmed, most operas would end with Madame Nicolas being content that her daughter, and likely her own social status, are established as marriage is about finances and solidifying one's place in society.

But this is not the case in *Le mariage d'Antonio*. In this opera, Antonio decides to give away his gold to his father, his brother and finally, and rather progressively, to Colette for her steadfast love. He declares he does not require gold because Colette's love is enough for his satisfaction. His passion has led him to devotion. Antonio's love is ultimately proven, and the

³⁵⁶ "When the oxen move two by two, the plowing goes better."

horrors of money's corruption are even hinted at within the final chorus. Nicolas tells his wife it is ultimately his decision for his daughter to marry, and he allows them to, though Colette says she will always obey her mother as she prefers to have both of her parents' blessing. Madame Nicolas informs the two lovers that they can finally wed. Madame Nicolas has been educated on love's importance and ultimately, her views on marriage's purpose have equally shifted. Instead of *les bœufs* working long days to make ploughing easier (as highlighted in André Grétry's chorus), it appears that the end of this opera offers a remarkably different suggestion of love, passion, and faithfulness; one which is rooted in agreeability and moral instruction.

This overarching theme of young women instructing liberty through a sense of educational nourishment is what makes this opera, I believe, part of the *maternités* genre. Colette uses her place as a daughter to instruct her parents and, it is likely fair to assume, Parisian audiences who were watching and absorbing this work. While it may be a stretch to directly connect Colette's righteousness and encouragement to breastfeeding as an act itself, similar symbolic outcomes are produced. If breastmilk was believed to moralize children and assist in moulding them into ideal citizens, then this style of education aligns with Colette's achievements regarding her parents and Antonio.

The similarity between Colette's moral instruction in this opera and cultivating the French Republic through milk rests upon one structural similarity: both acts of nurturing are enacted by those without any formally given power and from within intimate spaces. Mothers were not expected to recite the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* (1789) to their children while nursing, nor does Colette give some grand, political speech declaring how she is old enough to marry whomever she wants. She does not even defy her parents, though technically the opportunity does present itself. Rather, Colette uses her femininity coupled with a sense of passivity to shape

those around her. Breastfeeding mothers and Colette set the example themselves, inspiring and influencing others, and this was the intended result of Republican Womanhood.³⁵⁷

2.6 The Importance of Pure, “Unspoiled” Melodies

I wish to turn to the opera’s melody construction as another way to understand how this work may be interpreted as part of the *maternités* tradition. Returning to André Grétry’s letter in the Journal de Paris for the opera’s original premiere, André Grétry used this opportunity to boldly claim the opera as the work of his young daughter.³⁵⁸ He stressed the importance of declamation and text-setting and suggested that opera composers must be concerned with “the spirit of the text”.³⁵⁹ However, as a teacher, he refrained from telling his daughter when her compositions failed to achieve this result. Rather, as he states, he simply mirrored back what had been written so that his pupil could hear for herself the melodic errors.³⁶⁰ The goal of this gentle approach is to not scold women composers for improper text-setting, but rather to demonstrate why what has been written does not complement the libretto. According to André Grétry, music is a learned habit that is “as true and as varied as the spoken word”.³⁶¹ What likely remains important and ultimately shapes this letter is the balance between formal mentorship and the desire to leave unmarred the natural, unspoiled sweetness innate within women-composed melodies.

André Grétry’s description of his teaching methods resonates with the eighteenth-century’s desire to create natural music, meaning that it successfully conveys an “authentic voice” through expressing human emotions where melody, not harmony, becomes the ultimate “voice of

³⁵⁷ See Foley, *The Meanings of Difference*.

³⁵⁸ See Appendix F for the complete letter.

³⁵⁹ Grétry ed. Adelson, *Le mariage d’Antonio*, xiv.

³⁶⁰ Grétry ed. Adelson, *Le mariage d’Antonio*, ix.

³⁶¹ Grétry ed. Adelson, *Le mariage d’Antonio*, xiv.

nature.”³⁶² It likely follows that André Grétry championed women composers due to this sex’s supposed ability to become “answerable or analogues to nature” itself.³⁶³ Returning to Rousseau’s *Émile*, Rousseau declares that “by the decrees of Nature herself,” women were thought to have been better aligned to this natural state as both their supposed physical and mental inferiority separated them from the more logically driven man.³⁶⁴ In other words, it was understood that women could create art that was naturally eloquent and honest while men were thought to be the only sex able to compose masterpieces that were learned and sophisticated. The purity of melody and the incorruptibility of vegetarian maternal breastmilk appear to both be rooted in the same ideas and discourses that dominated the early Revolution regarding women’s natural goodness and virtue.

Historian Lieselotte Steinbrügge best explains this connection between femininity and nature through her understanding of philosophical writings during eighteenth-century France and she concludes that there is an inseparable connection between women, nature, and sexual morality or sex-specific corporeality.³⁶⁵ While it was true that women were often considered the sex more closely connected to nature, “even in the most natural of societies, woman’s closeness to nature requires an institution of control.”³⁶⁶ This is why, despite women being granted a special status of sorts as the ones closer to the natural realm, man’s role was still to control and confine women. This is perhaps why André Grétry felt it necessary to praise his daughter’s musical abilities while simultaneously ensuring that her natural gift to compose melody never became spoiled; it was

³⁶² Marvin Carlson, *Voltaire and the Theatre of the Eighteenth Century* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 92.

³⁶³ Leslie Ritchie, *Women Writing Music in Late Eighteenth-Century England: Social Harmony in Literature and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 136.

³⁶⁴ Rousseau, *Émile*, 388.

³⁶⁵ Lieselotte Steinbrügge, *The Moral Sex: Woman’s Nature in the French Enlightenment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

³⁶⁶ Steinbrügge, *The Moral Sex*, 53.

moulded and shaped through his tutoring but, as with pure breastmilk, the music's natural feminine goodness remained intact.

And yet, as slaves to the natural world, women who composed music which reflected this idea of natural, authentic text-setting were also reaffirming woman's social position and, as a result, their time's social hierarchy. This is precisely why women opera composers, as with Revolutionary festival muses, who entered public spaces and often challenged the idea of a woman's supposed place within the domestic home, cannot be viewed as entirely violating their natural state. André Grétry takes great pride in announcing his daughter as the creator of this opera because she is contributing to society by reaffirming woman's supposed moralizing power over society. Though, as André Grétry notes, for music to open previously unattainable paths for women and "have masters of the same sex, capable of charming us with their musical compositions," remaining faithful to their natural disposition was essential.³⁶⁷

It is in this letter that André Grétry also informed the public that he was the one who filled in his daughter's harmonies and that Lucile Grétry mainly focused on composing the vocal and harp melody lines. This distinction was likely included to suggest that Lucile Grétry was never exposed to the unfeminine pursuits of spending time in the opera house. Composing melody was acceptable and deemed natural for a young woman like Lucile Grétry, but the intricacies of writing an entire orchestration were outside of a proper young woman prodigy's realm. André Grétry claimed that he "corrected the ensemble pieces, for this kind of composition [his daughter's opera] requires a knowledge of the theatre which he would have been upset if she had already acquired."³⁶⁸ Conceivably, since André Grétry was a champion of women's musical education,

³⁶⁷ See Appendix F.

³⁶⁸ Steinbrügge, *The Moral Sex*, 53.

this letter served less as a way for him to take credit for his daughter's successful opera and was rather written to shield Lucile Grétry from potential scrutiny.³⁶⁹

While I agree with Letzter and Adelson that there were pragmatic reasons for Lucile Grétry's restriction to compose melodies, the importance of André Grétry shielding his daughter and her reputation from the unfeminine pursuits of composing harmonies may suggest another possibility.³⁷⁰ Refusing to detract from her natural abilities to compose sweet, simple melodies connects, only figuratively, to the idea of unspoiled, vegetarian milk. A parallel between the mediating roles of André Grétry as a teacher and a wet nurse can be made. His duty as father and teacher was to not interfere with his daughter's natural talents and instead was to simply enhance what was already composed. Had he artificially intervened by changing Lucile Grétry's melodic lines, an act of disruption to nature as it were, his function could be compared to that of the wet nurse, meaning that he would have been meddling in an unnatural place. Allowing nature to take its course, through either maternal nursing or women's innate ability to create beautiful, simple melodies, could only be positive within this mindset.

I believe *Le mariage d'Antonio*'s pastoral overture, highlighted in Musical Example 4, best encapsulates this idea of melody's simplicity in its most natural, feminine form. This opening orchestral piece's purpose is not to celebrate its composer's abilities but rather to paint the scene of an idyllic French countryside. Even its structure is simple as it is in ternary form, with a notably lengthy introduction. Melodically, it is comprised of short two bar phrases, and it aligns closely with Michael Beckerman's idea of the pastoral set, meaning that the work contains a bass drone,

³⁶⁹ Adelson and Letzter agree with this conclusion in *Women Writing Opera*, 252-279.

³⁷⁰ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 27.

harmonies exclusively made up of thirds and sixths and that it is non-contrapuntal.³⁷¹ The short slurs, which begin the phrases should, as musicologist Stephanie Vial claims, be understood within late eighteenth-century music as articulation but also as an expressive device.³⁷² I do not believe it is a stretch to suggest that this melodic passage evokes song as it is extremely singable. These opening measures are indicative of melodies throughout the entire opera as they are all equally “natural” in their style, a term which Charles Burney (1726-1814) used himself to describe the *galant* style of simplified harmonies, slower harmonic rhythm, and a melody marked by “graded dynamics such as a *crescendo*” compared to more learned musical styles.³⁷³



Musical Example 4: Melody reduction from "Overture", mm.1-6, Lucile Grétry, *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786), <https://imslp.org/wiki/Special:ImagefromIndex/31056/torat>.

2.7 Personifying Motherhood Without Children

In contemplating this nurturing analogy, one cannot help but address that Colette is not a mother. However, this alone does not necessarily eliminate Colette from nurturing Antonio, her parents, and potentially even the audience. As we have seen through the essentialist idea of

³⁷¹ Michael Beckerman, “Mozart’s Pastoral” in *Mozart-Jahrbuch, 1991* (Bericht über den Internationalen Mozart Kongress Salzburg, 1991) vol. 1, 92-100.

³⁷² Stephanie Vial, *The Art of Musical Phrasing in the Eighteenth Century: Punctuating the Classical "Period"* (Rochester: The University of Rochester Press, 2008), 132-137.

³⁷³ See Don Michael Randel, *The Harvard Dictionary of Music, Fourth Edition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 183.

eighteenth-century womanhood, the concept of Republican Womanhood and Republican Motherhood were often enough to define all women, even if individual women themselves did not fit into the strictest definition of motherhood. In other words, the allegory of women was strong enough to define all women, and it is through the symbol of motherhood that women's significance during the early Revolution shifted. Turning to fine art may best explain how all women, regardless of their circumstances, came to collectively represent universal abstract ideas.³⁷⁴

As art historian Jean-Marie Roulin notes, one can see how women became synonymous with motherhood and how their role extended into more public avenues through comparing Jacques-Louis David's (1748-1825) paintings before and during the Revolution.³⁷⁵ In *Le Serment des Horaces* (1784), it is evident that mothers are relegated outside of the political realm, and they are quite literally almost out of the picture. Cast aside to the painting's right side, it is only the men who are fighting.



Figure 2.3: Jacques-Louis David, *Le Serment des Horaces*, 4e quart du XVIIIe siècle (1784), oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures. Photo by Musée du Louvre, © 2018 RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Michel Urtado, <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010062239>.

³⁷⁴ Jacobus, "Incorruptible Milk: Breast-Feeding and the French Revolution," 204.

³⁷⁵ Jean-Marie Roulin, "Mothers in Revolution: Political Representations of Maternity in Nineteenth Century France," *Yale French Studies* 101, no. Fragments of Revolution (2001): 182–200.

However, in *Les Sabines* (1795-1799), painted during the Revolution, women are first represented as mothers by shielding their children from violence, with the bare-breasted mother reaching out her hand to comfort her child below. The children in David's work, according to Roulin, represent the future or France's path forward.³⁷⁶ But it is Hersilia in *Les Sabines*, centred and dressed in immaculate white, who notably throws herself in between those fighting, without care for her safety, to forge peace. Here, she is credited with not only creating harmony between Rome and the Sabines, but she appears as a representation of all women who are present in this painting. Hersilia is not directly holding a baby, feeding a child, or being depicted as the older woman behind her, yet in this work, she is synonymous with all these female figures. Hersilia represents the totality of the feminine figure and through this, she can forge peace.



Figure 2.4: Jacques-Louis David, *Les Sabines*, 4e quart du XVIIIe siècle (1799), oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures. Photo by Musée du Louvre, © 2018 RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Michel Urtado, <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/c1010065426>.

³⁷⁶ Roulin, "Mothers in Revolution", 183-184.

These two paintings demonstrate how concepts of motherhood transcended from the biological mother, taken in its most literal sense, to what Roulin declares “motherhood’s commitment in allegorical figures.”³⁷⁷ Hersilia, and I argue Colette and Lucile Grétry, demonstrate how motherhood came to not be defined through strictly giving birth to children, but through giving or birthing the “transmission of knowledge”.³⁷⁸ Female nourishment was therefore available to all women. It is through women’s self-sacrifice—putting themselves in danger of violence like Hersilia or potentially having their heart broken like Colette—that a more regenerative and liberal French society could be born.

To take this idea further, motherhood’s symbolic nature could represent all women precisely because it was conflated with virginal womanhood. When describing the Third Republic, though very much applicable to the First, Elinor Accampo notes that women and girls were subjected to contradictory forms of symbolism. The most obvious example is that of Mary, the mother of God. As both a virgin and a mother, an unattainable model for any other woman, Mary most clearly represents this duality. However, the Revolutionary festival muses of Liberty, Equality, and Virtue encompass similar contradictions. While the Virgin Mary was commonly associated with being the country’s protector during the *ancien régime*, she was cast aside for Marianne, Minerva, and Mercury during the Revolutionary period.³⁷⁹ These figures managed to navigate the space between innocence, unblemished protector, and “feminine allegory watching protectively but passively over active men.”³⁸⁰ This hybrid reputation suggests that both girls and women “were thus continually exposed to female representations...replete with internal

³⁷⁷ Roulin, “Mothers in Revolution”, 185.

³⁷⁸ Roulin, “Mothers in Revolution”, 198.

³⁷⁹ Peter McPhee, *The French Revolution, 1789-1799* (Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 185.

³⁸⁰ Elinor Accampo, *Blessed Motherhood: Bitter Fruit Nelly Roussel and the Politics of Female Pain in Third Republic France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 21.

conditions.”³⁸¹ I believe due to Lucile Grétry’s youth, prodigy status, manipulated image, and tragic ending, that she too can be read today in a similar light.

It should be noted that Accampo remarks that this idea of motherhood’s symbolic admiration which was available to all inevitably pushed actual women farther away from public prominence and hindered their ability to obtain formal rights. As a mother, “she is kept at a distance from the order of desire and sexuality [where] under cover of elevation to allegory or metaphor she is refused political citizenship.”³⁸² I concur that one must be careful to not assume that just because the allegorical woman was admired, this translated to French women’s realized political agency, as Marina Warner also notes.³⁸³ Therefore, it would be incorrect to imply that Lucile Grétry benefited or benefits today from being understood as an allegory for French womanhood. However, this chapter does not suggest that she, or even *Le mariage d’Antonio*, gained overt political power. Rather, the purpose of exploring French women’s symbolic importance as composers is to provide a meaningful historical contextualization for an opera which, until now, has been largely ignored.

2.8 Mythologizing Lucile

Another way of reading Lucile Grétry as a representation of Republican Womanhood is to uncover what has been written about her after her tragic death. In addition to André Grétry’s autobiography, where he briefly mentions his daughter’s unhappy marriage, a nineteenth-century author also wrote about Lucile’s life in *The International Monthly Magazine of Literature, Science,*

³⁸¹ Accampo, *Blessed Motherhood*, 21.

³⁸² Accampo, *Blessed Motherhood*, 200.

³⁸³ See Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens*, 18-37.

and Art (1852).^{384 385} This source is often celebrated by feminist music historians for its claim that “if not for [Lucile’s] death, which took her at the age of sixteen...the greatest musician of the eighteenth century would perhaps have been a woman...”³⁸⁶ Arguably, the way this author celebrates Lucile Grétry’s femininity is just as progressive as this message, despite its error in her death’s age.

This review, which reads almost like a biography, stands out for its descriptive, hyperbolic passages such as “Lucile had learned to read music before she knew her alphabet,” and “she had so long been lulled to sleep with Grétry’s airs, that at the age when so many other young girls think of only hoops and dolls, she had found sufficient music in her soul...”³⁸⁷ The poetics of Lucile Grétry’s life culminates when the author describes the moment André Grétry’s journalist friend apparently walked into a room while his daughter was privately playing her harp. This individual, who remained unnoticed by the young girl, retold the story to the reviewer remarking that “she wept, she sang, she struck the harp with incredible energy...I wept with joy, in beholding this girl transported with so glorious a zeal, and so noble an enthusiasm for music.”³⁸⁸ Describing the young girl as being overcome with the harp’s emotive powers, Lucile was otherworldly.

Passages such as these almost dehumanize Lucile Grétry and make her reputation more in line with a fictionalized character. We should be sceptical of reviews such as this as they clearly reflect only one person’s opinion, and they likely serve to support the author’s own goals rather

³⁸⁴ See André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry, *Mémoires, Ou Essais Sur La Musique* (Paris: the Bavarian State Library, 1789),

³⁸⁵ *The International Monthly Magazine of Literature, Science, and Art*, vol. 5 (New York: Stringer & Townsend, 1852), 304.

³⁸⁶ *The International Monthly Magazine of Literature, Science, and Art*, 304. The error of Lucile’s death, as she died at seventeen and not sixteen, may be forgiven in this review as André’s other daughters, Jenny and Antoinette both died at sixteen, so the confusion is understandable.

³⁸⁷ *The International Monthly Magazine of Literature, Science, and Art*, vol. 5, 304.

³⁸⁸ *The International Monthly Magazine of Literature, Science, and Art*, vol. 5, 304.

than provide an honest portrayal of a supposed conversation which took place. However, the fact that someone wrote about Lucile Grétry sixty years after her death is very telling. Considering her music ceased to be played after 1792, and her father died in 1813, for someone to write about Lucile Grétry in 1852 suggests that she remained known and that her innocent, youthful reputation was a central part of her identity after her death.

Lucile Grétry's death warrants exploration as well. She tragically died from tuberculosis after a short and very unhappy marriage. Having been married at her father's request to Pierre Marin de Champourt, which is criticized in the strong rejection of this type of marriage in *Le mariage d'Antonio*, Lucile was abused by Pierre Marin de Champourt who "had been brought up like a slave, cruelly took delight, with a coward's vengeance, in making her feel all the chains of Hymen."³⁸⁹ Unlike the story of André Grétry's journalist friend spying on Lucile, there is no source mentioned in this passage describing Pierre Marin de Champourt's actions. Again, this could be a fictional retelling from a nineteenth-century source, but we cannot challenge the fact that she did die at a very young age as her own father recounted the event before his own death.³⁹⁰

Little has been written about Lucile's husband, but as the son of the relatively well-regarded François-Louis Claude Marin (1721-1809), it is rather strange that Pierre's wicked behaviour towards Lucile was so well-documented. François-Louis was a journalist, perhaps even the one who even spied on Lucile while she was playing her harp, as well as a *censeur royale* who had the responsibility of censoring and judging manuscripts' legitimacy and authorizing their publication on behalf of the *ancien régime's* *chancelier*.³⁹¹ His background as the writer of *Lettre*

³⁸⁹ *The International Monthly Magazine of Literature, Science, and Art*, 5, 304.

³⁹⁰ See Grétry, *Mémoires*.

³⁹¹ See L.P. de Bachaumont, *Mémoires secrets*, 26 mars 1774; Geneanet, "M. Pierre Marin de Champcourt," accessed November 10, 2021,

de l'homme civil à l'homme sauvage (1763) saw him writing pieces which criticized Rousseau, in particular *Le Devin du village* (1752), as François-Louis appears to have been fanatical about a courtier's role and the nobility's proper behaviours, which *Le Devin* apparently does not stress enough.³⁹² It is impossible to determine Pierre Marin de Champourt's true intentions and behaviour towards his wife, and there is every possibility that he was indeed a horrible husband. However, a young, musical genius who suffers at the hands of her cruel husband, and is only liberated through death, certainly plays into the youthful mythologization of Lucile Grétry.

It is important to note that because Lucile Grétry was a member of the Comédie Italienne and not the Opéra, she would have still been under the legal authority of her father and subsequently her husband once she married. While the Comédie Italienne has been understood as being a more welcoming place for women, as discussed in this project's first chapter through the work of Raphaëlle Legrand, this could not shield Lucile Grétry from her abusive husband.³⁹³ I believe this is important to highlight as while co-creating *opéra-comique* was a freer enterprise for French women—in terms of belonging to a *société* and being allowed to get married—women composers could still face gendered discrimination and violence regardless of their affiliated opera house. While her tragic life may have mythologized her reputation, one cannot overlook the fact that the final years for Lucile Grétry were extremely difficult, despite the success of *Le mariage d'Antonio*.

<https://gw.geneanet.org/tinagaquer?lang=en&pz=roland+raymond+joachim&nz=feraud&p=pierre&n=marin+de+chamcourt>.

³⁹² François-Louis-Claude Marin, *Lettre de l'homme Civil à l'homme Sauvage* (Amsterdam: Editor not identified, Lyon Public Library, 1763).

³⁹³ See Legrand, "Libertines et femmes vertueuses".

2.9 Youth Culture's Rising Political Importance

The last theme I wish to consider regarding Republican Womanhood is the rising importance of youth culture within the early French Revolution and how *Le mariage d'Antonio* cannot be fully understood without this historical understanding in mind, due to both its young composer and its librettist. The opera's progressive libretto was notably credited as being written by a Mme de Beaunoir. Despite publishing numerous libretti under his own name, Alexandre de Robineau (1746-1823) used Mme de Beaunoir, his wife's name, as a pen name for this work. *Le mariage d'Antonio* was not the only libretto he did this with, as a Mme de Beaunoir is noted as the librettist in many of Stanislas Champein's (1753-1830) operas, including *Diane et Endimion* (1780) and *Le Manteau ou les Nieces rivaux* (1802-03).³⁹⁴

The real Mme de Beaunoir, Louise-Céline Cheval (1766-?), was a mere twenty years old at the opera's premiere and this would have quite possibly altered the work's overall reception.³⁹⁵ Conceivably, according to Letzter and Adelson, a woman's name was taken on by de Beaunoir to shield the young Lucile Grétry from any negative connotations of working closely with a male librettist.³⁹⁶ Women composers often worked with other women or, even more frequently, they sourced libretti which were already published or reworked other written texts like novels to avoid damaging their reputation by having to intimately work with a male writer.³⁹⁷ Considering Lucile Grétry's status as a young woman, it likely follows that it may be for very pragmatic reasons why Alexandre de Robineau used his wife's name when publishing the libretto for this opera, especially considering he used his own name in *Céline de Saint-Albe* (1786), *Les Amis du jour* (1786), and

³⁹⁴ For the complete works of Stanislas Champein, see CÉSAR, https://cesar.humanum.fr/cesar2/people/people.php?fct=edit&person_UOID=200224.

³⁹⁵ Accampo, *Blessed Motherhood*, 200.

³⁹⁶ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 123.

³⁹⁷ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 46.

Le Singe et la perruche (1786), all written the same year as *Le mariage d'Antonio*. Comparable to André Grétry's letter clarifying that his daughter's modesty had not been harmed despite composing a large-scale work, perhaps another way the young woman's reputation was self-manipulated to avoid public disapproval was by sourcing a libretto by a seemingly young, respectable woman like Louise-Céline Cheval.

There is equally an important political consideration around youth and the early Revolution. As Nicolas Déplanche explores in his work regarding youth culture and the *passion révolutionnaire* during 1789-1798, the rise in adolescents' moralizing society was a phenomenon that began in France during the early Revolutionary years, and it draws many comparisons to the similar moralizing role women acquired.³⁹⁸ Excluded from formal rights of citizenship due to their age, Déplanche explains that French youths became politically active long before more formal pedagogical structures were established in 1793 when the French State took over the instruction of young adults in a top-down approach. As his case study regarding youth culture in Brittany and Anjou suggests, young people were indeed paramount in shaping Revolutionary culture, and they were politically active in public spaces before established modes of activism were offered, like participating in festivals or becoming members of political groups. For Déplanche, the generational positioning which had previously served to exclude youths from the *ancien régime*, as often unmarried, landless, socially insignificant individuals, served to legitimize their activism post-1789.³⁹⁹ Pamphlets and easily circulated materials are the media to explore this transition of adolescence's rising importance, but libretti and opera may also be read comparably.

³⁹⁸ Nicolas Déplanche, "From Young People to Young Citizens: The Emergence of a Revolutionary Youth in France, 1788-1790," *Journal of Social History* 45, no. 1 (Fall 2011): 225-37.

³⁹⁹ Déplanche, "From Young People to Young Citizens", 226.

A coalition of young men who were mainly students of law assisted the Third Estate in drafting and circulating materials which were intended to instruct those about their rights which should be granted under the State. Using language and already established forms of political action, these young men were able to effectively support the Third Estate in their grievances while exclaiming that their

support of the Third Estate was justified not only by egalitarian rhetoric claiming, ‘the absolute reestablishment of the eternal and imprescriptible principles of social justice [...],’ but also by a systematic pledge of submission to the King’s authority, a ruler “more father than the king, who uses the supreme power devoted to him only to ensure the rights and freedom of humanity[...].⁴⁰⁰

This political consciousness was met with initial resistance but, as Déplanche shows, coupled with the king reinstating the Estates General for the first time since 1614, youths now had a political space which was previously unattainable, and their opinions were no longer disregarded, at least actively, due to their age.

The example of circulating pamphlets in Brittany and Anjou specifically looks at moments where young men were able to break political barriers and enter spaces where previously only those with formal power granted by the king were able to do so. Women are notably excluded from this type of political consciousness as they were not law students nor, except for a few, were they able to draft legal documents showing why the pillars of the new Republic must be extended to all. Yet, this rise in political youth culture may intersect with women’s abilities as educators of society or, as *lettres bougrement patriotiques* suggests, as feeders of liberty. No formal contestation of citizenship or rights is overtly explored in Lucile Grétry’s opera, aside from challenging the purpose and intent of marriage, but Déplanche’s work suggests that youth and political activism was well established before the Storming of the Bastille. Therefore, while it may

⁴⁰⁰ Déplanche, “From Young People to Young Citizens”, 232.

be tempting to assume that Lucile Grétry, Mme de Beaunoir, and Colette would not have been taken seriously due to their age, I do not believe this would have been the case. The fact that Colette was written as an extremely serious and mature young woman suggests that this opera connects, at least in theory, to the corresponding rise in legitimizing young people's voices, a phenomenon which extended into the world of opera as demonstrated previously in this chapter with Monsigny's *Rose et Colas* and Fiévée's *Les rigueurs du cloître*.

For a comic opera, which is generally light-hearted, it appears to be notable to include such a thoughtful and emotionally stable young lead character. Colette's age is initially held against her when Thérèse suggests that she is too young to marry yet, like Lucile Grétry, Colette proves that one's age does not necessarily correspond to one's merit. Historian Lynn Hunt connects this newfound respect of youths to the increasingly complex and multifaceted symbolic representations of womanhood in her work on families during the Revolution. The apotheosis of the female allegory was specifically linked to young women, which becomes evident when looking at popular iconographic representations like Revolutionary muses.⁴⁰¹ Rather bluntly, mothers tend to be young.

What remains important in *Le mariage d'Antonio* is both youth culture and the female allegory becoming politically vital during the early Revolution. In essence, as a rejection of the king and the Great Chain of Being, every institution and hierarchy in 1789 had to be reconstructed.⁴⁰² A "system of signs", as Hunt calls it, was established to counter the previous political structure where Salic law reigned. Representing the Republic's principles, and indeed the concept of a republic itself, via young, mythologized women was an overt rejection of the kings

⁴⁰¹ Hunt, *Family Romance of the French Revolution*, 98.

⁴⁰² Hunt, *Family Romance of the French Revolution*, 99.

who once ruled over and defined France. Women were the chosen vehicle precisely because of the reality that they would never hold formal positions of power. This is manifested through the fact that no political leaders or men were replicated on official documents or on money during the Revolution, and no man was ever associated with a French allegory, largely because they were male and could hold positions of tangible representation.⁴⁰³ Perhaps youth culture functioned in a comparable way to womanhood as they too served to reflect larger ideological beliefs of liberalism but this did not translate into lasting political agency.

2.10 Grétry's Final Departure

In March of 1790, a group of one hundred musicians lined Parisian streets to play *Le mariage d'Antonio*'s overture for Lucile Grétry's funeral procession, thus marking her physical death, yet not the end of her opera's influence.⁴⁰⁴ This opera's jovial overture is perhaps not the most appropriate selection for such an occasion, but it nevertheless demonstrates just how important this opera was to both Lucile Grétry's reputation as well as to those who attended her funeral. As this chapter explores, Lucile Grétry's musical brilliance continued to be written about long after her death. *Le mariage d'Antonio* may indeed be regarded as one of the finest examples of a young prodigy's excellence and the opportunities women composers gained during late eighteenth-century France. However, it is this opera's resonance within its social period which makes it truly valuable, both to its own time and for our deeper understanding of the early French Revolution today.

⁴⁰³ Hunt, *Family Romance of the French Revolution*, 99.

⁴⁰⁴ James Barrington, *The Musical World of Marie-Antoinette Opera and Ballet in 18th Century Paris and Versailles* (Jefferson: McFarland, Incorporated, Publishers, 2021), 165.

On the one hand, *Le mariage d'Antonio* may be appreciated as a comic, entertaining opera which delighted audiences during the early Revolution. Equally, as this chapter explores, Lucile Grétry's opera may be considered as a reflection, affirmation, and possibly even a catalyst for the overarching political shift occurring during eighteenth-century France where conceptions of Republican Womanhood became central to discourses during the early French Revolution. The rise of maternal breastfeeding and its direct encouragement to instil the early Revolution's principles are only one way *Le mariage d'Antonio* may be viewed as representational of larger concepts surrounding gendered idealism. The importance of youth culture and the complexities of Lucile Grétry's mythologization are another.

There are likely many reasons why *Le mariage d'Antonio* was revived during the early Revolutionary years and this chapter has only addressed a few potential possibilities. The intent of exploring women-created opera in this way is not to suggest that this reason, which is formed largely through my own position as a feminist music historian attempting to reclaim Lucile Grétry's opera today, takes precedence over any other. Rather, what this chapter demonstrates is that women co-creating sentimental French operas which placed virtuous women at their centre was part of the much larger genre of *maternités*; a style which gave many French women artists a place in male-dominated artistic endeavours specifically during the early French Revolution, a period where the genre of *maternités* reflected more broadly held beliefs about womanhood.

Chapter Three

Beyond the Dairy: Employing Gendered Pastoralism in Florine Dezède's *Lucette et Lucas* (1781)

Royalty has here endeavored [sic] at great expense to conceal itself from its own eye. But the attempt is vain. A dairy furnished with the porcelain of Sèvres is a semblance too splendid for rural life... the money applied in making it has been but badly spent and would be not badly spared... this expense and others like this have occasioned their meeting.

—Gouverneur Morris, Thursday, May 14,
1789

While serving as the United States of America's Minister to France, Gouverneur Morris kept a diary and wrote letters that offer some of the most valuable observations regarding the early French Revolution.⁴⁰⁵ His detailed passages on the Reign of Terror's (1793-1794) violence are particularly rich and his chronicles are often used to better understand France's political climate during the early 1790s. In the above epigraph, Morris recounts his visit to Marie-Antoinette's Hameau at the Petite Trianon in Versailles—the secluded, tranquil, and rustic farm with a pleasure dairy on the outskirts of the palace gardens. His reflection reads as a warning to the Queen regarding the political dangers of projecting an opulent lifestyle during France's critical financial crisis.⁴⁰⁶ However, underpinning this diary entry, is Morris's concern about women mimicking the peasantry.

⁴⁰⁵ Gouverneur Morris, *The Diary and Letters of Gouverneur Morris, Minister of the United States to France; Member of the Constitutional Convention*, 2 vols. ed. Anne Cary Morris (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888), Vol. 1, 82.

⁴⁰⁶ For more information regarding France's economic climate during the eighteenth century, see Appendix B. See also Florin Aftalion, *The French Revolution: An Economic Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Bestowing particular attention on the highly delicate and luxurious porcelain made in the southwestern Parisian suburb of Sèvres, Morris' perception of the Hameau offers a glimpse into how Marie-Antoinette, Versailles, and aristocratic pastoral were acquiring newfound political significance in 1789. Stressing that Marie-Antoinette's embracement of a peasant lifestyle was contrived, and reflecting the early modern period's aesthetic preference for authenticity over artificiality, Morris' concern was not necessarily with the monarch espousing a rural, rustic life but rather with the fact that Marie-Antoinette's activities in the Hameau directly contrasted her perceived lavish lifestyle at Versailles.⁴⁰⁷ The physical building of the Hameau and its role within the wider French pastoral movement may appear to have been less significant within his overall critique. Yet, when the history of French women monarchs employing the pastoral for political purposes is explored, one begins to appreciate the Gouverneur's remarks with a new understanding.

The sixteenth century marked the French pastoral's revival, initiated by poet Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585).⁴⁰⁸ Thereafter, the first known pleasure dairy, which was part of a larger ornamental farm like Marie-Antoinette's hamlet, was designed in 1560 by the Italian architect Francesco Primaticcio (1504-1570). It was erected at Fontainebleau for the Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici (1519-1589).⁴⁰⁹ As a foreign ruler who was reigning on behalf of her son, Charles IX (1550-1574), Catherine de Medici required additional authority to govern and legitimize her monarchical power; silencing those who opposed her rule was essential. Through creating a pleasure dairy, the Queen Mother solidified her right to rule by means that initially

⁴⁰⁷ See Francis X. J. Coleman, *The Aesthetic Thought of the French Enlightenment* (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971), especially Chapter IV: Art, Language and Morality, 123-150.

⁴⁰⁸ See Ian McFarlane, *Renaissance France, 1470-1589* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1974), 311; John Usher, *Virgilian Identities in the French Renaissance* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2012).

⁴⁰⁹ For a visual depiction of this pleasure dairy, see Meredith Martin, *Dairy Queens: The Politics of Pastoral Architecture from Catherine De' Medici to Marie-Antoinette* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2011), 27-30.

appeared rather apolitical. Rooted in symbolism, the dairy's production of milk suggested her deep sense of fertility; donating its by-products to the needy insinuated her sense of benevolence; the general bucolic setting offered Catherine de Medici an important sense of female refinement and domestication. However, it was the building itself, its foundation in rural French soil, which signified her right bestowed by God to govern over the very land of France.⁴¹⁰

Until 1750, pleasure dairies such as Catherine de Medici's were unrefined and analogous to their working, larger-scale counterparts. However, by the 1770s, these institutions became increasingly opulent, though their overall purpose largely remained the same. In essence, this romanticization of farming life encoded "complex messages aimed at the sophisticated, ruling elite within an ostensibly simple, rural veneer", and they served to simultaneously portray power while appearing to denounce it.⁴¹¹ The unassuming exteriors often masked the ambition of the women who frequented these spaces, and the idea of the hardworking, domestic labourer almost always flattered those who frequented ornamental dairies. While partaking in real farm life was frowned upon for women within the Second Estate, suggesting that they were softened and refined by nature's gifts was the pleasure dairies' goal. These spaces played into French societies' belief in women's necessary domestication and, as a result, pleasure dairies became prominent political fixtures.⁴¹²

This context illuminates Gouverneur Morris' comments about Marie-Antoinette's Hameau. As with all forms of pastoralism embedded within literature, music, and architecture, aristocratic representations of ruralism generated idealized versions of the pastoral which

⁴¹⁰ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 27-30.

⁴¹¹ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 8.

⁴¹² Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 9. For a longer discussion of the domestication of women during the early Revolution, specifically the concept of "Republican Womanhood", see Chapter Two: Unspoiled Milk: Feeding the Nation through Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786).

“embodied the desires, alleviated the anxieties, and certified the authority of the ruling class.”⁴¹³

Yet, what differentiates the French pastoral, especially that which was erected through architecture, is its intersection with gender; since 1560, evoking bucolic, simple life came to be one way women claimed “an identity that asserted power in veiled, non-threatening terms”.⁴¹⁴

It is easy to assume that French women weaponizing the pastoral for their autonomy ceased with the fall of the *ancien régime*. In terms of aristocratic creations of highly sanitized physical and rural spaces, this may be so as it was not until Joséphine de Beauharnais (1763-1814) established Malmaison in 1799 that something comparable to the *ancien régime*’s pleasure dairy arises. However, in the world of opera and specifically *opéra-comique*, the pastoral’s popularity only grew during the early Revolution with Louis Aneassume (1721-1784) and Edigio Duni’s (1708-1775) *Les deux chasseurs et la laitière* (1763) becoming the most performed work during the Revolutionary decade.⁴¹⁵ Importantly, all women-composed operas which found success between 1789-1794 were pastoral, sentimental works which celebrated rural French culture and contained coded elements of pastoral music.⁴¹⁶ Yet, rather than functioning comparably to Marie-Antoinette or Catherine de Medici’s aristocratic rustic retreats—where ruralism granted these elite women a sense of authority over French soil—women’s co-creation of pastoral operas may have differed.

Post-1789, pastoral operas may have become popular for their ability to signify the French nation, a concept which politicians themselves were seeking to establish and define, through their

⁴¹³ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 8.

⁴¹⁴ See Amber Ludwig, “Place and Possessions: Emma Hamilton at Merton, 1801-5” in Heidi A. Strobel ed. *Materializing Gender in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2017): 87-104, 92.

⁴¹⁵ See Emmet Kennedy *Theatre, Opera, and Audiences in Revolutionary Paris: Analysis and Repertory* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 94; Julia Doe, “Two Hunters, a Milkmaid and the French ‘Revolutionary’ Canon,” *Eighteenth-Century Music* 15, no. 2 (2018), 177–205.

⁴¹⁶ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution* (London: The University of California Press, 2001), 8–9. See also Appendix A for the complete list of women co-created opera during the French Revolutionary period.

homogenization of French ruralism and peasant lifestyles. Political historian Chimène Keitner explores the political significance of the term “nation,” as he charts how eventually the Crown, the State, and the Nation came to signify different things in 1789.⁴¹⁷ At its simplest, struggles between *parlements* and the king increasingly aided the conceptual separation of king and nation. The monarch no longer defined the French nation and its peoples post-1789, nor was subordination to the king viewed as a necessity to respect the state and further France’s powers globally. Now, *le peuple* defined all of France and France was defined through *le peuple*.⁴¹⁸

The philosophical principles of the social contract, popular will, and the importance of collective identity became the new unifying ideology, usurping the king as head of state.⁴¹⁹ This profound shift may have resulted in a new purpose for French opera which was not directly under the control of the State; these works had to fulfil a commercially driven incentive to appeal, at least theoretically, to Parisian audiences.⁴²⁰ Therefore, as with all operas during the Revolution, especially those post the Le Chapelier Law in 1791, women-composed opera had to resonate with a collective, almost homogenous audience; one which equally served to abstractly define the nation.⁴²¹

Despite this important shift in defining France’s identity, it is entirely inaccurate to assume that *opéra-comique* simply began celebrating collective ideas of *le peuple* and French ruralism in 1789. In terms of women co-created works, we know that operas by Caroline Wuïet (1766-1834),

⁴¹⁷ Chimène Ilona Robbins Keitner, *Paradoxes of Nationalism: The French Revolution and its Meaning for Contemporary Nation Building* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007), 19.

⁴¹⁸ For information on defining *le peuple*, and how collectivism came to shape the early Revolution, see Eric Golay, *Quand le peuple devint roi: mouvement populaire, politique et révolution à Genève de 1789 à 1794* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001).

⁴¹⁹ See Andrea Becker and Maren Reyelt, *Jean Jaques Rousseau's Concept of Society and Government: A Study of the Social Contract* (Munich: GRIN Verlag, 2004).

⁴²⁰ For a more detailed discussion on state-controlled opera during the early French Revolution, see section 1.5 “Revolutionary Audiences” and 1.6 “Opera under the Revolution” in Chapter One: Historiography and Criticism of *Opéra-Comique* and Gender during the Early Revolution.

⁴²¹ Vincent Giroud, *French Opera: A Short History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 2–3.

Lucile Grétry (1772-1790), and Florine Dezède (1766-1792) all embraced pastoral modes earlier in the century.⁴²² We also cannot argue that pastoral operas written after 1789 were more popular than those which used this mode before the Revolution. In addition to *Les deux chasseurs et la laitière*, André Grétry's (1741-1813) *L'Epreuve villageoise* (1784), Nicolas Dalayrac's (1753-1809) *Les Deux petits Savoyards* (January 1789), and Girard de Propiac's (1759-1823) *La Fausse paysanne ou l'heureuse inconséquence* (March 1789) were all written before the Revolution's start yet remained highly popular throughout it.⁴²³

And yet, because we can historically confirm that women co-created operas which focused on the domestic, rural, and idyllic countryside found new or renewed success from 1789-1794, it follows that women-composed pastoral opera during the early Revolution was in some way uniquely appealing—a special case.⁴²⁴ A change of fortune is exemplified by composer Florine Dezède (1766-1792) and her only opera, *Lucette et Lucas, ou La Paysanne curieuse* (1781).⁴²⁵ This *comédie mêlée d'ariettes en un acte* premiered at the Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne on 8 November 1781, two years before the Comédie-Italienne moved to the Salle Favart in 1783. This opera remained unperformed after this initial performance for over nine years until, on 3 March

⁴²² See Caroline Wuiet's *L'Heureuse erreur, ou La Suite de l'épreuve villageoise* (1786), an *opéra-comique* that first performed at the Théâtre Beaujolais, Paris, 1786. Libretto and music by Caroline Wuiet; Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio, opéra-comique*, first performed at the Comédie Italienne in 1786. Libretto by Mme de Beaunoir (pseudonym of Alexandre-Louis Robineau); Florine Dezède's *Lucette et Lucas*, first performed at the Comédie Italienne in 1781. Libretto by Nicolas-Julien Forgeot. See Appendix A for a complete list of women co-created opera during the early French Revolution. See Appendix D for the complete performance history of Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786). See Appendix E for the complete performance history of Florine Dezède's *Lucette et Lucas* (1781).

⁴²³ For the complete performance history of André Grétry's *L'Epreuve villageoise*, see CÉSAR *calendrier électronique des spectacles sous l'ancien régime et sous la Révolution* [Oxford: CESAR Project at Oxford Brookes University, 2001] Web, https://cesar.huma-num.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UOID=136972. For the complete performance history of Dalayrac and des Vivetières *Les Deux petits Savoyards*, see CÉSAR, https://cesar.humanum.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UOID=136972. For the complete performance history of de Propiac and Barre's *Les Savoyardes ou La Continence de Bayard*, see CÉSAR, https://cesar.humanum.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UOID=162441.

⁴²⁴ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 8. See Appendix A for a complete list of women co-created opera during the French Revolution versus those created before 1789.

⁴²⁵ See Florine Dezède's *Lucette et Lucas*, libretto by Nicolas-Julien Forgeot (Paris: Des Lauriers, 1781).

1790, it was revived at the Théâtre Italien where it was performed at least ten times until 1792.⁴²⁶ As with Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786), I believe it is necessary to explore the reasons why this opera was unearthed and popularized after initially appearing to be a failure.⁴²⁷ In particular, I believe further consideration is warranted when we consider that *Lucette et Lucas*' librettist, Nicolas Forgeot (1758-1798), wrote two similar comic plays in 1780 and 1781, *Les Deux oncles* (1780) and *L'Amour conjugal ou l'heureuse crédulité* (1781), yet these works were never remounted after their premiers.⁴²⁸

One plausible explanation for Dezède's newfound success during the early Revolution is that her opera offered a new, political significance which was supplementary to the work itself; resonances which potentially echoed the early Revolution's ideologies, especially those regarding gender difference and women's place in society. Considering the longstanding history of elite women claiming the French countryside to obtain power, early Revolutionary society may have appreciated or understood pastoralism granting gendered agency in a new way. Perhaps women composers claiming French rural identity as their own domain through recreating pastoral retreats on the stage were no longer seen as specifically aristocratic, but as representatives of the Second Estate.

This chapter seeks to better understand pastoralism's gendered political complexities. I begin with changes in who deployed pastoral discourse, noting a shift from elite women to those of the Third Estate. My interest is twofold: to understand how pastoral operas which celebrated

⁴²⁶ For the complete performance history of Florine Dezède's *Lucette et Lucas* (1781), see Appendix E.

⁴²⁷ For the complete performance history of Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786), see Appendix D. For a discussion of this opera's renewal, see Chapter Two: Unspoiled Milk: Feeding the Nation through Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786).

⁴²⁸ For the complete performance history of *Les Deux oncles*, see CÉSAR, https://cesar.humanum.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UOID=152459. For the complete performance history of *L'Amour conjugal ou l'heureuse crédulité*, see CÉSAR, https://cesar.humanum.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UOID=152467.

the daily lives of peasants came to define a universal idea of French identity and how the “maternal and natural ideas” embedded within these operas in turn contributed to the “propagation of a feminine and maternal public image” which served to legitimize the composers themselves.⁴²⁹ In other words, I explore how pastoralism helped women composers generate economic and symbolic capital.

Lucette et Lucas serves as an ideal case study for this discussion as the opera is part of the wider *paysannerie* tradition and its performance history suggests that its resurrection may have been connected to political discourses during the early Revolution. It was, however, not the only women co-created opera revived. As we have already seen, Lucile Grétry’s *Le mariage d’Antonio* shares a similar performance history.⁴³⁰

After exploring Dezedé’s relationship with her father, and the authorial complexities of women co-creating operas, this chapter discusses the pastoral mode. In this context, I discuss the French *paysannerie* tradition and how *opéra-comique* embraced a more rustic pastoralism, departing from the earlier *pastorale héroïque*. I then turn to uncovering pleasure dairies as sites of women’s emancipation. Inspired by the work of material cultural historian Meredith Martin, I build upon the idea that French pastoralism offered women a sense of autonomy.⁴³¹ Through the delicate act of balancing fiction versus reality, these rural spaces granted women the possibility to exert power in relation to secluded feminized retreats. This allowed women to reclaim the pastoral mode’s innate passivity or, as historian Leslie Ritchie suggests, pastorals offered women intervention in “a space that had been figuratively occupied by depictions of their passivity and

⁴²⁹ Ronit Milano, *The Portrait Bust and French Cultural Politics in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 90.

⁴³⁰ See Chapter Two: Unspoiled Milk: Feeding the Nation through Lucile Grétry’s *Le mariage d’Antonio* (1786).

⁴³¹ See Martin, *Dairy Queens*.

weakness. This sense of intervention was only heightened by the dynamics of musical performance”.⁴³²

Using the pleasure dairy as a metaphor to explore Dezède’s opera allows us to connect women opera creators to existing feminist scholarship that also seeks to redefine women’s political participation outside of traditional avenues.⁴³³ This chapter’s goal is not to suggest that *Lucette et Lucas* is, or was interpreted during its time, an actual pleasure dairy. I am interested in comparing and linking pleasure dairies and *opéra-comiques* as sites of gendered and political discourse.

Lucette et Lucas advocates for women’s autonomy through its strong, young female lead character, Lucette. Lucette controls her environment and all those within the story. This chapter will connect this empowered character to the agency women historically gained within pleasure dairies and other physical places of pastoral retreat. While Marie-Antoinette controlled her Hameau without male intervention, this practise did not extend outside of this fictionalized space and into other areas of her life; she was never granted political agency comparable to her husband.⁴³⁴ There are many similar elements within *Lucette et Lucas* which equally reflect this balance between the pastoral’s realist roots, on the one hand, and its reliance upon fiction, on the

⁴³² Leslie Ritchie, *Women Writing Music in Late Eighteenth-Century England: Social Harmony in Literature and Performance* (London: Routledge, 2017), 136.

⁴³³ In addition to research of women in French Opera by Olivia Bloechl, Sarah Hibberd, Hedy Law, Raphaëlle Legrand, and Julia Prest, among many others, this chapter has been inspired by the approach taken by Mary Ann Smart’s edited *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, especially that of Catherine Clément in “Through Voices, History”. Exploring how gendered political messaging alters based on time and place is central to my own approach in this chapter. See Olivia Bloechl, “Gendered Geographies in Proserpine” in *Seachanges: Music in the Mediterranean and Atlantic Worlds, 1550-1800* ed. Kate Van Orden, (Florence: I Tatti-The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, 2021); Anne E. Duggan, “Women and Absolutism in French Opera and Fairy Tale” *The French Review* 78, no. 2 (2004): 302–15. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25479770>; Hedy Law “Composing *Citoyennes* through Sapho” *The Opera Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (2016): 5-28; Raphaëlle Legrand, “Libertines et femmes vertueuses: l’image des chanteuses d’opéra et d’opéra-comique en France au XVIIIe siècle,” *Émancipation sexuelle ou contrainte des corps* (2006): 157-175; Julia Prest, *Theatre Under Louis XIV: Cross-Casting and the Performance of Gender in Drama, Ballet and Opera* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Marry Ann Smart *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

⁴³⁴ For a discussion of Marie-Antoinette’s life at the Petit Trianon, see Denise Maior-Barron, *Marie Antoinette at Petit Trianon: Heritage Interpretation and Visitor Perceptions* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2018).

other. *Lucette et Lucas*'s use of a Parisian Patois dialect is one way a sense of rural authenticity is projected. Its plot, where a young woman is celebrated for her autonomy, is entirely fictional.

As with the operas and lives of Lucile Grétry and Julie Candeille, this is only one proposed way to understand how and why women-composed pastoral opera became popular during the early French Revolution. There are naturally many reasons why *Lucette et Lucas* might have been revived.⁴³⁵ However, through Elizabeth Bartlet's work on Étienne Méhul's (1765-1817) *Adrien* (1792) and its censorship during the early Revolution, we are aware of clear cases where Revolutionary deputies opposed operas that countered or did not support their political aims.⁴³⁶ I therefore do not believe it is a stretch to read *Lucette et Lucas* through a political lens and claim that its revival could have been, at least partially, due to its resonances with early Revolutionary discourses.

3.1 Modesty Over Musical Masterpieces

Little is known about Florine Dezède, but we do know that she was born in 1766 and that she died in 1792 at the age of twenty-seven. Dezède composed *Lucette et Lucas, ou La Paysanne curieuse* at the age of thirteen and, like fellow composer Lucile Grétry, she was probably regarded as a child prodigy.⁴³⁷ Present scholarship tends to explore Dezède through her father, the famous French composer Nicolas Dezède, who was himself associated with the Comédie-Italienne.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁵ David Charlton speaks about the history of revivals at the Comédie Italienne and how operas were occasionally revived, though often within the same season and not after years of neglect. See David Charlton, *Popular Opera in Eighteenth-Century France: Music and Entertainment Before the Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), Chapter 8: Performance as History, 184-207.

⁴³⁶ See Elizabeth Bartlet, "On the Freedom of the Theatre and Censorship: The *Adrien* Controversy (1792)" in Antoine Hennion ed. *1789-1989 Musique, Histoire, Démocrate*, 1 (Paris: Maison de Sciences de L'Homme), 15-30.

⁴³⁷ Brigitte Van Wymeersch attaches this title to Lucile Grétry in her book *Mozart aujourd'hui*. She deduces that because of the young girl's age and talent, the status of prodigy is likely appropriate. See Brigitte Van Wymeersch, *Mozart aujourd'hui* (Louvain: Presses universitaires de Louvain, 2007), 25-256.

⁴³⁸ See Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 25.

Considering the lack of biographical detail surrounding Florine Dezède, this is a necessary compromise.

Nicolas Dezède was born in Turin in 1744 and, like his daughter, he too died in Paris sometime during 1792.⁴³⁹ Born as an illegitimate child, Nicolas received a large allowance from his adopted family yet, when he disobeyed their guidance and searched for his biological parents, the financial support was removed. He turned towards opera as a profession and, in 1772, his first opera *Julie* was performed.⁴⁴⁰ With other operas entitled *Les Trois Fermiers* (1777) and *Le véritable Figaro* (1784), Nicolas Dezède often composed within the pastoral mode, likely providing his daughter with the necessary education to do the same a few years later.

As music historian Raphaëlle Legrand notes, it is unlikely that Nicolas used his daughter's name on *Lucette et Lucas* to conceal his own identity.⁴⁴¹ Legrand toyed with the possibility that fathers attributed their own work to their daughters to allow themselves space to experiment or to further the idea of the opera's youthful innocence. She also admits that Florine Dezède's music for *Lucette et Lucas* is like that in her father's compositions.⁴⁴² However, given young women's wide involvement in creating opera during the early Revolution, Legrand finds no compelling reason to suggest that Florine Dezède did not compose *Lucette et Lucas*.

I do, however, believe there is something deeper at play regarding young French women claiming authorship, specifically over pastoral *opéra-comiques*. The fascination of young women opera composers who exclusively composed pastoral works suggests that there might have been a

⁴³⁹ Mary French McVicker, *Women Opera Composers: Biographies from the 1500s to the 21st Century* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2016), 175.

⁴⁴⁰ McVicker, *Women Opera Composers*, 175. For a complete list of the works of Nicolas Dezède, see CÉSAR, "Nicolas [Alexandre] Dezède (1738 - 11 Septembre 1792)," n.d., https://web.archive.org/web/20071007130629/http://cesar.org.uk/cesar2/people/people.php?fct=edit&person_UOID=100336.

⁴⁴¹ See Raphaëlle Legrand, "Femmes Librettistes et Compositrices à l'Opéra et à La Comédie-Italienne Sous l'Ancien Régime," *Polymatheia, Les Cahiers Des Journées Des Musiques Anciennes de Vanves* 3 (November 2016).

⁴⁴² Legrand, "Femmes Librettistes et Compositrices".

desire or at least a connection between youthful innocence, femininity, and pastoral representations on the operatic stage. Knowing that authenticity was a valued artistic belief during this period, the relationship between heartfelt, sentimental pastoral opera and young women creating these operatic worlds becomes evident, especially when we consider the semi-autobiographical element embedded within many women-composed operas including Julie Candeille's *Catherine, ou la belle fermière* (1793).⁴⁴³ However, due to a lack of biographical information regarding Florine Dezède, who mysteriously disappeared and we assumed died in 1792, we cannot be sure if *Lucette et Lucas* shares a similar connection between the composer's own life and the opera's lead female character.

Ironically, the lack of sources for Florine Dezède's life reflects how her life was led and the risks of courting publicity. As Félicité de Genlis (1746-1830) remarked, women authors had to be careful regarding the potential personal cost they faced if they claimed authorship of artistic works.⁴⁴⁴ She stated:

Women must realize under which conditions they are permitted to become authors: first, they must never be in a hurry to publish their works; throughout their youth they must shun any form of attention, even the most honourable; second, every rule of propriety requires them invariably to show the greatest respect for religion and the most austere morality; third, they must answer the critics only when they misquote [them] or when [women authors] are blamed for something they did not do.⁴⁴⁵

This awareness of constraints on female authorship turns on notions of modesty. Appearing to comply with conservative virtue shielded women from harsh criticism especially when they were

⁴⁴³ See Jacqueline Letzter and Robert Adelson, "The Legacy of a One-Woman Show: A Performance History of Julie Candeille's 'Catherine, Ou La Belle Fermière,'" *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 33, no. 1/2 (Fall-Winter-2005 2004), 11–34. For a more complete discussion of Candeille and her opera, see Chapter Four: From Shepherdess to Milkmaid: Navigating the Reign of Terror in Julie Candeille's *Catherine, ou la belle fermière* (1793).

⁴⁴⁴ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 125.

⁴⁴⁵ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 126.

creating works which were not necessarily deemed to be feminine such as large-scale operas.⁴⁴⁶ Dezède may have led a secluded life to avoid condemnation and injurious gossip.

None of the conditions that de Genlis highlights were unusual for eighteenth-century women.⁴⁴⁷ Modesty, virtuousness, and submission form the basis for many early-modern stipulations. The writer's first point, that women authors must never be in a hurry to publicize their accomplishments, highlights that women should avoid self-praise and self-promotion regardless of their mastery or skill. Correspondingly, women's creations were less often celebrated as monuments to personal artistic genius than deemed to exemplify collective and lofty ideal such as instructing the masses or reclaiming French identity. Individual genius was discursively off limits.

One of the few historical accounts which mentions Dezède, comes from the nineteenth century—though I believe it casts light retrospectively on gendered difference between male and female art. In physician Alexander Skene's *Medical gynecology: A treatise on the diseases of women from the standpoint of the physician* (1895), Dezède is mentioned as a prominent composer during Revolutionary France.⁴⁴⁸ The nineteenth-century British-American gynecologist included the composer in his section on “Woman's Function in Life” to suggest that, despite women's sexual differences rooted within their organs, they too can become brilliant, albeit to a lesser extent than men. It is remarkable that Dezède is included in a nineteenth-century medical textbook, especially considering that she is seldomly discussed in any musicological research today.

⁴⁴⁶ See Jill Halstead, *The Woman Composer: Creativity and the Gendered Politics of Musical Composition* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2017), especially Chapter Two: Music and Personality.

⁴⁴⁷ Women in late eighteenth-century France could not vote or hold office as they were considered “passive” citizens. During 1789, their public presence became more controlled resulting, in 1793, with their banishment from any formal political action, including attending political clubs, salons, and societies. For more information regarding the restrictions women increasingly faced, see Annie Smart, *Citoyennes: Women and the Ideal of Citizenship in Eighteenth-Century France* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011).

⁴⁴⁸ Alexander Skene, *Medical Gynecology: A Treatise on the Diseases of Women from the Standpoint of the Physician* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1895).

In his treatise, Skee states that “while [women] have not in these departments, attained an equal standing with men, [I] have [been] given complete evidence that, with time, education, and culture, they can do great work.”⁴⁴⁹ Despite being written nearly one hundred years after her death, Sken’s rationalization regarding women composers largely mirrors those within the late eighteenth-century France. As previously discussed, the eighteenth-century’s shift to a “two-sex” model furthered the idea that women were innately different from men.⁴⁵⁰ Skeen highlights this biological difference and, comparable to the writings of Rousseau, thought this would make women ineligible to create works of genius at the same standard as men.⁴⁵¹ Indeed, during the early French Revolution, French women were appraised in sex-specific terms. This may have resulted in women’s art not being valued for its sophistication as a *chef-d’oeuvre* but resonating with wider, especially moral, discourses.

3.2 What is the Pastoral Mode?

There is debate within musicology over what constitutes a pastoral work and what musical characteristics lend themselves to this mode of expression. Most scholars turn to Schiller’s essay *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1795) where the pastoral is deemed to be more of a mode rather than a list of qualities.⁴⁵² According to Geoffrey Chew and Owen Jander, in pastoral music, there is a “‘natural’ style falling appreciably short of the complexity of the conventional

⁴⁴⁹ Skene, *Medical Gynecology*, 89.

⁴⁵⁰ See Chapter Two: Unspoiled Milk: Feeding the Nation through Lucile Grétry’s *Le mariage d’Antonio* (1786).

⁴⁵¹ Rousseau states in *Émile*, “It is for them [women] to apply the principles man has found, and to make the observations which lead man to the establishment of principles. Regarding what is not immediately connected with their duties, all the reflections of women ought to be directed to the study of men or to the pleasing kinds of knowledge that have only taste as their aim; for, as regards works of genius, they are out of the reach of women.” See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile* trans. and ed. by Christopher Kelly and Alan Bloom (Lebanon: Dartmouth College Press, 2010), 565. For more on the sexual politics of Rousseau’s work, see Joel Schwartz, *The Sexual Politics of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985).

⁴⁵² Friedrich Schiller, *Über Naive Und Sentimentalische Dichtung* (Place Unknown: Karl Graeser, 1795).

style of the day”.⁴⁵³ John Powell suggests in his *Music and theatre in France, 1600-1680* (2000) that French pastoral music has a long history starting in the 1600s and, by the eighteenth century, this style and its characteristics were firmly established.⁴⁵⁴ Short verses, frequent caesuras, and common rhythms evoking country dances tend to be favoured while plot-wise, shepherds, nymphs, magicians, and satyrs are all popular characters within this mode.

However, I would argue that it is musicologist Raymond Monelle’s influential *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral* (2006) which has most clearly defined pastoral music.⁴⁵⁵ According to Monelle, the pastoral is one of the oldest literary and cultural genres, yet it has undergone a more recent prejudice due to a perceived lack of seriousness. Monelle suggests that “pastoralism is an allegory of the imagination, and the unmeaning lyricism of pastoral verse is an allegory of music.”⁴⁵⁶ In pastoral worlds, as in music, there is no “real”. As “emotion and desire” are allowed to run free in the pastoral, the “imagination is responsible only to the text, not to the world.”⁴⁵⁷

In France, according to musicologist Thomas Downing, the eighteenth-century pastoral can be split into two styles. The older “high” pastoral dominated the start of the early modern period until the mid-eighteenth century. This style celebrates the supernatural with gods and goddesses, fairies, and other fictional characters all through special effects and “idyllic landscapes”.⁴⁵⁸ The *pastorale héroïque*, which draws on classical pastoral poetry, is likely the most

⁴⁵³ Geoffrey Chew and Owen Jander, “Pastoral [Pastorale] (Fr It. Pastorale: Ger. Hirtenstück, Hirtenspiel, Schäferspiel Etc.),” *Grove Music Online*, January 2001, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040091>.

⁴⁵⁴ John S. Powell, *Music and Theatre in France, 1600-1680* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 188–226.

⁴⁵⁵ See Raymond Monelle, *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006).

⁴⁵⁶ Monelle, *The Musical Topic*, 189.

⁴⁵⁷ Monelle, *The Musical Topic*, 189.

⁴⁵⁸ Thomas Downing, *Aesthetics of opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 101.

famous genre within this style of pastoralism. It is also within this older pastoral mode where the *merveilleux* occupies considerable space and attention.⁴⁵⁹ French pastoral opera may have originated in the *pastorale héroïque*, but *opéra-comique* is largely based on the rurally focused *paysannerie* tradition which is indebted to the “more artificial pastoral” style of Charles-Simon Favart (1710-1792) in the 1740s.⁴⁶⁰ *Paysannerie* operas are generally more rustic, focusing on peasants and rural lifestyles. *Opéra-comique*, especially during the 1770s and 80s embraced this style of pastoralism and *Lucette et Lucas* falls within this second tradition.⁴⁶¹

Nonetheless, the pastoral remains somewhat elusive, evading any one clear definition. Edmund Goehring’s exploration of what may constitute pastoral music is of particular interest as he, like Schiller, suggests that pastoralism is a mode that can draw on a range of musical styles. However, he identifies one unifying attribute; the pastoral has a covertly defiant potential.⁴⁶² The pastoral may at once embrace Christianity or reflect paganism, mirror naturalness or celebrate artificiality, be neither tragic nor comic, and even be satirical or highly sentimental, yet it always does so through modifying another genre rather than acting autonomously on its own.⁴⁶³ We may add to this list of contradiction that pastoralism may serve to advocate for women’s autonomy or it may further encourage their domestic subordination.

Historian Leslie Ritchie provides a more cohesive definition of this mode, especially when it is created by women. Playing on the word “content”, Ritchie argues there is “‘content’ or rural subject matter and ‘content’ [meaning] a subject position that exploits one’s pleasure and

⁴⁵⁹ David Powers, *The Pastorale Héroïque: Origins and Development of a Genre of French Opera in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 263.

⁴⁶⁰ David Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 56.

⁴⁶¹ For more information on the history and style of French pastoral music, see Monelle, *The Musical Topic*, 185–251; John S. Powell, *Music and Theatre in France, 1600-1680* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 188-226.

⁴⁶² Edmond Goehring, “Despina, Cupid and the Pastoral Mode of *Così fan tutte*,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 7, no. 2 (1995), 108.

⁴⁶³ Goehring, “Pastoral Mode of *Così fan tutte*”, 110.

complacency in country life, often for an avowedly moral or social purpose.”⁴⁶⁴ This second element offered women artists the chance to enter into the second style of French pastoral tradition through depictions of ruralism yet advocate for their symbolic position as guardians of social harmony and morality through Republican Womanhood.⁴⁶⁵ Serving to morally instruct the early French Revolution’s principles, French women composers who evoked pastoralism generally fall into this idea of creating pastoral content. Their operas served two political purposes, one for the creators themselves to have their music performed through employing a popular genre and another for the development of the Revolution’s initial goals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. I will argue that the operatic stage served as the locale for both these realizations.

3.3 The Paysannerie Tradition

Depicting utopian peasant villages on the stage was neither unique to France nor to the eighteenth century.⁴⁶⁶ What differentiated French pastoral art is that it underwent a gradual shift. In the seventeenth century, peasants were crudely portrayed as ignorant, dirty, or tragic. The late eighteenth-century shifted to depict them as virtuous, happy, peaceful, and ambitious.⁴⁶⁷ Louis Le Nain’s (1593-1648) “Le Repas de paysans” reflects how the seventeenth century regarded peasantry. While not as crude a portrayal as Molière’s (1622-1673) depictions of peasants, like in *Les Femmes Savantes* (1672), this seventeenth-century painting succinctly highlights the hardships of these people.

⁴⁶⁴ Ritchie, *Women Writing Music*, 134.

⁴⁶⁵ “Republican Womanhood” was the political concept that women were the ideal sex to uphold and promote Revolutionary ideals through their natural role as moralizers of society. It is discussed, at length, in Chapter Two: Unspoiled Milk: Instructing the Nation through Lucile *Le mariage d’Antonio* (1786). See also Ritchie, *Women Writing Music*, 139.

⁴⁶⁶ For more information on the history of the French pastoral, see Arthur Tilley, *The Literature of the French Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904), 115–16.

⁴⁶⁷ See Gabrielle Thevenot and Jean Nard, *La France paysanne* (Paris: Verso, 1985).

In “Le Repas de paysans”, the characters are serious, with torn clothing, shoeless, dirty, and rather despondent, as depicted in Figure 3.1. Likely realistic, these sorts of depictions were ultimately rejected in the late eighteenth century for a more romanticized view of simple, rural



Figure 3.1: Louis Le Nain, *Le Repas de paysans* (1624) oil on canvas, Public Domain, image currently held at the Musée du Louvre, France, [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Le_Nain_-_Repas_de_paysans_\(1642\).jpg](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Le_Nain_-_Repas_de_paysans_(1642).jpg).

lifestyles.

As Amy Wyngaard notes, there were problems with late eighteenth-century France’s fascination with a romantic peasantry as it was entangled in larger ideals of the “Enlightenment”.⁴⁶⁸ Despite now being idealized and romanticized, artistic depictions of peasants were comparable to those of the “noble savage”,

meaning that this celebration of their uncorrupted state was a thought experiment rather than an argument for social inclusiveness.⁴⁶⁹ Indeed, French opera’s fictional peasants involved the erasure of the harsh realities the peasantry faced even though they formed over three-quarters of the French population.⁴⁷⁰

It may, therefore, be proposed that the French *paysannerie* tradition was and is a cultural projection which speaks louder about late eighteenth-century France’s desires than of its reality. This universal imagery still stands and shapes much of French identity today.⁴⁷¹ Perhaps one of the most obvious cases of the homogenization of rural France is through its food. Hyper-regionalized peasant traditions, such as Brittany’s galettes and crêpes, Nice’s ratatouille, or

⁴⁶⁸ Amy Wyngaard, *From Savage to Citizen: The Invention of the Peasant in the French Enlightenment* (Newark: The University of Delaware Press, 2004), 13.

⁴⁶⁹ Wyngaard, *From Savage to Citizen*, 13.

⁴⁷⁰ Georges Lefebvre, R.R Palmer, and Timothy Tackett, *The Coming of the French Revolution* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2019), 129.

⁴⁷¹ Wyngaard, *From Savage to Citizen*, 13.

cassoulet from Southern France's Périgord region, can not only be easily found in Paris today but, in many ways, these foods have come to define all of France and its culture.

The idea of a homogenized peasantry served a vital political purpose, especially during the First Republic's initial days. At its core, "the peasant" post-1789 played a crucial role in unifying France as a nation-state rather than its previous unification through subordination to the king. As the peasantry formed well over half of the French population, it follows that defining the nation through peasants made political sense. Unlike a state, which is defined strictly through its borders, the nation is an ideological concept; the only thing it requires is some sort of collective identity, normally established through language, rituals, or other modes of cultural expressions.⁴⁷² Through creating a France that contained each of the *départements* and their corresponding regional identities, a mixing pot of sorts, "over the course of the century, [with the early Revolution as a climax], the peasant came to represent France's core and what it meant to be French".⁴⁷³

While eighteenth-century peasant portrayals romanticized these individuals' hard lives, it should be noted that peasants would not have viewed themselves as a distinct social class. Rather, as historian Eugen Weber suggests, peasantry would have been understood as a social condition.⁴⁷⁴ This helps to explain how the rising bourgeoisie, of which Dezède was a part and who shared the same social estate as peasants, was able to enter the realm of *paysannerie* and depict peasants in a vastly different way than depictions by those within the Second Estate, like Marie-Antoinette. Despite not necessarily sharing similar realities, because women composers of the early Revolution were part of the Third Estate, they could theoretically maintain a sense of authenticity

⁴⁷² See Michael P. Fitzsimmons, *The Remaking of France: The National Assembly and the Constitution of 1791* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁴⁷³ Wyngaard, *From Savage to Citizen*, 13.

⁴⁷⁴ Eugen Weber, *Peasants Into Frenchmen The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 245.

when depicting country life, whereas nobles who did so could not.⁴⁷⁵ Eighteenth-century French class identity is more complex than the classic Marxist analysis allows. Celebrating peasantry was not necessarily resistance against the Second Estate but a conscious act of depicting regionalism to forge a sense of French nationalism.

3.4 Women's "Normative Naturalness"

As part of the wider *paysannerie* tradition, *Lucette et Lucas*' plot is comparable to other 1780s pastoral *opéra-comiques*, like those composed by her father Nicolas Dezède (1740-1792) including his *Les Trois fermiers* (1773) and *Blaise et Babet, ou la suite des Trois fermiers* (1783).⁴⁷⁶ Again, this newer style of pastoral comic opera focused on celebrating rural identities and not the supernatural or the *merveilleux*. The importance of fooling the unfaithful aristocratic man, hiding in secluded gardens at dusk using the shadows of darkness to conceal one's identity, making a mockery of the overly confident libertine buffoon, and, most importantly, relying upon women's redemptive powers to reaffirm social order—the core belief of Republican

⁴⁷⁵ For a discussion of the social class of women opera composers, see this project's Introduction and section 1.1 "Class and the Origins of the French Revolution" in Chapter One: Historiography and Criticism of *Opéra-Comique* and Gender during the Early French Revolution.

⁴⁷⁶ See Nicolas Dezède, *Les Trois fermiers, Comédie mêlée d'ariettes* in two acts, libretto by Jacques Marie Boutet de Monvel (Paris, Comédie-Italienne- Hôtel de Bourgogne, 24 May 1777). "Louise Desvignes (soprano) eagerly awaits her marriage to her cousin Louis (tenor) scheduled for the next day. Her sister Babette (soprano) confesses to Louise that she is in love with the 16-year-old Blaise (tenor) who has encouraged her affection. Louise's parents, Jacques (bass-baritone) and Alix (soprano), express their delight at the closer family ties to be created by the marriage of the cousins. Grandfather Mathurin (baritone) has unexpectedly arrived to attend the wedding. When the family sits down to eat and drink, the landlord, M. de Belval (baritone), announces that since he expects to lose a legal case, he is forced to sell the estate to Le Comte (bass). While the women show the new proprietor round, the peasant farmers offer to repay Belval's debts. Clearly touched, Belval accepts the offer, and the farmers rejoice in having kept their landlord." Synopsis taken from CÉSAR, https://cesar.humanum.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UID=160611. Nicolas Dezède, *Blaise et Babet ou la suite des Trois fermiers, Comédie mêlée d'ariettes* in two acts, libretto by Jacques-Marie Boutet dit Monvel (Paris. Comédie-Italienne- Salle Favart, 30 June 1783), CÉSAR, https://cesar.humanum.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UID=160574.

Womanhood—were central themes found within many 1780s and 1790s pastoral *opéra-comiques*.⁴⁷⁷

As with eighteenth-century German operas, French *paysannerie* opera equally “served as a platform on which to articulate political ideals concerning legal freedoms, gender roles and a collective sense of morality” and ultimately, pastoral *opéra-comique* promoted new, more modern ideologies of collectivism and national identity.⁴⁷⁸ Jean-Jacque Rousseau’s *Le devin du village* (1752), and Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais’ *La Folle journée, ou Le mariage de Figaro* (1778) are some of the more popular French plays which exhibit this idea from earlier in the century. These plays celebrate an idealized version of the rural and class conflicts, which was central to the more modern *paysannerie* tradition.⁴⁷⁹

Interestingly, in 1820, French musicologist Castil-Blaze remarked that the pastoral *paysannerie* operas of Florine Dezède, Lucile Grétry, and Marie Justine Favart (1727-1772) were likely far better at exploring ruralism than those of men, or at least Rousseau’s *Le devin du village*. His idea was that, theoretically, women could more easily reflect the countryside’s complicated connection between women’s authority and nature.⁴⁸⁰ This observation, made thirty years after Dezède’s death, warrants further exploration. Castil-Blaze wrote this remark in the early nineteenth-century during the Bourbon Restoration when he began his new role as a music critic.⁴⁸¹ He was known for his controversial remarks, especially in the *Journal des débats*.⁴⁸² It would

⁴⁷⁷ For more on pastoral *opéra-comiques*, see David Charlton, *Opera in the Age of Rousseau: Music, Confrontation, Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Chapter Four: The Reality of Pastoral, 1742-1752, 93-129.

⁴⁷⁸ Estelle Joubert, “Genre and Form in German Opera,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera*, ed. Anthony DelDonna and Pierpaolo Polzonetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 187.

⁴⁷⁹ Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique*, 56.

⁴⁸⁰ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 25.

⁴⁸¹ See Cormac Newark, “Castil-Blaze [Blaze, François-Henri-Joseph]” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition, ed. by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2002).

⁴⁸² Newark, “Castil-Blaze”.

therefore be imprudent to assume that his remark about women excelling in pastoral operas simply reflected eighteenth-century beliefs.

However, Castil-Blaze's comments do resonant with discourses directly before and during the early Revolution regarding the countryside and gender difference. As historian Michael McKeon notes in his work on domesticity and the division of knowledge, initiated through the writings of philosophers like Rousseau, the argument was proposed that women should remain within the domestic or private domains of society.⁴⁸³ During the early Revolution, women's confinement to domestic duties and removal from public life was not only encouraged in political speeches but, on 30 October 1793, women were banned by the National Convention from attending any political club or society.⁴⁸⁴ Yet, the pastoral is not clearly defined; it blurs the boundaries between private and public life.

Through the "fluid categories of social distinction", the pastoral offered the chance to think about the limits of gender difference, specifically that between art and nature and men and

⁴⁸³ Rousseau's belief in male-only gatherings in public spaces is perhaps best stated in *Politics and the Arts, Letters to M. d'Alembert on the Theater*, trans. Allan Bloom. The philosopher states "By themselves, the men, exempted from having to lower their ideas to the range of women and to clothe reason in gallantry, can devote themselves to grave and serious discourse without fear of ridicule". See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Politics and the Arts, Letters to M. d'Alembert on the Theater*, trans. Allan Bloom (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1960), 105.

⁴⁸⁴ One of these speeches that denounced women's involvement within public spaces was President of the Paris Commune Pierre-Gaspard Chaumette's Speech at City Hall denouncing women's political activism (17 November 1793). In it, the politician states "I demand a special mention in the proceedings for the murmuring that has just broken out; it is a homage to good morals. It is shocking, it is contrary to all the laws of nature for a woman to want to make herself a man. The Council should remember that some time ago these denatured women, these viragos [noisy, domineering women; amazons], wandered the markets with the red cap in order to soil this sign of liberty and wanted to force all the women to give up the modest coiffure that is suited to them. Since when is it permitted to renounce one's sex? Since when is it decent to see women abandon the pious cares of their household, the cradle of their children, to come into public places, to the galleries to hear speeches, to the bar of the senate? . . . Remember that haughty wife of a foolish and treacherous spouse, the Roland woman [Marie Jeanne Roland, wife of a minister in 1792], who thought herself suited to govern the republic and who raced to her death. Remember the shameless Olympe de Gouges, who was the first to set up women's clubs, who abandoned the cares of her household to involve herself in the republic, and whose head fell under the avenging blade of the laws. Is it for women to make motions? Is it for women to put themselves at the head of our armies?" See *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History*, trans., ed., and with an introduction by Lynn Hunt (Bedford/St. Martin's: Boston/New York), 1996, 138–39.

women.⁴⁸⁵ As discussed in Chapter Two of this project, by the mid eighteenth-century, women were thought to be not an underdeveloped version of men, but rather an entirely different sex.⁴⁸⁶ The result of this thinking was that a woman was defined by virtue of “her normative naturalness.”⁴⁸⁷ As McKeon notes, this created shaky ground as if woman was defined predominately through nature, and pastoral art was defined by depicting nature, then was woman not the ideal sex to create pastoral art?⁴⁸⁸

This is further complicated by the fact that during the beginning of the early modern period, economic production was dominated by household productions. It was only in the mid eighteenth-century that a gendered division of labour, where men worked outside of the home and women worked within it, became normative.⁴⁸⁹ However, farming, which is frequently replicated in the pastoral mode through roles like the shepherd or the milkmaid, did not follow this gendered division of labour. It was women who were milkmaids, engaging in manual acts of labour, carrying large carafes of milk over their heads back and forth between the dairy and the farm.⁴⁹⁰

The belief in female cultivation, meaning that it was the fairer sex who could moralize society, brings one last consideration regarding the pastoral and women’s domain. As McKeon states, the “enlightenment” idea that there was a “female capacity to civilize the natural brutishness and savagery of men” is important to bear in mind.⁴⁹¹ This is especially important considering that the *paysannerie* tradition became less supernatural yet more idealistic in *opéra-comique* during

⁴⁸⁵ Michael McKeon, “The Pastoral Revolution” in *Refiguring Revolutions: Aesthetics and Politics from the English Revolution to the Romantic Revolution*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Irvine: The University of California Press, 2022):267-290, 280.

⁴⁸⁶ See Chapter Two: Unspoiled Milk: Instructing the Nation through Lucile Grétry’s *Le mariage d’Antonio* (1786).

⁴⁸⁷ McKeon, “The Pastoral Revolution”, 280.

⁴⁸⁸ McKeon, “The Pastoral Revolution”, 280.

⁴⁸⁹ McKeon, “The Pastoral Revolution”, 280.

⁴⁹⁰ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 225. Martin focuses on primary sources from Brittany, a region known for its dairy production, and reveals that women were often the ones to engage in the hard labour of milking cows and transporting this milk from the farm to the dairy.

⁴⁹¹ McKeon, “The Pastoral Revolution”, 280.

the 1770s to 1790s, as reflected through works like Girard de Propiac and Pierre-Yvon Barré's *La Fausse paysanne ou l'heureuse inconsequence* (1789), Louis-Emmanuel Jadin and Alexandre Robineau's *Fanfan et Colas, ou les frères de lait* (1784), and Nicolas Dalayrac and Marsollier des Vivetière's *La Pauvre femme* (1795).⁴⁹² This is perhaps how conceptions of Republican Womanhood aligned with women co-created *paysannerie opéra-comiques* during the early Revolution; woman's supposed civilizing authority which was crucial for establishing the French First Republic could be fully enacted within the secluded space of pastoral.⁴⁹³

This appreciation of the pastoral blurring public and private life may even be why Revolutionary deputies like Maximilien Robespierre (1758-1794) were strong advocates for women artists. As historian Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall notes, in 1787, Robespierre enthusiastically supported writer Louise-Félicité de Keralio's (1758-1821) admission to the Academy of Arras.⁴⁹⁴ The politician even stated that "the *lumière* of letters has begun to reappear [after the Middle Ages], and it is women who will accelerate the happy revolution that will be the result."⁴⁹⁵ Keralio, who wrote a romance pastoral novel *Adelaïde* (1783), was a woman of letters who largely wrote during the early Revolution about women's role within the public sphere becoming, as historian Annie Geffroy states, a "*pionnière du républicanisme sexiste*".⁴⁹⁶ Perhaps

⁴⁹² For the complete performance history of *La Fausse paysanne ou l'heureuse inconsequence*, see, https://cesar.huma-num.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UOID=127584. For the complete performance history of *Fanfan et Colas ou les frères de lait*, see CÉSAR, https://cesar.huma-num.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UOID=127584. For the complete performance history of *La Pauvre femme*, see CÉSAR, https://cesar.huma-num.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UOID=147853.

⁴⁹³ For a larger discussion of Republican Womanhood, see Chapter Two: Unspoiled Milk: Instructing the Nation through Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786).

⁴⁹⁴ Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, "Robespierre, Old Regime Feminist? Gender, the Late Eighteenth Century, and the French Revolution Revisited," *The Journal of Modern History* 82 (March 2010): 1-29, 2, <https://scholarworks.calstate.edu/downloads/bz60cw73p>.

⁴⁹⁵ See Leon Berthe, "Réponse de Maximilien de Robespierre, avocat au Parlement et directeur de L'Académie, au discours de Mademoiselle de Keralio," *Annales Historique de la Révolution française* 46 (1974): 274-83.

⁴⁹⁶ "A pioneer of republican sexism". See Annie Geffroy, "Louise de Keralio-Robert, pionnière du républicanisme sexiste," *Annales Historique de la Révolution française* 344 (2006): 107-124. Keralio's editorials in various

this is why women co-created pastoral operas like *Lucette et Lucas* found their peak in popularity during the early Revolution, when Robespierre was one of the most powerful politicians in Paris.

I do not believe this suggests that Robespierre was a champion of women's rights: the politician equally declared that "an opinion favorable to women is often suspect".⁴⁹⁷ Rather, I raise this issue of the pastoral being more welcoming to women's artistic activities because I believe it is not a coincidence that women co-created operas which found success between 1789-1794 were largely all in the *paysannerie* tradition.⁴⁹⁸ Crucially, the convergence of Republican Womanhood and women's creation of the pastoral may even be one reason why both *Lucette et Lucas* and Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* were resurrected at the start of the French Revolution. This said, the pastoral is far more complicated than simply being a place for women to morally instruct. The complexities of rural spaces are made apparent when we consider one of the mode's most notorious spaces, Marie-Antoinette's Hameau at the Petit Trianon.

3.4 The Queen's Hameau

Located at the Petite Trianon's northern edge, the Hameau de la Reine or the Queen's Hamlet was constructed between 1783 and 1787. It was imagined as a space far removed from society's corruption, where simple virtues flourished. Architect Richard Mique (1728-1794) constructed twelve cottages around a pre-existing lake, thus creating the feeling of a small, self-contained rustic village: a true fantasy land.⁴⁹⁹ This village was separated into three distinct sections. The first, located south of the stone bridge across the river, contained cottages designed

newspapers largely supported the idea that women should remain within the private sphere during the early Revolution.

⁴⁹⁷ Berthe, "Réponse de Maximilien de Robespierre," 275, 278. On the depth of Robespierre's commitment to natural rights, see Marisa Linton, "Robespierre's Political Principles," in *Robespierre*, ed. Colin Haydon and William Doyle (New York, 1999), 37-53.

⁴⁹⁸ See Appendix A for a complete list of women co-created opera during the French Revolution.

⁴⁹⁹ Guillaume Janneau, *L'époque Louis XVI* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), 177.

for leisure including le boudoir, la Maison de la Reine, and the mill. It was within these spaces that Marie-Antoinette entertained fellow aristocrats and where pastoral operas like Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny (1729-1817) and Michel-Jean Sedaine's (1717-1797) *Rose et Colas* (1764) and Rousseau's *Le Devin du village* were performed.⁵⁰⁰ The mill is notable as it was not a functioning building; no grain was ground, nor was bread produced, indeed, the necessary equipment was lacking. Rather, its purpose was to conjure the feeling of a rustic French village.⁵⁰¹



Figure 3.2: Aerial view of the hameau de la reine, Domain of Versailles, France. Photo is Public Domain by Toucan Wings - Creative Commons By Sa 3.0 - 025.jpg, 2013, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vue_a%C3%A9rienne_du_domaine_de_Versailles_par_ToucanWings_-_Creative_Commons_By_Sa_3.0_-_025.jpg.

⁵⁰⁰ Thomas Vernet, “«Avec un très profond respect, je suis votre très humble t très obéissant serviteur » Grétry et ses dédicataires. 1767-1789”, in *Regards sur la musique, Grétry en société* ed. Jean Duron (Paris : Mardaga): 61-122, 92.

⁵⁰¹ Le Château de Versailles, “Le Hameau de La Reine,” accessed August 25, 2022, <https://www.chateauversailles.fr/decouvrir/domaine/domaine-trianon/hameau-reine#histoire-du-lieu>.

The Hameau's second area was dedicated exclusively to farming. Of particular importance were the *laiterie de preparation*, where milk was expressed and transformed into dairy products, and the *laiterie de propreté* where Marie-Antoinette tasted these finished products. The last area of the Hameau contained the fairy-tale-inspired Marlborough tower which, while attached to the *laiterie de propreté*, was, like the mill, purely aesthetic. Unlike the mill and the tower, these two dairies were fully functional, though perhaps still aestheticized. The addition of an entirely separate building exclusively dedicated to the Queen tasting these goods before they could be shared was likely a conscious decision on her part. Having the final say over her milk's quality granted Marie-Antoinette a sense of authority over nature. This mastery over the natural world, as well as the act of manual farm labour to obtain this milk, could have favourably coloured the Austrian queen's reception at the Court.

A space for tasting and ensuring an overall hygienic process, the *laiterie de propreté* was a one-room dairy containing an ornate marble floor, solid marble furniture, and a delicately painted sky ceiling over a large marble table in the room's centre.⁵⁰² The use of marble served two purposes. On a functional level, it helped to keep the milk cold, but the luxuriousness of this stone also elevated the space.⁵⁰³ Symbolically, white marble projected the idea of purity, painting the Queen and other women who frequented this building in a flattering, virtuous light. While



Figure 3.3 Laiterie au Hameau de la Reine - Intérieur, Château de Versailles, photo is Public Domain taken from Wikimedian partnership with Château de Versailles, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Laiterie_au_Hameau_de_la_Reine_-_Int%C3%A9rieur.jpg.

⁵⁰² Le Château de Versailles, "Le Hameau de La Reine".

⁵⁰³ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 20.

Marie-Antoinette may have been actively claiming French identity through working French soil in her hamlet's gardens, the act of tasting milk in this feminized space suggests that her domination over this pastoral space was achieved through a much larger process of domestication and female refinement. It was possibly hoped that this might have shielded the foreign monarch from harsh criticisms.

The Hameau's three sections are important as they neatly demonstrate how this pastoral space integrated conceptions of reality and fiction. The functional buildings, like the two dairies that housed animals and produced animal by-products, directly contrasted the purely ornamental tower and mill. However, all these spaces worked together to project a bucolic, simple life where the Queen could engage in daily manual labour and appear to be in control of this space. While the hamlet likely offered the monarch escapism from the harsh realities of her rapidly declining reputation, this artificially created pastoral space was anything but apolitical.⁵⁰⁴ It was a conscious attempt to usurp French identity. Indeed, through this space, Marie-Antoinette united herself to the idea of a virtuous milkmaid, and thus with the French peasantry. In doing so, she aggregated France's regional identity.

One could propose the argument that the Hameau was a frivolous space. Often when such an argument is suggested, Susan Sontag's association between camp and eighteenth-century pleasure gardens is used to devalue pastoral retreat, as demonstrated in Meredith Martin's *Dairy Queens: The Politics of Pastoral Architecture from Catherine De' Medici to Marie-Antoinette* (2011).⁵⁰⁵ This results in these spaces not being appreciated for their political, perhaps even feminist, potential.⁵⁰⁶ Camp, as Sontag describes, is a "victory of style over content" or "aesthetics

⁵⁰⁴ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 216.

⁵⁰⁵ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 195.

⁵⁰⁶ See Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp,'" (London: Penguin Classics, 1st edition, 1964).

over morality,” but this idea of triviality overlooks these bucolic spaces’ importance, especially when they are constructed and inhabited by women.⁵⁰⁷ It is not that the pastoral itself is political, as it is merely a mode or space which reflects a certain aesthetic, but that within these spaces possibilities of gendered political symbolisation emerge.

The pleasure dairies’ political possibility is explored by Martin who notes that these refined spaces were created as visual spectacles, as much to be seen as they were to produce milk.⁵⁰⁸ Pleasure dairies allowed French women to paint themselves as “natural, domestic, healthful, beneficent, and maternal” and project this image to the public.⁵⁰⁹ This act is political for two reasons. First, by retreating to an “image of Arcadian peace and prosperity”, women in pleasure dairies could project their “enduring devotion to the land,” which was essential for foreign queens.⁵¹⁰ The second reason is that pleasure dairies provided women with a “sense of liberation” as they could escape the Court and further their self-worth as they were the ones in charge of these spaces.⁵¹¹ As Martin notes, pleasure dairies were “not meant to be duplicitous but rather nuanced and self-aware in [their] delicate fusion of reality and fantasy, life and art.”⁵¹² They became places where a queen and other female aristocrats could seemingly mask ambitions of power through female domesticity, a tactic which could be argued was equally necessary for women entering the male world of opera composition.

Retreating to a pretend farm or listening to a playful pastoral opera like *Lucette et Lucas* does indeed appear to be frivolous, but those who gathered to partake in such activities were also playing with boundaries. Like salons, pleasure dairies blurred social divisions. However, unlike

⁵⁰⁷ Sontag, “Notes on ‘Camp’”.

⁵⁰⁸ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 20.

⁵⁰⁹ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 64.

⁵¹⁰ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 11.

⁵¹¹ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 64.

⁵¹² Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 20.

salons, retreats like the Hameau were entirely private and they could fully grant yet seemingly contain woman's authority.⁵¹³ The pastoral is instinctively linked with a sort of faux farm labour, and, in many ways, this mode conjures ideas of hard labour, embracing the natural world, and caretaking over the land. While this is not necessarily a feminine trait, when women create pastoral worlds, either on the stage or through retreats like the Hameau, manual labour and all it involves often extends to all people within these spaces. As a result, a type of fantastical matriarchy is formed where women work the land, have control over their lives, and are given the final say regarding the quality of the farm's dairy products or, as I will argue through Dezède's opera, women characters can determine their own fate.

Where the pastoral which is created by women truly challenges societal norms is how through this self-fashioned world, self-governance and the idea that women can reclaim their own physical space becomes the norm.⁵¹⁴ The significance of women evoking the pastoral is that it simultaneously refines women yet encourages women to engage in manual labour, advocates for their autonomy yet masks their ambitions behind a façade of domestic pursuits, and ultimately creates strict boundaries yet simultaneously blurs their limitations.

3.5 Depicting Peasants through Parisian Patois

Lucette et Lucas has been written about as being a mockery of marriage as, though it ends with a strong, moral stance regarding couples remaining faithful, it is supposedly filled with caricatures and parodies.⁵¹⁵ However, I do not necessarily agree with this reading. *Lucette et Lucas*' strong moral warning surrounding the dangers of deception, yet the importance of forgiveness, aligned with the concurrent philosophical beliefs during the pre-Jacobin, pro-

⁵¹³ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 61.

⁵¹⁴ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 90.

⁵¹⁵ See Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 26.

constitutional years of the early French Revolution.⁵¹⁶ As I will subsequently discuss, when compared to other comic parodies from earlier in French theatre's history, *Lucette et Lucas* does not faithfully follow the same parody formula. As such, despite the inclination to consider this work a parody, this designation is likely inaccurate and very simplistic.

The opera is based on the first libretto written by Nicolas Forgeot who would later go on to create works that were set to music by André Grétry (1741-1813) and Étienne Méhul (1763-1817).⁵¹⁷ While not an overly popular librettist, Forgeot was a relatively successful *hommes des lettres* in addition to being a *dramaturge*.⁵¹⁸ As a playwright, Forgeot was known to leave his work's interpretation up to its actors; his dialogues are rather sparse and dry but his plays, like *Les Deux Oncles*, were considered a blank canvas which allowed actors to add their own inflections.⁵¹⁹ This is important as it at least suggests that *Lucette et Lucas*' performances may have treated the libretto in the same way, leaving additional interpretations up to the singers. Such an assumption is plausible considering the importance *opéra-comique* placed on spoken dialogue versus sung drama. In his 1785 book, Michael-Paul-Guy de Chabanon (1730-1792) expressed that musical setting was more appropriate for tragedies than comedies.⁵²⁰ David Charlton has interpreted this remark to mean that *opéra-comique* had a distinct aesthetic which was "more generally pleasing" as "the speech provided a useful rest from music and renewed one's appetite for music."⁵²¹ In other words, dialogue was as important as song in this genre.

⁵¹⁶ See Anne Sa'adah, "Forgiving without Forgetting: Political Reconciliation and Democratic Citizenship," *French Politics and Society* 10, no.3 (1992): 94-113.

⁵¹⁷ Grétry's *Le Rival confident* (1788) and Méhul's *La caverne* (1795) are based on libretti by Nicolas-Julien Forgeot.

⁵¹⁸ Claude Bernard Petitot, *Répertoire Du Théâtre Français, Troisième Ordre: Ou Supplément Aux Deux Éditions Du Répertoire Publiées En 1803 Et En 1817 Avec Un Discours Preliminaire* (Paris: Foucault, Librairie, 1819), 67.

⁵¹⁹ Petitot, *Répertoire Du Théâtre Français*, 67.

⁵²⁰ See Michael-Paul-Guy de Chabanon, *De la musique considérée en elle-même et dans ses rapports avec la parole, des langues, la poésie, et le théâtre* (Chez Pissot: Paris, 1785), 325-327.
<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1081402.texteImage>.

⁵²¹ Charlton, *Grétry and Opera-Comique*, 9.

Both *Lucette et Lucas*' libretto and arias are written in a sort of Parisian Patois, which may be read as mockery of the Third Estate but, considering when *Lucette et Lucas* was created and revived, this dialect may suggest something else. Unlike courtly French, Parisian Patois originated in the Île-de-France; in theatre, it was often used to denote peasantry as demonstrated in Cyrano de Bergerac's *Le Pédant joue* (1654), the nurse and her husband in Molière's *Le Médecin malgré lui* (1666) and the peasants in his *Dom Juan ou le Festin de pierre* (1665), and in Brécourt's *La Noce de Village* (1666).⁵²² In these earlier plays, this dialect's crassness is heightened, and this is likely why many assume Forgeot and Dezède's use of Patois a century later suggests that their work does the same.⁵²³ Important features of this vernacular include improper liaisons which turn a /z/ into a /s/, heavy use of exclamation marks, curse words, and the shortening of words with apostrophes thereby omitting vowels.⁵²⁴

In *Lucette et Lucas*, Lucette and Lucas each speak in Parisian Patois from the very start of the opera. After singing their opening duo, Lucette tells Lucas to “*reste ici, j’alons r’venir...et j’pass’rons c’tems-là ensemble.*”⁵²⁵ Eventually, Lucas responds “*Tu r’vienras?*” thus continuing the conversation in Patois.⁵²⁶ The omission of the final schwa is evident within these brief examples but, because the sentence structure remains the same as within formal written French, this dialect is rather jarring. Authentic Parisian Patois would be structurally far more casual. This

⁵²² See Cyrano de Bergerac, *Le Pédant joue* (1654) (Paris: Chez Charles de Sercy, reprint 2016), https://www.theatre-classique.fr/pages/pdf/CYRANO_PEDANTJOUE.pdf; Molière, *Le Médecin malgré lui* (1666) (Paris: Iean Ribou, 1667); Molière *Dom Juan ou le Festin de pierre* (1665) (Paris: Hatier, reprint 2001); Brécourt *La Noce de Village* (1666) (Théâtre Classique, 2023) web, https://www.theatreclassique.fr/pages/programmes/edition.php?t=../documents/BRECOURT_NOCEDEVILLAGE.xml. For a discussion of Parisian Patois in French theatre, see Anthony Lodge, “Molières Peasants and the Norms of Spoken French,” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 92, no.4 (1991): 485-499.

⁵²³ Wendy Ayres-Bennett, *Sociolinguistic Variation in Seventeenth-Century France: Methodology and Case Studies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 80.

⁵²⁴ Ayres-Bennett, *Sociolinguistic Variation in Seventeenth-Century France*, 82.

⁵²⁵ Dezède, *Lucette et Lucas*, 26.

⁵²⁶ Dezède, *Lucette et Lucas*, 26.

dialect's lack of authenticity is likely required due to the nature of singing in French. When the characters who speak in this version of Patois sing, final schwas are occasionally required depending on the musical sentence.⁵²⁷ These vocal lines would have likely stood out far too much had a more realistic version of Patois been presented.

On the one hand, Dezède's use of Parisian Patois could be considered sarcastic due to the form's longstanding tradition as a comic device within the French theatre tradition. Yet, *Lucette et Lucas* uses Patois differently when characterization is considered. Those who speak using this dialect are not comic characters. The opera revolves around a fifteen-year-old girl named Lucette who is in love with the villager Lucas. Her godmother, Simonne, opposes this union as it may hinder her own chances of marrying her lover, the *intendant du châteaux*, Durand. Considering this would be Simonne's third marriage, a circumstance which could result in both her and Lucette's ridicule, Durand suggests that Lucette marry Durand's own libertine nephew Bertrand. After Lucette confesses her love for Lucas to Simonne, Simonne devises a plan to lie to her goddaughter and tell her that she saw Lucas with another woman in the village meadow. A distraught Lucette eventually confronts Lucas and, after exclaiming that she was helpless and almost hypnotized to fall in love, Lucas reveals the truth. The woman he was with already left the village days before their supposed encounter. The two young lovers come to realize that Simonne is trying to manipulate her way into marrying Durand by having Lucette marry Bertrand.

The opera's plot culminates in the final few scenes when the truth is finally revealed through a case of mistaken identities. As Simonne and Durand are alone in her house, they notice that the villagers might see them together as it is getting dark, and their candlelight will reveal their secret. Simonne blows out the candle and asks Durand to hide. However, they are both unaware

⁵²⁷ For example, in the opera's opening duo, Lucas sings "*donne-le moi*" where the final schwa on "*donne*" is accentuated with a sixteenth note. See Dezède, *Lucette et Lucas*, m. 67, 13.

that Lucette and Lucas are already concealing themselves in the house. As Durand moves behind a window, Lucas is already there. Simonne tells whom she thinks is Durand to jump out of the window however, it is in fact Lucas who jumps pretending to be the older man. He then re-enters the house with a candle in his hands revealing himself to Simonne, who has yet to understand what has transpired. Lucas declares that Simonne must allow his marriage as her secret has been revealed, yet she is still unable to comprehend what is occurring. It is not until Lucas calls her his godmother, informs her that her lover is closer than she thinks, and asks Durand to reveal his hiding place that Simonne begins to understand. Informing everyone that one must be cautious with love, Lucas and Lucette explain how they tricked Simonne and Durand into exposing their secret. The ending's comic element is that the dim libertine Bertrand does not fully understand what has happened until all the characters sing about the dangers of hidden identity in the final vaudeville.

Concerning Parisian Patois, it is vital to realize that as the intendant, Durand, and subsequently his nephew Bertrand, would have been considered higher members of society as they were part of the Second Estate. While Durand speaks in more formal French, throughout the opera Bertrand uses Parisian Patois in an identical way to Lucette, Lucas, and Simonne. Thus, it does not follow that Patois is only reserved for the victorious characters like Lucas and Lucette, as both Bertrand and Simonne also speak using this dialect. Nor can we say that Durand and his more formal French are elevated in this work as his aria reveals how he previously abused his first wife, and it is only through the embarrassment he and Simonne face at the end of the opera that he realizes the error of his ways.⁵²⁸ Therefore, the use of Patois was likely included as a way to contribute to the *paysannerie* tradition, a romanticized ideal of peasant life but one which is not rooted in malice and should not be understood as parodying the Third Estate.

⁵²⁸ See the aria "En prenant un vieux, femme tremble," in Dezède, *Lucette et Lucas*, 52-58.

As a strong, independent young woman, Lucette manages to both moralize her godmother and the powerful *intendant* Durand while living out her own desire to marry Lucas. She does this all through speaking in Parisian Patois. This may be read as a moment of self-fashioning for the character as, in some ways, she reclaims the theatrical tradition of Parisian Patois and connects it to wider discourses on Republican Womanhood.⁵²⁹ Importantly, it is Lucette's authentic, genuine love for Lucas which functions to solve the opera's chaos and bring about the satisfactory conclusion. Returning to the Hameau, the functional dairy at Marie-Antoinette's pleasure dairy served to refine and domesticate the Queen and, as a result, she was granted a sort of power over nature and the ability to determine her own life in this physical retreat. Lucette achieves a comparable result through the pastoral world. Through her innate feminine goodness, she can determine her own fate by using the pastoral mode to claim authority over her guardian, Simonne, and the powerful Durand.

3.6 Women Uniting France through Pastoral Opera

As the *intendant du Chateaux*, Durand's character highlights another important political consideration embedded within this opera. Durand's ultimate realization and transformation into a more righteous, kind, benevolent lover may have appeared rather differently to audiences post-1789 compared to the opera's initial premier in 1781. Under the *ancien régime*, *intendants* were the king's official stewards, and they served as agents in rural lands outside of cities. They were primary figures in extending the king's reach to less urbanized areas and their bureaucratic purpose served to unify all of France under the absolute monarch's rule. They furthered the idea of the Divine Right of King's and the monarch's position as defining the nation. Before the Revolution

⁵²⁹ For a more complete discussion of Republican Womanhood, see Chapter Two: Unspoiled Milk: Feeding the Nation through Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786).

in 1789, there were thirty-three *intendants* for the thirty-four areas of France and, as representations of the Crown, they were essential in centralizing its power.⁵³⁰ However, upon the commencement of the Revolution, *intendants* became replaced with the *assemblées provinciales* as these previous positions were unpopular due to their power in enforcing public order and collecting taxes.⁵³¹ Making Durand have this occupation suggests a connection to the previous power of the Crown and the *ancien régime*. More importantly, the act of Durand being forced to realize his errors, seek pardon for his past transgressions, and humble himself may have been appreciated post-1789 as a revolutionary remark regarding the necessity for a decentralization of power, a rejection of defining the nation through subordination to the king, and a general ushering out of the *ancien régime* and its practises.

While understanding this character in this way is admittedly only a possibility, as we have no primary sources to indicate how he was understood, it is not the opera's only element which may straddle the old and new regimes. *Lucette et Lucas'* music equally reflects this balance between ruralism and courtly sentiments. The work's overture is comic, and it truly paints the picture of rural France with its inclusion of rustic pedal drones and dominating hunting and horn calls. When listening to the overture, and indeed to any of the opera's purely orchestral selections, one questions if Dezède is nodding to the past by evoking, or at least paying homage to, terraced dynamics. In eleven measures, the bassoons and violins commence at *piano* and, as more instruments are introduced, a *poco forte* continues until all orchestral sections arrive with a grand *fortissimo*.⁵³² Crescendos and decrescendos are used which are not reliant upon this technique, but this sudden increase in volume, which is implicitly dependent on adding more instruments, appears

⁵³⁰ Christophe Morin, *Au Service Du Château: L'architecture Des Communs En Île-de-France Au XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2008), 160.

⁵³¹ Robert H. Blackman, *1789: The French Revolution Begins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 61.

⁵³² See Dezède, *Lucette et Lucas*, "Overture", mm.94-105, 5.

to be Dezède's preference for dynamic contrast. It must be noted though that a similar technique was occasionally also used in other comic French operas, like in Antoine Poinciset's (1735-1769) *Le sorcier* (1764) where the prelude "is a brief sonic image, starting with abrupt terraced dynamics".⁵³³ This echo effect, as it were, shapes *Lucette et Lucas*' musical character, although the larger score is not distinctively baroque as it embraces more contemporary late eighteenth-century techniques such as a slowing of harmonic change and chord progressions and an overall lack of ornamentation and cadenzas.

The overture's topic of the Tambourin is well chosen; it centres the opera within a rural French setting while still evoking a courtly imagination. Normally written in binary form and in duple meter, the Tambourin's bass line repeats an identical drummed rhythmic pattern which was often used to accompany a galoubet.⁵³⁴ The traditional instrument was long and narrow at around 3^{1/2} feet, as shown in Figure 3.4, and it was struck with a stick rather than with the hand.⁵³⁵ Not only was this dance more popular in earlier parts of the eighteenth century, but it also originated as a country dance from rural Provence like the Rigaudon. The Tambourin was commonly embraced by many French composers earlier in the *tragédie en musique*, notable examples being Destouches' *Amadis de Grèce* (1699) and *Télémaque et Calypso* (1714), and Rameau's *Les Indes galantes* (1735), but its inclusion in Dezède's overture may have served two purposes.⁵³⁶ Evidently, it sets the tone of a country scene, yet it also could be interpreted as reflecting Dezède's

⁵³³ David Busch, *Magic Flutes and Enchanted Forests: The Supernatural in Eighteenth-Century Musical Theater* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 140.

⁵³⁴ Paul Hermann Apel, *The Message of Music*, 281.

⁵³⁵ Ferne Arfin, *Adventure Guide to Provence & the Côte D'Azur (Hunter Travel Guides)* (Edison: Hunter Publishing, Inc., 2005), 171.

⁵³⁶ André Cardinal Destouches, *Amadis de Grèce* (Paris: Ballard, 1699), Tambourin, iv, 3; Destouches, *Télémaque et Calypso* (Paris: Ballard, 1730), Tambourin, 301; Jean-Phillipe Rameau, *Les Indes galantes* (Paris : Ballard, 1735), Rigaudon en Tambourin, I, 6. For more on Destouches' use of the tambourin and how it differed from Jean-Baptiste Lully, see Graham Sadler, Jonathan Williams, and Shirley Thompson's *The Operas of Rameau: Genesis, Staging, Reception* (London: Talyor & Francis, 2021), especially Chapter Two: Destouches and Collin Blamont: Two Surintendants in the Face of the Ramiste Threat.

musical knowledge of what dance tunes were embraced within French opera thus legitimizing her position as a composer.

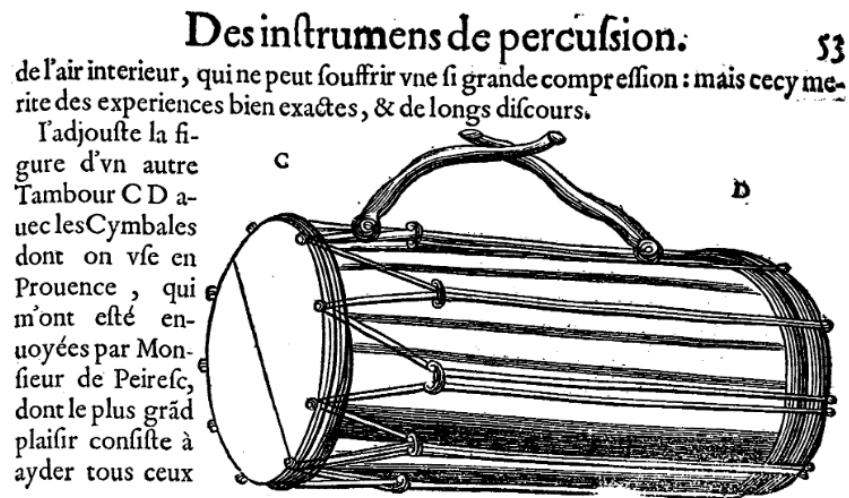


Figure 3.4: Drawing of a Tambourin from *Harmonie Universelle* (1636). Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle* (Paris, 1636), 53, Photo is Public Domain by IMSLP, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Harmonie_universelle_\(Mersenne,_Marin\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Harmonie_universelle_(Mersenne,_Marin)).

This overture's use of *notes inégales* is equally important to discuss. A type of rhythm specific to seventeenth and eighteenth-century France, *notes inégales*, or over-dotting a rhythm, was a popular technique used to evoke dance music where consecutive notes of equal value were often performed with unequal durations, although the extent of this disproportionate length is often left unclear. Jacques Hotteterre (1674–1763)'s treatises on this technique suggest that when the number of eighth notes is even, the first becomes longer than the second while when it is odd, the opposite occurs. Conversely, in common time, “the quavers [eighth notes] here are equal and the semiquavers [sixteenth notes] are dotted—that is to say one long and one short.”⁵³⁷ In *Lucette et Lucas*' overture, which is in common time, Dezède consistently uses two-note slurs over each

⁵³⁷ Jacques Hotteterre, *L'Art de Preluder Sur La Flûte Traversière, Sur La Flûte-a-Bec, Sur Le Haubois et Autres Instruments de Deßus* (Paris: Auteur and Foucault, 1719), 57.

sixteenth note, which is called *lourer*, and this suggests that an inequality of duration should be played.⁵³⁸

While it was not necessarily outdated for Dezède to explicitly use *notes inégales*, as this technique was still common in French opera until after the Revolution—demonstrated through both Lucile Grétry and Julie Candeille also embracing this technique in their operas—I wish to highlight one further significance mentioned in Mather’s *Interpretation of French Music* (1973) which may complement our understanding of this musical technique. The scholar points out that

This practice [sic]...came from attempts to imitate the non-detached, slightly long-short, and loud-soft performance of the instruments known as the *loure*, *cornemuse*, and *musette* (all members of the bagpipe family) and the *vielle* (hurdy gurdy). These instruments possessed a drone and were therefore incapable of clean articulations. The only means players of these drone instruments had of defining the beat was to lengthen and strengthen the long first note of pairs fitting within the beat.⁵³⁹

I believe we should not necessarily dwell on Dezède’s use of a technique more common during earlier decades and instead focus on this idea of *notes inégales*’ ability to imply rusticity. The French countryside during the years leading up to and including the Revolution reflected quite different and contrasting sentiments. The shift in French nationalism through uniting regional identities to create *le peuple* meant that to unite the masses, the people needed to share a common culture and history, and evocations of rural France as identity formation for ‘Frenchness’ was one way this was achieved. Celebrating French regionalism was difficult, though, because through appropriating rural culture, the Revolution essentially homogenized regional spaces and ultimately forced them into becoming homogenized institutional tools for republican narratives.⁵⁴⁰ To further

⁵³⁸ For another example of *lourer*, see Dezède, *Lucette et Lucas*, “Duo”, mm.11-15, 11.

⁵³⁹ Betty Bang Mather, *Interpretation of French Music from 1675 to 1775: For Woodwind and Other Performers* (New York: McGinnis & Marx, 1973), 3–4.

⁵⁴⁰ Jennifer Ngaire Heuer and Mette Harder, eds., *Life in Revolutionary France* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1972), 5.

complicate matters, the Grande Peur or peasant's riots in 1789 brought violence and anger to the French countryside.⁵⁴¹ While Paris tried to regulate rural villages and bring state control to these areas, now that the feudal system had been fully eradicated, peasants were fighting for their own revolution, one which would grant their autonomy from the rising bourgeoisie. This led to peasants initially fighting against lords, the aristocracy, and the peerage but eventually also against Republican deputies' increasing control.⁵⁴²

The division between cities and rural communities and the rising homogenization of rural identities are much more complicated than this section has alluded to, but the use of *note inégales*, like those found within Dezède's overture, could serve an important purpose for early Revolutionary discourses on national identity. This style could evoke the French countryside on a Parisian stage by insinuating traditional rural dance music while sidestepping or casting doubt over the complexities of this political homogenization. The opera could be used to rejoice and promote this new universal idea of homogeneous French culture, while thus allowing Parisian audiences to feel connected to their country despite having little in common with far away *départements*. Pastoral music in general and, this opera specifically, serves as the ideal medium for this purpose as it is again artificial and need not faithfully represent one region.

3.7 The Pastoral's Suspension of Time

Musically, there are other pastoral elements aside from the more obvious hunting calls found within the overture. One clear example of evoking the bucolic French countryside occurs in

⁵⁴¹ The Grand Peur or The Great Fear occurred in July and August of 1789. It was a series of peasant revolts across France which were highly spontaneous and erratic. Fearing a grain shortage, and a plot to cause starvation and famine in rural communities, villages across France grew militias to fight against landowners. This resulted in an even greater separation between cities and villages and a general mistrust by peasants for those in power.

⁵⁴² See P. M. Jones, *The Peasantry in the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), especially Chapter Three: 1789- Between Hope and Fear, 60-81.

Lucas' aria "Aux village pour faire un choix" in the opera's second scene.⁵⁴³ Alone on the stage, Lucas cries out that he has made the correct choice of a partner and that he is lucky to have found Lucette. The topic of the siciliano shines in this aria which speaks about his passionate love and, considering this dance is distinctly associated with the pastoral, Lucas's aria would have allowed audiences to feel a sense of rusticity.⁵⁴⁴ "Aux village" narrates Lucas finally meeting Lucette and her unwavering fidelity to their love. The past is represented in many ways in this aria as it is highly contemplative; the sweet, simple harmonies are almost nostalgic or longing in their sound, harkening to the simplicity of the pastoral. In addition, through the siciliano, the pastoral serves an important purpose as it helps suspend reality. We do not know if Lucas and Lucette are from the same social standing nor are we aware if their love is considered appropriate, as it does seem rather strange that the *intendant du Chateaux* is set to marry Lucette's guardian Simonne, yet Lucas, likely a peasant, is seemingly set on marrying Lucette. However, hierarchical spaces are negated in the pastoral. Like in *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786), where a Countess and her servant meet as equals, Lucas and Lucette may meet without violating any properties all through the pastoral's realm.⁵⁴⁵

Much has been written about the pastoral's musical suspension of time, and there are elements of this within Dezède's compositional style, but what I wish to highlight is that the pastoral form's rejection of boundaries perhaps aligns with women-composed opera. As women within a male-dominated public space, they too were suspending reality and defying traditional expectations or boundaries. It is precisely because the pastoral is an entirely fictionalized space

⁵⁴³ Dezède, *Lucette et Lucas*, "Aux village pour faire un choix", 24-29.

⁵⁴⁴ The siciliano is a dance topic which ceased to be danced in eighteenth-century ballrooms, unlike the minute or the contredance. It's "connotations of simple innocent nature were purely arbitrary, derived from the conventions of the pastoral genre." According to musicologist Matthew Head, it serves as a "copy of a copy". See Stephen Rumph, *Mozart and Enlightenment Semiotics* (Irvine: The University of California Press, 2012), 62; Matthew Head, *Orientalism, Masquerade, and Mozart's Turkish Music* (London: Royal Music Association, 2000): 67-89.

⁵⁴⁵ See Wye J. Allanbrook, "Metric Gesture as a Topic in 'Le Nozze Di Figaro' and 'Don Giovanni,'" *The Musical Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (January 1981): 94-112.

that French women could find self-governance, whether that be through Marie-Antoinette controlling a farming operation, Lucette autonomously marrying her lover and educating those around her, or even Florine Dezède becoming a resurrected composer on the Revolutionary stage.

3.8 A Vaudeville's Lasting Message

As with many *opéra-comiques* of the 1780s, *Lucette et Lucas* finishes with a vaudeville.⁵⁴⁶ It is at this moment that a more daring political message is revealed. This final composition is a gigue, and each character sings a verse and reveals the lessons they have learned throughout this story. Bertrand begins by declaring that he has tried so hard to catch women, but he himself has ultimately been caught as a buffoon. A sharp critique regarding the libertine's lifestyle shines within his verse and, considering libertine literature began to fall out of favour in 1789, it makes sense that Bertrand's narrative arch would have probably aligned with French society in the late eighteenth century.⁵⁴⁷ He has been humbled and, considering this is the simplest music he sings throughout the entire opera, his boasting has been silenced.

It is then Durand's turn to take over the vaudeville and he quite simply declares that he shall be more submissive to his lover as this will bring him happiness. As previously discussed, his change of heart can be read in many ways, but what remains important is that Durand does not declare that treating Simonne with more respect will bring her happiness, as one might expect. Instead, Durand announces that it is his own happiness which will blossom if he acts more obediently towards his love. When people act justly, it is not the lives of others which transform

⁵⁴⁶ As David Charlton notes, "Opéra-comique was built originally on singing-culture in the form of vaudevilles." A vaudeville may be defined as "a song that runs through the town, is easy to sing, and whose words normally report some adventure or current intrigue." According to Charlton, vaudevilles carry a long history of containing political messaging within them, as demonstrated through the revolutionary songs which became increasingly popular during the Frond (1648-53) when many vaudevilles rejected Mazarin's government. For more on the history of *opéra-comique en vaudevilles*, see Charlton, *Popular Opera*, Chapter Five: *Opéra-comique en vaudevilles*, 10-133.

⁵⁴⁷ See Laura Linker, *Dangerous Women, Libertine Epicures, and the Rise of Sensibility, 1670-1730* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2016), especially Conclusion: The Fate of the Female Libertine, 141-150.

for the better but the actors themselves. Considering his governmental role as the liaison between rural communities and the Crown, Durand's repentance suggests even further political significance. Should the *intendant du Châteaux* act with more respect and consideration for others, France itself can also be made stronger, not just the lives of those who live under the intendant's rule.

After Durand's realization, Simonne begins and, considering she hardly sings throughout the entire opera, this is an important moment for the character. She starts by singing that the one who wants to deceive will be caught but then quickly shifts her intention by also stating that the husband who wants to catch will equally be caught. This progressive remark contradicts her character as, until this moment, she was more than willing to surrender her goddaughter over to a scheme which was created for her own bliss with Durand. This revelation exposes Simonne's newfound appreciation for the truth and, while Durand and Bertrand are also at fault throughout the opera, Simonne is the closest character the opera has to an antagonist. Yet, unlike Durand and his wickedness, she is never truly punished as Lucette, and Lucas are content that they can now marry. No one holds Simonne accountable for the distress she has caused.

This ending with Simonne could have been viewed as simply a comic, trivial opera where there is a moral lesson, but considering the pastoral's ability to evoke seemingly undetectable political messages, perhaps it could be read in another way. Bearing in mind the early Revolution's political climate, where the initial goal was to reform the monarchy into some sort of constitutional monarchy rather than to completely abolish it, Simonne's ending politically resonates with this intent.⁵⁴⁸ As with the French Crown, she was at fault for only thinking about her own personal gains, yet reform and not condemnation is the resolution. While we may never know why Dezède

⁵⁴⁸ Peter Jones, *Reform and Revolution in France: The Politics of Transition, 1774-1791* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 176.

and Forgeot chose rehabilitation over rejection, the idea of women's moralizing power over society does come to mind considering both Dezède and Simonne's gender. As Rassier explores, women were key in serving to moralize and civilize society, especially in art such as music and literature.⁵⁴⁹ Their softer approach to changing hard, discourteous, self-centred men was often considered a positive attribute which could be harnessed outside of art to moralize all of society. Perhaps another potential reason *Lucette et Lucas* managed to remain being performed until the Reign of Terror's commencement is due to this very stance. The work advocates for social change where ego and self-service are pushed against but by gentle, gradual means.

While Lucas's final line in the vaudeville simply declares that love shall always win as it knows the tricks we play, Lucette's final verse has little to do with the opera's moral ending. As Letzter notes, Lucette's final verse is an autobiographical confession of sorts.⁵⁵⁰ The character sings:

You read your play to twenty friends
and each encourages you.
Author, charmed by their comments,
believes that they have done good work.
But often, to deter them, the whistle blows,
the author escapes as he did not want to be caught⁵⁵¹

Women composers concealing their identities for modesty is certainly important to consider when analyzing this verse. Yet, after better understanding the fictional creation of pastoralism—how these worlds simultaneously granted women agency while equally usurping French rural identity—the act of seeking escapement is interesting. While Marie-Antoinette was ultimately unsuccessful in her attempt to seek agency through evoking the pastoral at her Hameau,

⁵⁴⁹ Rebecca Ann Rassier, *History, Literature and the Representation of Women in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ph.D. Submission, The University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2000), 184.

⁵⁵⁰ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 25.

⁵⁵¹ Dezède, *Lucette et Lucas*, "Vaudeville", 45.

in many ways, Dezède's opera succeeded. Her rural creation, which on the surface appears to tell a simple love story and the danger of scheming, contains numerous moments which may be read as reflecting discourses of the early Revolution.

In her third line, Lucette, who is breaking the fourth wall, declares that the author is charmed by her friends' praises. This is not really a modest and reserved comment, and it contradicts the vaudeville's final words. Perhaps, the whistleblowing is less about avoiding authorship, as Dezède was recognized and publicly credited as the work's composer, but instead acts as some sort of escape from the political nuances of women creating pastoral worlds. In other words, this finale serves to avoid the realization that pastoralism legitimized Dezède as a successful opera composer and aided her transcendence of traditional gender barriers. Her opera could be celebrated and admired because, despite its strong female lead character who autonomously defies societal expectations to marry, this entire operatic world is ultimately fictional.⁵⁵²

We will probably never know the composer's intention regarding this final verse, and it could quite possibly have been added to simply reject any immodest attention. However, this is almost beside the point as it was within the pastoral mode that Dezède found success as an opera composer. As highlighted throughout this chapter, the pastoral world may be read as being largely feminocentric. In *Lucette et Lucas*, this is reflected by the fact that it is Lucette who rejects her guardian's desire to marry and who formulates her own plan to achieve her own goals. She is also the one who moralizes and reforms those around her. It may appear to be a stretch to connect pleasure dairies and women-composed pastoral opera together, but—from a feminist perspective—they served a similar purpose; they both offered women a fictionalized space to exert some level of control over their lives. While seemingly passive, quiet, and contemplative, the

⁵⁵² For more on the history of political messaging in the vaudeville, see Mason, *Singing the French Revolution*, 200-203.

pastoral is reclaimed by women for their agency, even if only theoretically, and this is undoubtedly a form of political agency.

3.9 The Pastoral as Women's Domain

I wish to conclude by returning to pleasure dairies. Turning towards another pastoral retreat, the *Ménagerie* at Chantilly exemplifies how the pastoral was, in many ways, women's domain. Built for the Grand Condé, this pastoral refuge began construction in 1686 under the guidance of architects Jules Hardouin-Mansart (1646-1708) and Daniel Gittard (1625-1686). While the dairy was destroyed in 1799, through drawings, we are aware of its layout.⁵⁵³ In the centre of the pleasure dairy, there was a rotunda made of white marble, white stone, large arched windows, and a vaulted ceiling. It was comparable to Marie-Antoinette's own *laiterie d'agrément*. However, just opposite Chantilly's *laiterie*, there was a salon dedicated entirely to the cult of the Egyptian goddess, Isis.⁵⁵⁴



Figure 3.5: Unknown, after Bernard Picart, “Isis avec une tête de vache allaitant Horus”, 1723, engraving, bottom left. Photo by Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec © 2023, <https://collections.mnbaq.org/fr/oeuvre/60003775>.

⁵⁵³ Carolin C. Young, “Le Laiterie de La Reine at Rambouillet,” in *Milk Beyond the Dairy: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 1999*, ed. Harlan Walker (London: Prospect Books, 2000), 365.

⁵⁵⁴ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 97.

With walls adorned with pastoral paintings, this palace dedicated to the ancient Egyptian goddess Isis was built around an actual temple.⁵⁵⁵ The goddess of fertility and motherhood, Isis was the daughter of Keb and Nut. She was appreciated for her magical power, by which she resurrected her husband. Though presenting herself in human form, Isis was known for the cow horns which adorn her head. She is certainly not alone, as Norse, Celtic, Roman, Greek, and Japanese mythology all had prominent women goddesses imaged as cows and the link between cows, the milk they produce, and feminine nourishment cannot be ignored. The fact that a dedicated space in a pleasure dairy was given to a female cow goddess cannot be overstressed.⁵⁵⁶ Such a strong, powerful symbol furthered the idea that pleasure diaries, and by extension pastoral spaces, were women's domains.

Dairies were deemed women's spaces not only because of milk but also because they were sanitized representations of ruralism, deemed "clean" spaces for women to frequent. As one of the highest female virtues, cleanliness was central to Rousseau's discourse of the ideal French woman.⁵⁵⁷ As Carolin Young summarizes, pastoral pursuits provided women with a forum to escape to a place "which was philosophically linked to the core of their womanhood as well as deemed suitably clean and proper to their social status."⁵⁵⁸ Women composers of the early Revolution entered a world or pursued an activity largely restricted for men; they certainly broke barriers, but by aligning their work with notions of purity and propriety through the pastoral, they could appear to act within approve female limits.

⁵⁵⁵ Gustave Antoine Armand Loisel, *Histoire Des Ménageries de L'antiquité À Nos Jours Volume 2* (Paris: Henri Laurens and Octave Doin and Son, 1912), 204.

⁵⁵⁶ Laurie Carlson, "Essay: Cattle and Women," in *Washington State Magazine*, n.d. Web, <https://magazine.wsu.edu/web-extra/essay-cattle-and-women/>.

⁵⁵⁷ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile* (Mineola: Dover Publications, Incorporated, 2013), 395.

⁵⁵⁸ Young, "Le Laiterie de La Reine at Rambouillet", 365.

3.10 The Pastoral's "Greater Matters"

Chateau Rambouillet rather than Versailles's Hameau or Chantilly serves as one last pastoral building to better understand pastoral and female agency in *Lucette et Lucas*. Serving at one point as the summer residence for the President of France, Chateau Rambouillet was bought by Louis XVI in 1783 to reaffirm his own power and to prove his rightful place as king. Located fifteen miles outside of Versailles, Louis built a *laiterie d'agrément* in the common style of those from the *ancien régime*, not dissimilar to his wife's Hameau. However, Marie-Antoinette never knew that this building was being constructed. Louis XVI and his building director, Charles-Claude de Flahaut de la Billarderie (1730-1809), kept their idea to make the Queen a new rustic hideaway secret.⁵⁵⁹ There are no surviving documents that note the building's cost, nor does it appear as if the public were aware of its construction; it was extremely mysterious.

The King appropriated the pleasure dairy, less to surprise his wife than to bolster his own claims to sovereignty.⁵⁶⁰ In the dairy's plans, the Queen was everywhere and yet nowhere; "the dairy and its gardens, menagerie, and sheep farm were not built with the real figure of Marie-Antoinette in mind."⁵⁶¹ What this building and its construction suggest is that the King and Billarderie were trying to replicate what the Queen had previously achieved at her Hameau, her ability to lay claim to France and her place as its controller. Rambouillet, unlike the Hameau, was not actually about one individual nor their power but, rather, it was an attempt to offer a "holistic vision of the monarchy" and project a robust, regenerated kingdom to the French people.⁵⁶²

⁵⁵⁹ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 216.

⁵⁶⁰ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 216.

⁵⁶¹ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 218.

⁵⁶² Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 218.

Essentially, it was an effort to usurp woman's power that was generated through the pastoral for the King's own political purposes. This plan failed, and the Revolution commenced six years later.

While Rambouillet failed to extend its political power, *Lucette et Lucas* may have not. The opera and its feminized pastoralism, moments which can be read as aligning to Revolutionary discourses, and its celebration of French nationalism through rural depictions were perhaps harnessed to serve a political purpose, one which did not necessarily benefit its creator but rather France itself who, as a new nation, was seeking to promote its new identity. This was likely not a conscious decision on the composer's part, but rather the result of a drastically shifting society where aesthetic tastes may have aligned with necessary political needs. Dezède's opera may have been popular until her death because it lay claim to French identity and could unify *le peuple* in a way which was unique to opera. As Allanbrook notes, pastoral music was the ideal medium to achieve this task as it offered "a ground traditionally beyond both time and class, a ground where [Mozart's] Countess and her servant may meet without violating any properties," a world where perhaps even women could serve to define and unify their nation through a moral, comic opera.⁵⁶³

Through basing *Lucette et Lucas* in a rural French world where young lovers find happiness and the boundaries between rich and poor, the Second and Third estate, formal and Patois French and even Versailles and Revolutionary Paris are blurred, Dezède in many ways was claiming the Revolution's values nearly ten years before its commencement. In no way was she alone in this task and indeed her opera and the *paysannerie* tradition owe their birth to movements much earlier than the 1780s. Yet, her opera may have acquired additional significance post-1789 and, subsequently, her gender could have equally offered newfound political importance. Like pleasure

⁵⁶³Allanbrook, "Metric Gesture as a Topic in "Le nozze di Figaro" and "Don Giovanni", 108.

dairies, Dezède's womanhood granted her a sense of authority which was generated through the process of women claiming French territory by forging fictional pastoral worlds.

Perhaps the writer George Puttenham's (1529-1590) idea of the pastoral best encapsulates why this mode uniquely offers women political possibilities. The goal of creating pastoral artistic worlds is not to faithfully reflect reality; acts of manual labour and the countryside's hardships are almost always ignored. It is equally not pastoralism's intent to offer refuge from reality and act as a sanctuary or offer seclusion. While this may be the case when individuals physically retreat to these rural spaces, when opera evokes the pastoral, there is a grander goal in mind. What rural subject matter allows is an aesthetic filter; the ability to hide one's intentions, as in the case of Marie-Antoinette's Hameau, and to address larger, more contentious matters. In other words, the pastoral is a "veil through which to insinuate and glance at greater matters", perhaps the greatest being the advocacy for women's place as unifiers of the country through a seemingly frivolous, revived opera.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶⁴ Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 8.

Chapter Four

From Shepherdess to Milkmaid: Navigating the Reign of Terror (1793-1794) in Julie Candeille's
Catherine, ou La belle fermière (1792)

Vergniaud adored the beautiful Madame Candeille, the famous actress, poetess, and musician. His friends sought him in vain, or rather, they found him only at the feet of this charming woman, with one hand resting on her lap, and the other listlessly sweeping her harp-strings; and every night he was at the theatre to applaud the divinity he worshipped all day.

—Alexandre Dumas, *La Comtesse de Charny* (1895)

La Comtesse de Charny is the fourth novel in Alexandre Dumas' series commonly known as the Marie-Antoinette romances.⁵⁶⁵ The series charts the French monarchy's fall, beginning in October 1789 with their departure from Versailles to Les Tuileries. While Duma's work is fiction—it explores the story of a young woman who falls madly in love with a monarchist, much to her pro-Revolutionary father's disapproval—*La Comtesse de Charny* is partly based on historical events. This is reflected through the novel's secondary characters, Maximilien Robespierre (1759-1794), Jean-Paul Marat (1743-1793), Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, Comte de Mirabeau (1749-1791), Pierre Vergniaud (1753-17993), and the *comédienne* and opera creator, Julie Candeille (1767-1834).

Candeille is only briefly mentioned in Dumas' series and, as the above epigraph suggests, she mainly serves to define the Girondins politician Vergniaud in *La Comtesse de Charny*'s second chapter entitled "Vergniaud".⁵⁶⁶ Vergniaud's absentmindedness and how he, despite being an

⁵⁶⁵ Alexandre Dumas, *La Comtesse de Charny*, Volume IV (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1895).

⁵⁶⁶ Dumas, *La Comtesse de Charny*, 11–30.

important political figure, was supposedly left distracted at his lover's feet during the Reign of Terror's (1793-94) onset, colours Dumas' chapter. As a work of fiction, it is likely fair to suggest that Dumas' novel eschew historical accuracy. However, this novel serves as one way of exploring Julie Candeille and her reputation during the early French Revolution.

The idea of Candeille being Vergniaud's muse and lover has been deeply debated.⁵⁶⁷ In 1817, when Candeille was married to her third husband, French historian Louis-Gabriel Michaud (1773-1858) wrote in his *Biographie des hommes vivants* (1816-17) that Candeille was Vergniaud's lover and that until the politician's death, they were frequently seen together.⁵⁶⁸ Candeille challenged this notion a few weeks later in a pamphlet response entitled *de Madame Simons-Candeille a un article de biographie* stating, "*J'aurais peine à me rappeler les traits de M. Vergniaud : je ne lui ai jamais parlé. (Pourquoi donc raconter ce qui n'est pas probable ? Et*

⁵⁶⁷ There is scholarly debate regarding the relationship status between Candeille and Vergniaud. There were rumours circulating during the French Revolution that she had, as historian Jacqueline Letzter describes, "romantic liaisons" with both the poet Phillipe Fabre d'Eglantine and Vergniaud. French historian Hector Fleischmann even wrote an entire chapter called "*la maitresses de Vergniaud*" in 1910 about this affair. French historian Jules Michelet supports this view in tome iv of his *Histoire de la Revolution*, where he notes that "Vergniaud did not share the aversion of the Girondists for Danton. The woman he loved, the good and beautiful Mme. Candeille, made a heroic attempt to cement the two parties". He includes this reference to Candeille as there was supposedly a fête where Candeille tried to salvage the relationship between the two politicians. French historians Lamartine and Louis Blanc equally support this claim. However, historian Edmond Biré refutes the idea of an affair noting that in Danton's own *mémoires*, the politician suggests that he was not present at this apparent fête gathering. It should be noted though that Lamartine, Blanc, and even Biré were all writing their historical appreciations of the 1789 Revolution either directly before, during, or right after the February Revolution of 1848. As such, their works must be considered within this context. For example, Biré was known to have taken a particular interest in monarchist-supporting novelists like Honoré de Balzac and Armand de Pontmartin. While it is important to determine the extent of the relationship between the Girondins orator and the composer, the fact that their relationship was being discussed during the early Revolution is likely what remains more important for this chapter's purposes rather than how historians have interpreted their affair. The circulating rumours at least suggest that the composer's reception within the Revolution would have been altered regardless of the gossip's validity. This chapter will present primary evidence for this affair and examples of gossip around this topic during the early Revolution. See also Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution* (Irvine: The University of California Press, 2001), 69; Edmond Biré, *The Diary of a Citizen of Paris During "the Terror,"* trans. Sir John Abraham Jacob De Villiers (London: Chatto & Windus, 1896), 91; Jules Michelet, *Histoire de La Révolution Française. Tome 4* (Paris: Chamerot, 1847), 392; Alphonse de Lamartine, *Histoire Des Girondins* (Paris: Furne & Cie, W. Coquebert, 1817), 2, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb307254965>; Louis Blanc, *Histoire de La Révolution française, Tome 7* (Paris: Furne et Cie, 1857), 271, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb301104314>.

⁵⁶⁸ Louis Gabriel Michaud, *Biographie des hommes vivants ou histoire par ordre alphabétique de la vie publique de tous les hommes qui se sont fait remarquer par leurs actions ou leurs écrits*, 5 vols. (Michaud: Paris, 1816-19), II: 33-5.

omettre ce dont on est sûr)?”⁵⁶⁹ Of course, we should recognize that Candeille denied any relationship with Vergniaud. Yet, historian Claude Bowers’s book *Pierre Vergniaud: Voice of the French Revolution* (1950) raises a very compelling reason why Michaud was likely correct.⁵⁷⁰

Bower suggests that it is “impossible to accept her [Candeille’s] denial of any knowledge of him [Vergniaud]” as Vergniaud was a well-regarded Bordelaise lawyer, who was prominent in Paris during the early Revolution and, as an elected member of the Assemblée legislative, it is highly unlikely that the socialite Candeille did not meet him. Furthermore, Vergniaud was a close friend of actor François Joseph Talma (1763-1826) and the politician frequently attended Talma wife’s, Louise-Julie Careu’s (1756-1805), salons.⁵⁷¹ Candeille was a member of Talma’s troupe, so it is quite likely that the two did indeed meet at some point.⁵⁷²

I believe there is further evidence to suggest that Candeille and Vergniaud were indeed closely connected. In 1800, returning from exile, French actress Louise Fusil (1771-1848) published her memoirs.⁵⁷³ While recounting an evening celebrating the birthday of Talma, Fusil wrote that Candeille was at the piano playing a song while Vergniaud stood beside her watching.⁵⁷⁴ There is no known reason to question why Fusil included this account, especially as it is a small sidenote to her larger story of the event. However, I do not blame the composer for trying to distance herself from the Girondins and Vergniaud. In 1817, when Candeille denied the relationship, France was under the rule of Louis XVIII (1755-1824). Espousing a close personal relationship with an ex-Revolutionary would have likely been an unwise decision.

⁵⁶⁹ “I hardly remember a Mr. Vergniaud: I never spoken to him. (Why recall that which is not probable? And omit that which is true?” From *réponse de Madame Simons-Candeille a un article de biographie*, 17 June 1817 (Paris: Gratiot), 181.

⁵⁷⁰ See Claude Bower, *Pierre Vergniaud: Voice of the French Revolution* (Irvine: The University of California Press, 1950).

⁵⁷¹ Bower, *Pierre Vergniaud*, 322.

⁵⁷² Herbert Collins, *Talma, a Biography of an Actor* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1964), 67.

⁵⁷³ See Louise Fusil, *Souvenirs d'une actrice* ed. Valérie André (Champion: Paris, 2006).

⁵⁷⁴ Fusil, *Souvenirs d'une actrice*, 190-191.

I highlight Candeille's connection to Vergniaud because I believe this relationship may offer new insights into her first opera, *Catherine ou La Belle fermière* (1792), and its immense success, particularly during the Reign of Terror. As the probable lover of a prominent Girondins politician, I believe it is fair to question how this opera grew in popularity during a period when the Girondins' rival, the Montagnards led by Robespierre, ruled.⁵⁷⁵ *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* is the most successful women created French opera, not just during the Revolution but even today.⁵⁷⁶ Premiering on 12 December 1792 at the Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu in Paris, this opera was continually performed until the 1820s. However, it truly dominated the Parisian stage during the Reign of Terror. From 1793-94, *Catherine ou La Belle fermière* was performed over sixty-eight times compared to just two performances in 1792, six in 1795, one in 1796, seven in 1798, and nineteen in 1799.⁵⁷⁷

I believe it is too simple to suggest that being a woman composer shielded Candeille from scrutiny during the Terror. This becomes apparent when her life and artistic outputs are contrasted with other prominent French women artists. While the famous portraitist Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun (1755-1842) fled France in 1789 due to her close companionship with Marie-

⁵⁷⁵ With the creation of the Assemblée législative in 1791, the Girondins worked together with the Montagnards—who would later become the more radical wing of the Jacobin club—to form the government and remove power from the Second Estate. The assembly's initial intent was to support a constitutional monarchy where the Estates General held comparable power to the king, to remove the absolute monarchy, and realign France to something comparable to Great Britain post the Glorious Revolution (1688-89). However, in 1792, the Girondins' goal quickly became impossible when the Revolution's objectives of liberty, equality, and fraternity had yet to materialize. While the Girondins originally formed a large part of the Jacobin club, the right-from-center or more conservative Girondins were overpowered by the radical left Montagnards, led by Maximilien Robespierre (1758-1794), who believed a more extreme and militant approach was necessary. The Montagnards took complete control of the Jacobin club in 1793 and, as is believed by many historians, the Girondins' opposition to the radical left likely initiated the Reign of Terror (1793-4). See Eli Sagan, *Citizens & Cannibals: The French Revolution, the Struggle for Modernity, and the Origins of Ideological Terror* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001); Patricia D. Netzley, *Terrorism* (New York: Greenhaven Publishing LLC, 2007), 219.

⁵⁷⁶ For the complete performance history of Julie Candeille's *Catherine ou La Belle fermière* (1792), see Appendix C.

⁵⁷⁷ See CÉSAR (*Calendrier électronique des spectacles sous l'ancien régime et sous la révolution*), Oxford: CESAR Project at Oxford Brookes University, 2001, Web, https://cesar.humanum.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UOID=200447. See also Appendix C.

Antoinette, fellow artist Adélaïde Labille-Guiard (1749-1803) remained in the capital during the Revolution. Despite her reputation as a court painter, Labille-Guiard continued to paint during the early Revolutionary years. However, in 1793, the government ordered the destruction of her painting, “Réception par le comte de Provence d’un chevalier des ordres réunis de Saint-Lazare et de Notre-Dame du Mont-Carmel” (1788) which had been commissioned by the King’s brother.⁵⁷⁸ Due to its glorification of the monarchy, Revolutionaries forced Labille-Guiard to burn this painting and all its studies. The connection of this work to the French monarchy is the basis for which this decision was made, yet this case of censorship was not unique.⁵⁷⁹

Importantly, we know from the new code law of *émigrés* enacted on 28 March 1793 that women during the Reign of Terror were held to the same political standards as men; their sex was not an excuse from consequences for supporting the enemy.⁵⁸⁰ Any and all counterrevolutionary

⁵⁷⁸ Bette W. Oliver, *Surviving the French Revolution: A Bridge Across Time* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2013), 52.

⁵⁷⁹ As highlighted in Chapter One, there were overt cases of Jacobin leaders censoring opera. For a complete discussion on this act of censorship, see section 1.7 “Opera During the Revolution”. See also Elizabeth Bartlet, “On the Freedom of the Theatre and Censorship: The Adrien Controversy (1792)” in *1789-1989 Musique, Histoire, Démocrate*, 1 ed. Antoine Hennion (Paris: Maison de Sciences de L’Homme), 15-30.

⁵⁸⁰ The new code of law of *émigrés* was enacted on 28 March 1793, a mere seven months before Marie-Antoinette was executed. Essentially declaring no distinction between the sexes when it came to desertion and treason, this law was truly ground-breaking for its time. The ruling was that “no man, woman, or child over the age of fourteen was allowed to leave Revolutionary France” as everyone held equal political responsibility to serve the nation. Those who did were to be killed. Within the National Assembly, there was debate over a women’s role within this law and her potential to politically commit to France. Before ratifying the final decision in March 1793, deputy Charles-Nicolas Osselin (1752-1794) briefly proposed that slaves were comparable to women in terms of their agency, and that both should therefore be seen as subject to their masters’ influence and ultimately incapable of making political decisions. While Osselin stressed that it was intolerable to disrespect the *patrie*, following one’s master could be a rational excuse for treason. However, he eventually altered his position due to the strong opinion among other politicians that gender was not an excuse for promoting anti-Revolutionary beliefs. Women were then declared to be eligible under the code law of emigrants, unless they were under the age of fourteen. In this legal sense, women were now deemed to be as politically accountable to the French nation as men, thus ushering in one of the most complex periods for women’s political responsibility. For more on this law, its history, and women’s place within it, see Jennifer Ngai Heuer, *The Family and the Nation: Gender and Citizenship in Revolutionary France, 1789-1830* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 33-37.

sentiments were not only rejected, but women who espoused sentiments which challenged the Montagnards were guillotined.⁵⁸¹

Considering Candeille's potential connection to the "wrong" side during the Reign of Terror, that being the Girondins, it is therefore reasonable to suggest that something deeper may have been at play which helped to shield *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* from Jacobin censorship.⁵⁸² Jacqueline Letzter and Richard Adelson propose that *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* found its success during the Terror due to the opera's autobiographical nature coupled with the fact that it is a work of sentimentalism. For these scholars, it supposedly provided escapism from the violent political battles taking place on Parisian streets.⁵⁸³ Audiences could use the theatre to escape the harsh realities of the public executions taking place and, as historian Cecilia Feilla notes, many productions during this time tended to be sentimental and at least overtly apolitical.⁵⁸⁴

However, I propose an alternative understanding of *Catherine, ou La belle fermière*. This chapter will read this work as an opera which allowed its creator to straddle the political boundaries between anti and pro-Jacobin ideals during the Reign of Terror. As a work of pastoral sentimentality—one which contains semi-autobiographical elements as Candeille was the opera's composer, librettist, and lead performer as she took on the role of Catherine during the Terror—

⁵⁸¹ This is most easily demonstrated through the execution of Olympe de Gouges and Charlotte Corday on 3 November 1793 and 17 July 1793, respectively. For more information on their deaths, see Lisa Beckstrand, *Deviant Women of the French Revolution and the Rise of Feminism* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009).

⁵⁸² For more on Jacobin censorship of French opera, see section 1.7 "Opera During the Revolution" in Chapter One: Historiography and Criticism of *Opéra-Comique* and Gender during the Early French Revolution.

⁵⁸³ See Letzter and Adelson, "The Legacy of a One-Woman Show".

⁵⁸⁴ Cecilia Feilla notes in *The Sentimental Theater of the French Revolution* that despite what one may assume, the most popular plays and operas during the French Revolution were sentimental dramas and comedies, many of which were created during the *ancien régime*. For a complete list of opera performances during the French Revolution, see Cecilia Feilla, *The Sentimental Theatre of the French Revolution* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 13.

Catherine, ou La belle fermière provides fruitful ground for considering Candeille within the wider political climate of 1793-1794. This chapter seeks to undertake this consideration.

A political understanding of this composer is, I believe, not only justified but indeed crucial considering her own political action during the early Revolution. Surprisingly, there has been no research into Candeille's activity and membership within the Société des amis des Noirs, a group created in 1788 to oppose slavery in the French colonies.⁵⁸⁵ As a close friend of fellow playwright Olympe de Gouges (1748-1793), Candeille also performed the role of Mirza, the young slave girl, in de Gouge's radical anti-slavery play, *Zamore et Mirza ou l'Esclavage des Noirs* (1784).⁵⁸⁶ This political action is highly important considering abolition formed a strong part of the Montagnard's own political ideology.

Catherine, ou La belle fermière's strong stance regarding marriage, specifically that it should only occur when mutual enjoyment and admiration are present, may also be read as a progressive political statement as equal unions were another ideal which the Montagnards supported. However, this alone should not overshadow the fact that some of the opera's characters may be read as figures or representations of the *ancien régime*. By situating this opera within larger political discourses around authenticity, civic virtue, and Republican Womanhood, the opera's contrasting embracement of Revolutionary sentiments may be better understood. In essence, this chapter's objective is to finally answer the lingering question regarding Candeille and her famous opera; how did the most successful French women opera composer in history find success during one of the most politically tumultuous periods in French history?

⁵⁸⁵ See Christine Ferret, *Amélie Julie Candeille et Girodet : la femme et l'artiste* (La Bibliothèque numérique de la BnF et de ses partenaires, 2021), Web, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/blog/30042021/amelie-julie-candeille-et-girodet-la-femme-et-lartiste?mode=desktop#block-commentsblock-comment-form-block>.

⁵⁸⁶ Sandrine Bergès, *Liberty in Their Names: The Women Philosophers of the French Revolution* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 37.

This chapter begins with a very brief overview of the Reign of Terror and why the Girondins, and those who were connected to this group, were persecuted during 1793-94. Candaille's biography is then explored. Her role as an actress within what was then believed a rather scandalous occupation, her potential portrayal as a Revolutionary festival muse, her rivalry with another operatic soprano, and the importance of her relationship to the Théâtre de la République are uncovered through primary sources.

The second half of this chapter turns to the opera's costuming, plot, and music. Candaille's reworking of Jean-François Marmontel's (1723–1799) story—to switch from a shepherdess to a milkmaid—is an important addition which has yet to be considered in any scholarship. Lastly, the opera's music may be read as embracing and yet rejecting the politics of the Terror and, like Candaille's biography, it suggests how this opera may be understood as being either a celebration of antimonarchist or pro-monarchist ideals.

As stressed throughout this entire project, the purpose of reading women-composed opera as being politically significant to the early Revolution is not to suggest that this is how *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* was understood in its own time, as such an understanding is nearly impossible to prove. Rather, this chapter's goal is to investigate why women opera composers may have been uniquely placed to navigate the Terror. Gender and the complexities of Republican Womanhood appear to be what allowed Julie Candaille to straddle both sides of the political spectrum, a feat which was seldomly accomplished by male composers.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸⁷ As in the case of André Grétry, French male composers who were closely tied to the French court through their patronage at Versailles were often cast aside during the Revolutionary decade. In general, male composers who did manage to find continued success during the early Revolution, notably Etienne Nicolas Méhul, did so through largely promoting and advancing Revolutionary ideals. As this chapter demonstrates, women were uniquely placed to embrace the old and new regimes through their art. For more information on male composers during the French Revolution and the censorship they faced, see Adelaïde de Place, *Etienne Nicolas Méhul* (Paris: Bleu nuit, 2005), especially Chapter 1 and 2.

The fact that women were forced to be as apolitical as possible in their everyday lives, yet distinctively feminine traits and domestic spaces were becoming increasingly politicized, must shape our understanding of this opera.⁵⁸⁸ The idea is not to categorize or politicize Candeille through a binary lens of being either an antimonarchist or a monarchist, a Republican or a counterrevolutionary. My goal is not even to “uncover” her respective political beliefs. Rather, to better understand how an opera composed by a woman found such immense success during the Terror, we must explore how *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* achieved balance. How both she and her opera navigated a politically charged and dangerous time through representing yet challenging contemporary politics through propagating idealized conceptions of French womanhood. Candeille created a world where traditional values of virtue and authenticity were displayed by women yet, at the same time, she progressively advocated for women’s marital and financial freedoms. It is this sense of balance, fashioned through a feminocentric world, which informs my understanding of this opera.

4.1 Withstanding the Terror

The Terror or Year II of the French Republic marks a significant turning point in the Revolution. After the monarchy’s fall in 1789, a second revolution took place when the National Convention, elected in 1792, became a Revolutionary dictatorship.⁵⁸⁹ As a result, the Convention knew it needed ultimate consensus and power and it therefore removed the Girondins faction from its ruling. It was a period where suspicion, treason, and violence reigned. While there were subsequent violent periods during the Revolution, notably the first White Terror in 1795 after

⁵⁸⁸ For more information regarding the politics of womanhood and how domestic life became increasingly used as a political tool during the early Revolution, see Chapter Two: Unspoiled Milk: Feeding the Nation through Lucile Grétry’s *Le mariage d’Antonio* (1786).

⁵⁸⁹ R. R. Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled: the Year of Terror in the French Revolution* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017), viii.

Robespierre's death, the Reign of Terror or the Great Terror is the most infamous period of violence during the Revolutionary decade.⁵⁹⁰ Politically, the Terror is relatively easy to comprehend. Anyone who was deemed to be a counterrevolutionary and against the Montagnard Jacobins was killed. However, it is the emotional climate that allowed these events to transpire which has puzzled historians for over a century.

Robespierre's now famous speech clearly addresses the often-posed question of why and how terror was justified. Aside from the desire to gain power and control, the necessity for a virtuous society was central to Revolutionary deputies' power:

If the basis of popular government in peacetime is virtue, the basis of popular government during a revolution is both virtue and terror; virtue, without which terror is baneful; terror, without which virtue is powerless. Terror is nothing more than speedy, severe, and inflexible justice; it is thus an emanation of virtue; it is less a principle in itself, than a consequence of the general principle of democracy, applied to the most pressing needs of the *patrie*.⁵⁹¹

Tyranny and violence were not only warranted but indeed encouraged under the guise of virtue. These two years, and specifically this speech, carry their own political history. Today, it is the post-revisionist trend of a more cultural, social, and psychological approach which underpins our understanding of these events.⁵⁹² However, William Reddy and Marissa Linton have taken a slightly separate approach to the standard post-revisionist thinking.⁵⁹³ Both have based their appreciation of the Terror within an emotion studies framework, attempting to merge

⁵⁹⁰ See Hugh Gough, *The Terror in the French Revolution* (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2010), 9-10.

⁵⁹¹ Maximilien Robespierre, "Maximilien Robespierre, 'Speech to the National Convention' (February 5, 1794)," in *Pageant of Europe*, ed. and translated by Raymond P. Stearns (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1947), 404–5.

⁵⁹² See Susan Banfield, *The Rights of Man, the Reign of Terror: The Story of the French Revolution* (Lippincott, 1989); Peter McPhee, *Robespierre: A Revolutionary Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); McPhee, *The French Revolution, 1789-1799*; Colin Jones, *The Fall of Robespierre: 24 Hours in Revolutionary Paris* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021). For a complete overview of the Reign of Terror, see Gough, *Reign of Terror*.

⁵⁹³ See Marisa Linton, *Choosing Terror: Virtue, Friendship, and Authenticity in the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Robespierre's idea of virtue and terror present in his speech within the larger climate of political sensibility which was sweeping French society.

While it is tempting to believe that the eighteenth century was shaped exclusively through man's pursuit of logic, reason, and betterment of life, emotion and sensibility were also central themes within this period. Social and political reform were important, however neither was enacted at the expense of feeling or embodiment. Political historian Henry Martyn Lloyd's influential *The Discourse of Sensibility: The Knowing Body in the Enlightenment* (2013) best outlines this idea. While the Kantian concept of the enlightened man supports a "rational or 'enlightened' governance", there was a simultaneous "sentimentalist" enlightenment that was paramount to Revolutionary France.⁵⁹⁴ Sensibility shaped the entirety of this decade; it was a period where emotive responsiveness was vital to instill acute awareness of morality and virtuousness.

At its simplest, sensibility is often "founded upon the dual beliefs that the human character was formed through interactions with the physical environment that were mediated by the senses, and the conviction that those of a more refined nature were more attuned to the suffering of others and more likely to display strong emotion..."⁵⁹⁵ It may appear odd to connect fear, which is the emotion most commonly associated when experiencing terror, and sensibility together. However, the two are intrinsically linked.

As Robespierre's speech clearly outlines, one belief was that terror was the result of virtue being enacted upon and lived out to its highest degree. In her examination of the Terror, Linton highlights fear's role in turning the politics of this time into a world of betrayal and denunciation.

⁵⁹⁴ Henry Martyn Lloyd, *The Discourse of Sensibility: The Knowing Body in the Enlightenment* (New York: Springer International Publishing, 2013), 2.

⁵⁹⁵ Victoria E. Thompson, "Memories of Fear in the Early French Revolution," *Journal of the Western Society of French Studies* 44 (2016), 38.

People were so fearful that they quite willingly condemned others to save themselves.⁵⁹⁶ Reddy suggests that this high level of suspicion and fear was unsustainable and that ultimately, the Terror had to end for people to find a release from their overly heightened emotional state.⁵⁹⁷ While valid, these appreciations of terror and fear suggest a more negative relationship between the pursuit of virtue and its connection to fear.

However, historian Victoria Thompson's more recent association between terror and virtue is rather compelling, especially when connected to opera studies.⁵⁹⁸ After completing an extensive analysis of emotion research and comparing this approach to primary texts from 1793, Thompson argues that fear did not necessarily divide Parisians but rather motivated a sense of fraternity or a willingness to help others and better society.⁵⁹⁹ This idea complements the work being completed within trauma history studies, notably that of Joanna Bourke, Maria Gendron, and Lisa Feldman Barrett.⁶⁰⁰

Thompson suggests that because Parisians would have been familiar with the violence in 1572 associated with the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, a historical event which importantly regained popularity on the stage during the early Revolution, the "cultural memory of fear" from this event would have also extended to Parisians reliving the joy people felt once the violence ceased in 1572.⁶⁰¹ The argument is that a similar experience may have occurred with the Storming

⁵⁹⁶ See Linton, *Choosing Terror*.

⁵⁹⁷ See Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 129.

⁵⁹⁸ See Thompson, "Memories of Fear".

⁵⁹⁹ Thompson, "Memories of Fear", 47.

⁶⁰⁰ See Maria Gendron and Lisa Feldman Barrett, "Reconstructing the Past: A Century of Ideas About Emotion in Psychology," *Emotion Review* 1:4 (October 2009): 316-339; Joanna Bourke, *Fear: A Cultural History* (Boston: Little, Brown Book Group, 2015).

⁶⁰¹ Thompson, "Memories of Fear", 42-43. On 4 November 1789, Marie-Joseph Chénier's play *Charles IX ou l'Ecole des rois* premiered. This work charts the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre and the sectarian violence between Catholics and Protestants in Paris during 1572. Highly successful, this play became a feature at the Théâtre de la Nation (Française) until 1791 when it switched to be performed at the Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu or the Theatre de la Republique. For the complete performance history of *Charles IX ou l'Ecole des rois*, see CÉSAR, https://cesar.huma-num.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UID=129478.

of the Bastille in 1789.⁶⁰² While recalling this violence a few years prior to the Terror may have initially sparked fear, the lasting sense of people culturally remembering the joy of changing from subject to citizen by reason of this event would have equally been felt. In other words, one could not sensibly feel fear without also recalling and embodying hope, fraternity, and progress. Ultimately, as Thompson suggests, this is likely why Parisians were so willing to experience terror because it was intrinsically linked to “a politically transformative emotion, necessary to the creation of a unified community.”⁶⁰³ Idiomatically, terror was a growing pain of sorts.

While the scholar does not address Robespierre’s speech on terror, this idea of collective sacrifice for the betterment of society, and that historically fear in France has led to societal betterment, is paramount to Robespierre’s own understanding of violence. The “pressing needs of the *patrie*” are what ultimately remain important.⁶⁰⁴ This understanding of virtue, terror, and sensibility is crucial as it suggests the emotional framework Parisian audiences may have experienced while watching *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* during 1793. They were not necessarily terrified and fearful despite the events taking place on their streets. Hope, or at least the general understanding that sacrifices must be made for a better France, could have been universally felt. Appreciating the Terror in this way not only provides insight into why violence transpired without mass objection, but it also pushes against the idea that *Catherine*, and indeed all sentimental happy-ending operas performed in 1793-4, were successful because they were escapist. An opera which celebrated virtue and sacrifice may have resonated with this idea of terror and self-sacrifice resulting in a more liberal society.

⁶⁰² Thompson, “Memories of Fear”, 42-43.

⁶⁰³ Thompson, “Memories of Fear”, 48.

⁶⁰⁴ Robespierre, “Speech to the National Convention”, 404–5.

4.2 Socialite, Muse, and Prodigy

Born in the Parisian parish of Saint-Sulpice on 30 July 1767, Amélie-Julie Candeille was a well-known *comédienne*, dramatist, composer, and singer as well as a writer, having written her own libretti as well as six novels.⁶⁰⁵ Her career began during the *ancien régime* yet her works were performed into the Revolution, the First Empire, and the Restoration thus making her one of the longest-active women artists in French history despite retiring from composing in 1796.⁶⁰⁶ Her musical oeuvre contains nine piano sonatas, a piano concerto, a *sinfonia concertante* for piano, flute, and horn, piano fantasies, various small ensemble works, and various operas including *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* (1792), *Bathilde, ou Le duo* (1793), *La Bayadère, ou Le français à Surate* (1796), and *Ida ou L'orpheline de Berlin* (1807).⁶⁰⁷

Like Lucile Grétry and Florine Dezède, Candeille gained her musical education through her composer father, Pierre Joseph Candeille (1744-1827). As a young composer, Pierre Candeille learned his craft from the church system, specifically at St Pierre in Lille.⁶⁰⁸ This would have provided him with the necessary background knowledge in a learned music style which he eventually passed onto his daughter. As a singer with the Académie royale de Musique Chorus, Pierre Candeille introduced Julie Candeille to the Parisian opera scene, which allowed her to form a connection with the Opéra-Comique. As a failing musician himself, Pierre Candeille revitalized his own career through his daughter. In Paris, he found relative success before the Revolution as a baritone and, according to his daughter, he also managed to tour Germany, yet his operas were

⁶⁰⁵ “Candeille, Julie (1767–1834),” in *Women in World History: A Biographical Encyclopedia*, n.d., <https://www.encyclopedia.com/women/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/candeille-julie-1767-1834>.

⁶⁰⁶ Katharina M. Wilson, ed., *An Encyclopedia of Continental Women Writers Volume 1* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1991), 203.

⁶⁰⁷ See Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 14. For the complete performance histories of *Bathilde, ou Le duo* (1793), *La Bayadère, ou Le français à Surate* (1796), and *Ida ou L'orpheline de Berlin* (1807), see Appendix A.

⁶⁰⁸ Bertil H. Van Boer, *Historical Dictionary of Music of the Classical Period* (Plymouth, United Kingdom: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 2012), 112.

largely considered unsuccessful.⁶⁰⁹ Despite his failure, during the Revolution, Pierre Candeille managed to compose a Revolutionary hymn and an opera which, when coupled with Julie Candeille's own association with prominent Revolutionaries, appears to be rather important as it suggests that he too may have been active within Revolutionary circles.⁶¹⁰

Following her father's tutoring, at the age of eight or nine, Candeille began taking lessons with Holiand, the brother of the cellist Moulins.⁶¹¹ At approximately the same time, she was also introduced to Marie-Antoinette (1755-1793), Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-1787), the mistress to the Duke D'Orléans, Mme de Montesson (1738-1806), and the famous opera singer, Mlle Sophie Arnould (1740-1802).⁶¹² While we are fairly certain that Marie-Antoinette did not hear Candeille sing, Candeille recalls that after playing the difficult overture to *d'Iphigenie en Aulide*, Gluck embraced the young performer and acclaimed "*0 petite! Petite...m'appartenais!*"⁶¹³ This experience would have been a great honour for both the young musician and her father, and it is clear when reading Candeille's unfinished *Mémoires* that she at least believed herself to have been a musical prodigy.⁶¹⁴

Candeille's mentioning of Gluck in her memoir, which was written in 1827 but is now considered lost, is fairly telling.⁶¹⁵ Considering Gluck was a well-known champion of young women singers, it likely follows that Candeille included this anecdote to solidify her own place as

⁶⁰⁹ Van Boer, *Historical Dictionary of Music*, 112.

⁶¹⁰ Pierre Candeille's opera was composed in 1793 and entitled, *La Patrie Reconnaissant ou L'Apotheose de Beaurepaire*. See Jean-Joseph Leboeuf et Pierre Joseph Candeille, *La Patrie reconnaissante ou l'Apothéose de Beaurepaire* (Paris: Imprimerie civique, 1793) (F-Pn., Yf 1155).

⁶¹¹ Charles Terrin, "Julie Candeille, Actrice, Musicienne, Femme des Lettres," *Revue Des Deux Mondes* (1829-1971) 33 no. 2 (1936): 408.

⁶¹² Terrin, "Julie Candeille", 408.

⁶¹³ "Oh little! Little...if you were mine!" from Terrin, "Julie Candeille", 408.

⁶¹⁴ Terrin, "Julie Candeille", 408.

⁶¹⁵ Julie Candeille, *Mémoires* (MS, c. 1827; unfinished, covering the period 1767–82) [Archives du Gard, Nîmes, presumed lost]; excerpts have been published in L. Aillaud, "Julie Candeille" *Chronique mondaine littéraire & artistique*, 27.

a qualified singer. While there has been some scholarly debate regarding Gluck's desire to compose for specific singers, it can be argued that the composer did have preferred singers.⁶¹⁶ In terms of Candeille's inclusion of this passage in her autobiography, there are two plausible reasons why Gluck's admiration was added. Through Samantha Cobcroft's work on eighteenth-century *prima donnas*, it becomes evident that Gluck had a strong preference for simple singers who genuinely expressed emotion.⁶¹⁷ Apparently, the composer even stressed that he wanted singer Antonia Bernasconi (1741-1803) to play Alceste specifically because "her gestures followed only the movements of her heart."⁶¹⁸ It follows that by Candeille implying that Gluck admired her voice, Candeille was insinuating that she too was adequately capable of expressing unpretentious and straightforward emotion while singing.

A much more practical reason for this inclusion is quite simply that Candeille was apparently not the most accomplished singer. As a young girl, while publicly singing difficult repertoire, her voice supposedly broke or cracked thus opening her up to ridicule.⁶¹⁹ As one can deduce from reading her *mémoires*, it follows that the young girl was highly self-conscious about her talents, so highlighting that Gluck admired her voice may have been a sort of catharsis that Candeille sought towards the end of her life; a rewriting of her past, as it were. Whether Gluck in fact admired the young girl's voice is unknown, yet it does not seem impossible as, at thirteen

⁶¹⁶ Most studies which look at a composer's desire to create music for specific singers tend to center around Mozart. However, more recent scholarship has sought to uncover if Gluck held similar preferences when creating specific operatic roles. See *Art and Letters* (London: Boussard, Valadon & Company, 1888), 205.

⁶¹⁷ Samantha Cobcroft "The Nurturing of the Late Eighteenth-Century Prima Dona" in *Aesthetics and Experience in Music Performance*, eds. Samantha Owens, Elizabeth Mackinlay, and Denis Collins (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005):85-98, 89.

⁶¹⁸ Owens, Mackinlay, and Collins, *Aesthetics and Experience in Music Performance*, 463.

⁶¹⁹ Terrin, "Julie Candeille", 408.

years old, Candeille did perform the title role in his *Iphigénie en Aulide* at the Académie Royale de Musique.⁶²⁰

Lacking confidence appears to have shaped much of Candeille's earlier life. This may be seen from her relationship with fellow famous French soprano, Sophie Arnould (1740-1802). Candeille speaks of Mme Arnould as her rival. This is quite likely true as Arnould was *the* soprano at the Opéra while Candeille was employed by the Comédie-Italienne.⁶²¹ Candeille recounts the horrible encounter the two singers had at a salon before the Revolution. After describing how Arnould snubbed Candeille by not allowing her to perform, when Candeille did manage to descend upon the harpsichord she was terrified and played "*sans rac et avec crainte*."⁶²² Arnould exclaimed "*Ah! Vraiment, messieurs, voici bien une autre merveille! Écoutez, écoutez!... C'est admirable!... c'est prodigieux!*" but Candeille interpreted this statement from Arnould as being purely condescending.⁶²³

In the 1790s, Candeille frequented gatherings held by Marie-Anne Picot (1766-1825), the wife of de Charles de Lameth (1757-1832) and Louise-Julie Careu, the wife of actor François-Joseph Talma.⁶²⁴ She may have even taken part in a festival organized by Talma at his private residence to celebrate General Charles-François du Périer Dumouriez (1739-1823), where many other Revolutionary politicians were also present, including Jean-Paul Marat (1743-1793).⁶²⁵ Being involved in these circles opened the musician to a new world as she conceivably became

⁶²⁰ John Warrack and Evan West, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Opera*, Third Edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 77.

⁶²¹ For a discussion on women singers at the Opéra versus the Comédie-Italienne, see section 1:4 "Women in French Opera" in Chapter One: Historiography and Criticism of *Opéra-Comique* and Gender During the Early French Revolution.

⁶²² "Tasteless and with fear." Terrin, "Julie Candeille", 409.

⁶²³ "Ah, really gentlemen, here is another wonder! Listen, listen...it's admirable...it's prodigious." Terrin, "Julie Candeille", 409.

⁶²⁴ Kale, *French Salons: High Society and Political Sociability from the Old Regime to the Revolution of 1848*, 59.

⁶²⁵ Terrin, "Julie Candeille", 15.

aware of the current political climate's inner workings. Her potential romantic involvement with Vergniaud would only have fed this knowledge as she may have attended political events with her supposed lover too.

One encounter with the authorities provides an interesting context for the connections Candeille was able to establish through attending Revolutionary salons. In 1793, during the height of *Catherine*'s performances, according to reports, Candeille was taken for questioning despite her opera's success.⁶²⁶ As with many Parisians during the early Terror, reports were apparently mounted against the composer for wrongdoings, most likely counter-Revolutionary sensibilities. Despite her close connection to the Girondins, it appears as if Candeille never publicly presented her own partisan political beliefs, conceivably due to her gender and the assumption that during the Terror, women were self-regulating from decreeing more overt public opinions.⁶²⁷ Regardless of why the composer was arrested and instructed to remain in her home, Candeille was eventually spared execution due to the last-minute intervention of National Convention Deputy, Julien de Toulouse (1750-1828). As a member of the Montagnards, de Toulouse was able to clear Candeille's name, and the singer-composer returned to the stage to continue her performances in *Catherine*.

De Toulouse is an interesting political figure as he, perhaps even comparable to Candeille, managed to survive the Reign of Terror and the Thermidorian Reaction by outwardly supporting

⁶²⁶ Julien de Toulouse, *Encore un mot à mes détracteurs, compte rendu de ma fortune* (Paris: Publisher Unknown, Year III.), 123.

⁶²⁷ The clamping down on women's political participation is most evident through the disbandment of the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women (SRRW) on 16 September 1793. Fearing a direct threat to public order, Jean-Baptiste Amar, a member of the Committee of General Security, announced that publicly active women were disruptive to the Revolutionary cause and that all women political groups must cease to exist. The idea that women were supposedly given innately separate skills and should exert their power within private, domestic spaces formed much of his reasoning for dissolving groups like the SRRW. For more information, see Jean-Baptiste Amar, "Discussion of Women's Political Clubs and Their Suppression, 29–30 October 1793," in *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History*, ed. and trans. Lynn Hunt (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1996).

various political beliefs.⁶²⁸ What remains important in the case of Candeille's arrest is that it suggests that she had strong, personal relationships with politicians within various and sometimes competing circles. While this was not uncommon, especially for a comedienne who attended salons, the fact that Candeille is so often written about in relation to the friendships she formed with political figures is rather telling. The most plausible explanation, aside from enjoying their company, is that these bonds pragmatically assisted Candeille in having her operas publicly performed. The fact that Candeille had help through strong relationships with both Vergniaud and de Toulouse, who were situated on opposing political sides, implies that Candeille was quite realistic and savvy about the real danger women composers could be subjected to.

Despite these close connections, there is disagreement as to whether Candeille actively participated in any political capacity within these circles or if she acted more as a confidant or even as a socialite. The most contentious debate regarding Candeille's political activities, aside from her relationship with Vergniaud, surrounds whether she was indeed a Revolutionary muse in a festival. According to a biographer of the writer Louise Colet (1810-1876), in 1793, Candeille, who was apparently quite the celebrity of the Revolution, impersonated the Goddess of Reason, naked, and at "one of the secularized alters".⁶²⁹ Knowing how important these ceremonies were, and the prominent women who often participated as goddesses like Sophie Momoro, the wife of the renowned publisher and politician Antoine-François Momoro (1756-1794), this does not seem to be entirely impossible.⁶³⁰ Historian Henry Stephens confirms this activity in his influential *A History of the Revolution* (1886), as does dramatist Sebastien Mercier in his *Nouveau Paris* (1793),

⁶²⁸ See Albert Mathiez and Ligarán, *Un député d'affaires sous la Terreur: Julien (de Toulouse) in La Corruption Parlementaire Sous la Terreur* (Bruges: Ligarán Éditions, 2015), 156-206.

⁶²⁹ Francine Gray, *Rage and Fire: A Life of Louise Colet--Pioneer, Feminist, Literary Star, Flaubert's Muse* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 36.

⁶³⁰ Ruth Scurr, *Fatal Purity: Robespierre and the French Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 267.

yet in her *mémoires*, Candeille again roundly denies participating in this event.⁶³¹ Preserving her reputation post-Revolution may again explain this discrepancy, but Candeille never denounced the fact that she was friendly with notable politicians from various parties during the Revolution.

4.3 Candeille, Abolitionism, and La Société des Amis des Noirs

We can be certain that Candeille was active within abolitionist circles, thus allowing us to see one side of her political beliefs. One of the *sociétés* that she belonged to was the Société des amis des noirs or the Amis des noirs.⁶³² She likely joined this group in the 1780s through her close friend, Olympe de Gouges, who was an active member, herself.⁶³³ In fact, according to historian Olivier Blanc, it was Candeille who introduced de Gouges to Vergniaud.⁶³⁴ The Amis des noirs was founded in Paris in 1788. Its goal was to abolish slavery in the French colonies and France's role within the Atlantic slave trade.⁶³⁵ This group was led by Jacques Pierre Brissot (1754-1793) who was also a prominent member of the Girondins. Some of its members included the Marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794), Jérôme Pétion de Villeneuve (1756-1794), and even the Marquis de La Fayette (1757-1834). In 1793, the society was disbanded, presumably because of its strong support

⁶³¹ See Henry Morse Stephens, *A History of the French Revolution* Volume 2 (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1886), 358; Sébastien Mercier, *Le Nouveau Paris*, new ed. Jean-Claude Bonnet (Paris: Mercure de France, 1994), 558; "Candeille, Réponse de Mme Simons-Candeille à un article de biographie, 17 juin 1817" (Paris: Gratiot, 1817).

⁶³² See Christine Ferret, *Amélie Julie Candeille et Girodet: la femme et l'artiste* (La Bibliothèque numérique de la BnF et de ses partenaires, 2021), Web, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/blog/30042021/amelie-julie-candeille-et-girodet-la-femme-et-lartiste?mode=desktop#block-commentsblock-comment-form-block>.

⁶³³ See Annie Vergne and Palmer, *Olympe de Gouges, a beacon of hope* (Paris: Harmattan, 2012), 14-15. For the relationship between Candeille and de Gouges, see Olivier Blanc, "Féminisme et politique: l'exemple d'Olympe de Gouges, 1789-1793," *Les Cahiers du CEDREF*, 2 (1996): 159-166; For their eventual falling out due to a rivalry on the stage, see Wendy Nielsen, *Women Warriors in Romantic Drama* (Newark: The University of Delaware Press, 2013), 59.

⁶³⁴ Blanc, "Féminisme et politique," 163.

⁶³⁵ For more on the Amis des Noirs and slavery in France directly before and during the French Revolution, see Marcel Koufinkana, *Les esclaves noirs en France sous l'ancien régime (XVI^e - XVIII^e siècles)* (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 2008); Jean-Daniel Piquet, *L'émancipation des noirs dans la révolution française, 1789-1795* (Paris: Karthala, 2002); Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, *Extremities: Painting Empire in Post-Revolutionary France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Sue Peabody, *There are No Slaves in France: The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Régime* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Anna Julia Cooper, *Slavery and the French and Haitian Revolutionists* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Incorporated, 2006).

amongst the Girondins, but many Montagnards, including Robespierre, were equally dedicated to abolishing slavery, which eventually was legally abolished in 1794.⁶³⁶

The Aims des noirs were known for publishing works on why *liberté, égalité and fraternité* should extend to the French colonies. Abolitionist literature formed a large part of their mandate.⁶³⁷ However, through the playwright Olympe de Gouges, theater also came to be one way this group promoted their political ideology. Her play *Zamore et Mirza, ou l'Heureux naufrage* (1784) or *L'Esclavage des Noirs* (1792) remains one of the most well-known French anti-slavery plays today.⁶³⁸

In 1784, Candeille performed the title role of Mirza in *Zamore et Mirza*.⁶³⁹ This play explores the story of two enslaved lovers, Zamore and Mirza who are on the run as Zamore killed his master. The two eventually find two Europeans who do everything within their power to save Zamore and Mirza from a shipwreck. In the play's preface, de Gouges directly speaks to slave owners asking in whose interest is slavery. She claims this play will help to promote justice and wisdom; two values, she declares, which are not present in the French colonies.⁶⁴⁰

Much more research is owed to this play, its creator, and the importance of abolitionist theater during the early French Revolution. What I wish to highlight is that Candeille's participation in such a controversial work likely suggests that she too shared similar beliefs with de Gouges regarding the French colonies, especially considering her membership in the Amis des

⁶³⁶ Piquet, *L'émancipation des noirs*, 48-58. For more on Robespierre and abolition see Hervé Leuwers, *Maximilien Robespierre* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2019), 178-179.

⁶³⁷ See Piquet, *L'émancipation des noirs*, 48-58.

⁶³⁸ For the performance histories of *Zamore et Mirza, ou l'Heureux naufrage* (1784) and *L'Esclavage des Noirs* (1792), see CÉSAR, https://cesar.huma-num.fr/cesar2/people/people.php?fct=edit&person_UID=100651.

⁶³⁹ Sophie Mousset, *Women's Rights and the French Revolution: A Biography of Olympe de Gouges* (Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 2011), 41.

⁶⁴⁰ Olympe de Gouges, *Zamore et Mirza, ou L'heureux naufrage : drame indien, en trois actes, et en prose* (Paris: Cailleau, 1788), Web, https://theatre-classique.fr/pages/pdf/GOUGES_EXCLAVAGEDESNOIRS.pdf, 4-5.

noirs.⁶⁴¹ Candeille's participation in this group, unlike her relationship with Verginaud or her role as a festival muse, was not contested in her *Mémoires*. This is important to note as while Napoleon I banned the slave trade in France in 1818, after he reinstated it in 1802, the Proclamation of the Abolition of Slavery in the French Colonies was only passed on 27 April 1848, after Candeille's death. Despite slavery still being legal in the Colonies, Candeille never faltered nor tried to renounce this belief in abolition.

4.4 The Politics of Hair, Fashion, and Womanhood

Aside from her affiliation with the Amis des noirs, it is difficult to determine how politically active Candeille was during the Revolution. From various engravings, we can be confident that she did accurately describe herself in her *Mémoires* when she stated that she had



Figure 4.1: Adelaïde Labille-Guiard "Portrait of Amelie-Julie Candeille (1767-1834), French opera singer and playwright," oil on canvas, 1791. Photo is Public Domain, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Am%C3%A9lie-Julie_Candeille#/media/File:Julie_Candeille.JPG.

"[d]e fort beaux cheveux blonds, les yeux bruns, la peau blanche, fine et transparente, [avec un] l'air doux et riant."⁶⁴² However, her appearance may be used to further suggest her own political leanings or at least how she wanted to self-fashion the duality of her public image. There is no known debate over Candeille's beauty, nor what her colouring or physical attributes were, but including "*de fort beaux cheveux blonds*" carries a particular significance when considering the eighteenth century, especially the years of the Terror.

⁶⁴¹ As an abolitionist play, *Zamore et Mirza, ou l'Heureux naufrage* (1784) was deemed controversial. For a discussion on this play's performance history, see John Cole, *Between the Queen and the Cabby: Olympe de Gouges's Rights of Woman* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), 11.

⁶⁴² "Strong, beautiful blonde hair, brown eyes, white skin, thin and transparent, with a soft and laughing air." Terrin, "Julie Candeille", 404.

Hair was highly politicized during the early Revolution. Free-flowing, unpowdered, natural hair became a symbol of Republican values.⁶⁴³ Rejecting powdering and more opulent hairstyles abandoned not only the *ancien régime*'s fashion preferences, but it also became part of a political symbol of values like the *sans-culottes*.⁶⁴⁴ As the portrait in Figure 4.1 from 1791 shows, Candeille was part of a Revolutionary fashion trend as her light, natural hair, which here is styled with a simple hat, is on display.⁶⁴⁵

Her higher-waisted empire gown adorned with a simple bow also reflects the simpler and more modern fashion styles of the early Revolution, as highlighted by art historian Amelia Rauser.⁶⁴⁶ The Revolution placed, as historian Clare Haru Crowston states, a heavy importance on the political messaging of one's clothing.⁶⁴⁷ Revolutionaries made an effort to "break completely with the Old Regime [through]... according serious consideration to installing an entirely new dress code."⁶⁴⁸ It was believed that French citizens could not put the horrors of the Old Regime behind them if they were "surrounded by visual reminders of it."⁶⁴⁹ Importantly, even the ideology behind "Enlightenment" thought and Republican Womanhood was manifested through clothing, the most important perhaps being the discovery of the female body through highlighting its shape via soft materials and lines; correspondingly, many women rejected wearing a stays, the precursor to the corset.⁶⁵⁰ One reason for this shift in silhouette to the simpler empire style is, according to

⁶⁴³ Nina Rattner Gelbart, "The Blonding of Charlotte Corday," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38, no. 1 (2004): 205.

⁶⁴⁴ Gelbart, "The Blonding of Charlotte Corday", 205.

⁶⁴⁵ For more on the change in fashion post-1789, see Madeleine Delpierre, *Dress in France in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 120-126.

⁶⁴⁶ Amelia Rauser, *The Age of Undress: Art, Fashion, and the Classical Ideal in the 1790s* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), 18.

⁶⁴⁷ Clare Haru Crowston, *Fabricating Women: The Seamstresses of Old Regime France, 1675–1791* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 30.

⁶⁴⁸ Crowston, *Fabricating Women*, 30.

⁶⁴⁹ Crowston, *Fabricating Women*, 30.

⁶⁵⁰ Judith Chazin-Bennahum, *The Lure of Perfection: Fashion and Ballet, 1780-1830* (London: Routledge, 2005), 98.

ballet historian Judith Chazin-Bennahum, due to maternal breastfeeding becoming the norm by the 1790s. A mother could more easily nurse in this style of dress compared to those of the 1780s.⁶⁵¹ It would likely be foolish to not place importance of Candeille's dress as we know fashion was highly political during the early Revolution.

However, free-flowing hair did not always indicate Republican values.⁶⁵² Men with long hair were often considered sensible, virtuous individuals who embodied strength in a comparable manner to Samson.⁶⁵³ Yet, for women, long, flowing hair carried complexities specific to their gender. On the one hand, women who displayed long hair were viewed as youthful, innocent creatures who exuded virtuous intent.⁶⁵⁴ Free-flowing hair was equally described as a feature women used to trick unsuspecting men into lust.⁶⁵⁵ Blonde or light-coloured hair further plays into this duality of virtue and temptation. Light hair was often assumed to symbolize brightness and purity, yet this was not always the case.

Charlotte Corday (1768-1793) provides a clear example of how blonde hair was used to denote women. Corday is described in numerous primary sources as being blonde, yet she was a brunette. Changing her hair colour was one way this controversial political figure was debased by the Montagnards.⁶⁵⁶ Signifying vanity and even deception, through the case of Corday, it becomes apparent that blondes could have been understood as cunning, deceitful women.⁶⁵⁷ Perhaps at the greatest detriment of all, blonde hair had also become synonymous with Marie-Antoinette.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵¹ For a discussion on the rise of maternal breastfeeding during the early French Revolution, see Chapter Two: Unspoiled Milk: Feeding the Nation through Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786).

⁶⁵² Gelbart, "The Blonding of Charlotte Corday", 205.

⁶⁵³ Gelbart, "The Blonding of Charlotte Corday", 205.

⁶⁵⁴ Gelbart, "The Blonding of Charlotte Corday", 205.

⁶⁵⁵ Gelbart, "The Blonding of Charlotte Corday", 205.

⁶⁵⁶ Gelbart, "The Blonding of Charlotte Corday", 205-210.

⁶⁵⁷ Gelbart, "The Blonding of Charlotte Corday", 210.

⁶⁵⁸ See Will Bashor, *Marie Antoinette's Head: The Royal Hairdresser, the Queen, and the Revolution* (Guilford: Lyons Press, 2013), 80.

Ever since her marriage to the dauphin of France in the early 1770s, Marie-Antoinette's hair was politicized.⁶⁵⁹ The idea of her hair embodying pure excess and frivolity was established long before the Revolution, as a private letter from Maria Theresa to her daughter from 1775 suggests.⁶⁶⁰ Encouraging her daughter to become more modest with her hair choices, Maria Theresa stressed the importance that a "pretty young queen full of charms has no need of all these follies" and a "simple hairstyle suites her better."⁶⁶¹ We know that this advice was not followed as the Queen's elaborate hairstyles and heavy use of powder to make her hair even lighter became one of the ultimate representations of the *ancien régime*, as it was commonly debased and ridiculed in pornographic engravings of the Queen during the early French Revolution.⁶⁶²

Having blonde, long hair clearly does not automatically suggest that Candeille would have been viewed in a comparable manner to Marie-Antoinette or Corday. I raise the duality of blonde hair's ability to simultaneously symbolize integrity and virtue yet equally deceit, frivolity, and promiscuity as one way of clearly understanding the social climate of contradictions women faced in early Revolutionary France.

The double bind women encountered during the eighteenth century is central to most feminist historical interpretations of the early Revolution. For historian Susannah Wilson, a

⁶⁵⁹ For examples of satirical images of the Queen's hair, see James McCammon, *The Empress Has No Clothes: The Political Pornography of Marie Antoinette and the French Revolution* (2014) Web, <https://jamesmccammon.com/2014/04/04/the-empress-has-no-clothes-the-political-pornography-of-marie-antoinette-and-the-french-revolution/>.

⁶⁶⁰ See Maria Theresa, *Marie-Antoinette: Correspondance Secrète Entre Marie-Thérèse et Le Cte de Mercy-Argenteau, Publ. Avec Une Intr. et Des Notes Par A. d'Arneth et A. Geffroy*, Volume 2 (Oxford: Oxford University, 1874).

⁶⁶¹ Theresa, *Marie-Antoinette*, 306. "De meme je ne peux m'empecher de vous toucher un point que bien des gazettes me repetent trop souvent: c'est la parure dont vous vous servez; on la dit depuis la racine des cheveux 36 pouces de haut, et avec tant de plumes et rubans que relèvent cela! Vous savez que j'étais toujours d'opinion de suivre les modes modérément, mais de ne jamais les outrer. Une jolie reine, pleine d'agrèments, n'a pas besoin de toutes ces folies; au contraire, la simplicité de la parure fait mieux paraître, et est plus adaptable au rang de reine. Celle-ci doit donner le ton, et tout le monde s'empressera de cœur à suivre même vos petits travers..."

⁶⁶² Will Bashor, *Marie Antoinette's Darkest Days: Prisoner No. 280 in the Conciergerie* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016), 241.

woman was forced “either to surrender her sexuality—becoming not masculine, but a surrogate male—or to be feminine and female, and hence to fail to count as a genius”.⁶⁶³ Or, as Adriana Craciun notes, women faced a contradiction of agency, as their power was both “produced by and resistant to power.”⁶⁶⁴ However, I wish to complicate matters and focus on how womanhood itself during the Revolution was filled with unsolvable contradictions. How women, particularly those like Candeille during the Terror, were faced with using their femininity as the only means to be granted access into more public spaces despite this very sense of femininity being what excluded them from public life in the first place.⁶⁶⁵ The connection Candeille held with prominent politicians suggests that in some sense, she used her feminine role as a muse who required men to protect her as the means to grant her own agency as a composer. As historian Joan Scott declares, women had only paradoxes to offer.⁶⁶⁶

4.5 Catherine’s Gauze and Silk

The politics of fashion are equally present in *Catherine, ou la belle fermière* through Catherine’s costuming. In a review from the *L’Esprit des journaux français et étrangers* (1793), a revealing remark about Catherine is mentioned:

*[c]’est son costume, qui, mêlé de gaze & de soie, n’étoit pas celui d’une paysanne. Il est étonnant qu’une femme dont l’esprit est si cultivé, n’ait pas senti l’inconvénient d’un pareil contre-sens.*⁶⁶⁷

The anxiety over a non-authentic costume appears to have greatly disturbed this reviewer and it follows that this lapse in faithfulness to a peasant’s dress may have distracted from the opera’s

⁶⁶³ Susannah Wilson, “Gender, Genius, and the Artist’s Double Bind: The Letters of Camille Claudel, 1880–1910,” *The Modern Language Review* 112, no. 2 (April 2017): 365.

⁶⁶⁴ Adriana Craciun, *Fatal Women of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 48.

⁶⁶⁵ See Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man*.

⁶⁶⁶ Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, in particular 161–170.

⁶⁶⁷ “It is her costume, which, mixed with gauze and silk, was not that of a peasant. It is astonishing that a woman whose mind is so cultivated did not feel the inconvenience of such a misunderstanding.” *L’Esprit des journaux français et étrangers*, 1793, volume III, 322–327.

overall truthfulness. Yet, when we consider the social climate of 1793, perhaps further significance reveals itself regarding this opera’s costuming in relation to the Terror’s political climate.

According to Figures 4.2 and 4.3, Catherine’s costume appears to reflect the *ancien régime*’s style. While pre-1789 saw the “padded and puffed look”, —meaning “dilated hips, especially achieved through panniers” and tightly corseted waists—fashion moved towards more streamlined, thin, and transparent silhouettes in the 1790s.⁶⁶⁸ As discussed above, Catherine’s costume in these two engravings appears to not be in the more modern empire style. This reviewer’s anxiety over the costuming being made of silk equally suggests that this outfit aligned more with earlier fashion styles as, by the 1790s, linen or printed cotton, especially for peasant dresses, was the norm; silk was for the rich.⁶⁶⁹



Figure 4.2: Amélie-Julie Candeille (1767-1834) acting in *Catherine ou la Belle Fermière* on the stage of the Théâtre-Français, Collection Comédie-Française, Paris. Anonymous artist, engraving, 1792. Photo by Public Domain.



Figure 4.3: *Catherine, ou La belle fermière*, comédie de Julie Candeille: costume de Rose Dupuis (Catherine). Maleuvre (Paris). Atelier. Graveur. Hauteceur Martinet (Paris), 1818. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Arts du spectacle, ASP 4-ICO. Photo by Bibliothèque nationale de France.

⁶⁶⁸ Oriole Cullen, *Furniture, Textiles and Fashion Department*, Victoria and Albert Museum, *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, The Metropolitan Museum, Web, https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/eudr/hd_eudr.htm; Pooja Khurana, *Introduction to Fashion Technology* (New Delhi: Laxmi Publications Pvt Limited, 2007), 5.

⁶⁶⁹ Aileen Ribeiro, *Fashion in the French Revolution* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1988). 76-83.

The cross around Catherine's neck in both the 1792 and 1818 engravings may additionally suggest a strong anti-Revolutionary sentiment. Catholicism, and essentially any formal religious practise, was strictly forbidden during the early Revolution.⁶⁷⁰ All external religious symbols were prohibited.⁶⁷¹ It was only in 1795 that individuals became again free to practise their faith, three years after *Catherine's* first performance. And yet, there were blurred lines when it came to women practising their faith during the Terror. While there was a general dechristianization of society during the early Revolution, women seemed to escape some of the pressure men faced to reject Catholicism, or they were at least less likely to be condemned for publicly holding religious beliefs.⁶⁷² Remarkably, there was even some tolerance towards women resorting to physical violence to advocate for the right to practise their religion. In Burgundy, women rioted outside the municipal council to demand the release of two priests, while in Chablis, women used force to protect sacred objects from being removed and destroyed at Sainte Pierre in 1793.⁶⁷³ Men would even occasionally dress as women to go out and protest religious intolerance as this meant that they were less likely to be arrested.⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁷⁰ Noah Shusterman, *The French Revolution: Faith, Desire and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 242.

⁶⁷¹ Shusterman, *The French Revolution*, 242.

⁶⁷² Catherine Théot is one such example. This religious visionary, who said she was "given to God from infancy" and that the French Revolution was God's will, has a fascinating history. She is often spoken about regarding Robespierre's fall as it was a supposed letter—which she sent to the politician—that declared Robespierre the new John the Baptist. This ultimately allowed Robespierre's political enemies to call for his execution. For an in-depth look at how Catherine Théot was involved in Robespierre's death, see *Archives de France*, T604², *Archives de France*, F⁷4737, *Archives de France*, F⁷4775²⁷ *Archives de France* F⁷4739. For Catherine Théot's complete biography, see Albert Mathiez, *Contributions à l'histoire religieuse de la Révolution française* (Paris: Publisher unknown, 1907), 107-142; Albert Mathiez, "Robespierre et Le Procès de Catherine Théot," *Annales Historiques de La Révolution Française*, no. 34 (1929): 392–97. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41923868>, 397.

⁶⁷³ See Archives départementales (AD) Yonne L1118, PVs du comité révolutionnaire d'Auxerre, 28 & 29 nivôses an III (17 & 18 January 1795); AD Yonne L712, Pétition des habitants de Courson au municipalité, 11 brumaire an III (1 November 1794); AD Yonne L209, Lettre de l'administration cantonale de La Ferté à l'administration départementale de l'Yonne & PV du canton de La Ferté, 20 floréal an IV (9 May 1796).

⁶⁷⁴ See "Pétition des habitants d'Avallon ont l'administration départementale de l'Yonne", (Novembre 1791), AD Yonne L716, "Lettre de la municipalité de Pallaye à l'agent national du district d'Auxerre," (14 pluviôse an III) (2 February 1795); "Arrête de Guillemardet, représentant du peuple", 21 nivôses an III (10 January 1795); AN C341, "Arrête de la Convention nationale", 4 prairial an III.

Historian Suzanne Desan explores these occurrences and, according to the scholar, women were granted religious leniency for a multitude of reasons but mostly because Revolutionaries believed religion would only serve to strengthen female morality, which in turn could be used to civilize French society.⁶⁷⁵ While it is tempting to assume that women who held onto and fought for their Catholic faith were all counterrevolutionaries, this was not necessarily the case. Many women claimed the Revolution's core values and ideology validated their very right to freely practise their religion, and thus they became advocates for the new Republic.⁶⁷⁶ The varied political backgrounds of women who remained practising Catholics muddles the significance of Candeille's choice to have Catherine wear a religious symbol. Through, I do believe it is fair to suggest that the cross's addition at least signifies something important about the young milkmaid's virtuousness.

4.6 The Théâtre de la République

Turning towards the opera itself, *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* premiered at the newly erected Théâtre de la République, previously known as the Comédie-Française on 27 December 1792. It was no coincidence that this opera premiered at this theatre. Located on the rue Richelieu in the 1^{er} arrondissement, the Théâtre de la République had become a site of women's artistic realization and achievement during the 1790s; actors Madame Desgarcins (1769-1797), Mademoiselle Fleury (1766-1818), Mademoiselle Lange (1772-1816), and Mademoiselle Mars (1779- 1847) were all made *sociétaires* of this troupe, a progressive honour which meant that they too were given a pro-rata salary based upon the entire company's success.⁶⁷⁷ This remuneration

⁶⁷⁵ Suzanne Desan, "The Role of Women in Religious Riots During the French Revolution," *Eighteenth-Century Studies Special Issue: The French Revolution in Culture* 22, no. 3 (Spring 1989): 462.

⁶⁷⁶ Desan, "The Role of Women in Religious Riots," 452.

⁶⁷⁷ Barry V. Daniels and Jacqueline Razgonnikoff, *Patriotes En Scène Le Théâtre de La République, 1790-1799: Un Épisode Méconnu de l'histoire de La Comédie-Française* (Patriotes en scène le Théâtre de la République, 1790-1799: un épisode méconnu de l'histoire de la Comédie-Française, 2007), 105.

was exclusively granted to women in comic opera, not at the Opéra as discussed in Chapter One.⁶⁷⁸ It is this theatre's political history that made it truly Revolutionary when compared to other Parisian troupes, especially those which sprung up post the Le Chapelier Law of 1791.

As its name suggests, the Théâtre de la République was a product of its time. It had separated from the Comédie-Française in 1789 precisely because of its operators and owners' political beliefs. Indeed, the Comédie-Française chose the overtly pro-Republican and newly renowned French actor François-Joseph Talma to play the lead in Marie-Joseph Chénier's (1764-1811) anti-monarchical play, *Charles IX* (1789).⁶⁷⁹ This is the same actor who introduced Candeille to Marat at the salon for Dumouriez. Talma's brilliant portrayal caused immense disturbances throughout Paris, as this play focused on the monarchy's failure surrounding the brutal events of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572. As previously mentioned, this historic event was an important tool for Revolutionaries as it induced sentiments of personal sacrifice for eventual communal gains. Regardless, Talma felt it necessary to leave the Comédie-Française and establish his own troupe due to the immense fallout arising from his role in *Charles IX* and the anti-monarchy sentiment it subsequently attached to his name.⁶⁸⁰ From the moment of its tumultuous birth, the Théâtre de la République was entangled in Republican policy and controversy, and many Parisians at the time would have considered it a political by-product of the Revolution.

⁶⁷⁸ See section 1.4 "Women in French Opera" in Chapter One: Historiography and Criticism of *Opéra-Comique* and Gender during the Early French Revolution.

⁶⁷⁹ Focusing on the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572, *Charles IX* has captured scholar's interest despite its rather mundane text as this play is often thought to have acted as a catalyst for the events of 1789 and for the Revolution itself. See Paul Friedland, *Political Actors Representative Bodies and Theatricality in the Age of the French Revolution*, 265–66.

⁶⁸⁰ For more information on Talma and the creation of the Théâtre de la République, see Herbert F. Collins, *Talma, a Biography of an Actor* (London: Faber & Faber, 1964).

4.7 Reworking *La bergère des Alpes* (1766)

Catherine, ou La belle fermière, like André Grétry's *Lucile* (1769), *Zémire et Azor* (1771), *L'Ami de la maison* (1771), and *Sylvain* (1770), is based upon a retelling of a well-known *conte moral* by Jean-François Marmontel (1723-1799).⁶⁸¹ Candeille's reworking of *La bergère des Alpes* (1766) includes not only a change of occupation, from a shepherdess to a dairy farmer, but also a new, more empowered lead character. While Marmontel's version focuses on a woman who has become a victim of circumstance—a shepherdess who is truly dominated—Candeille's reworking managed to create a more radical, assertive, perhaps even feminist lead character who remains in control throughout her life.

Catherine's shift in occupation to be a milkmaid is very important. As perhaps one of the most obvious evocations of the pastoral, the shepherdess had become synonymous with mid-eighteenth-century upper-class culture.⁶⁸² Specifically, the Savoyard theme with its Alpine valleys and its simple love story between the naïve shepherdess and steadfast shepherd had become increasingly popular through Rousseau's *Le devin du village* (1752) and the Favarts's parodie, *Les amours de Bastien et Bastienne* (1753). Marmontel was clearly influenced by these works when he wrote his own pastoral Alpine work, *La bergère des Alpes*, a few years later in 1759. However, within literature and on the stage, these versions of the shepherdess were often rather sanitized; no real labour was ever depicted. Rather, these women tended to their sheep without incident and rested in the countryside while falling in love. From a marketing standpoint, the shepherdess was

⁶⁸¹ For the complete performance histories of *Zémire et Azor* (1771), *L'Ami de la maison* (1771), and *Sylvain* (1770), See CÉSAR, https://cesar.humanum.fr/cesar2/people/people.php?fct=edit&person_UOID=100668.

⁶⁸² See Carolina Brown, "Portraits En Savoyarde and the Shepherdess of the Alps: Portraits, Prints, Literature and Fashion in Eighteenth-Century Sweden," *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift/Journal of Art History* 82, no. 3 (2013): 235–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00233609.2013.804004>.

indeed intended for upper-class consumption; it was not popularized for portraying the lived realities of rural women's hard labour.⁶⁸³

Prominent French women often aligned themselves with these sanitized pastoral worlds,



Figure 4.4 Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806), *L'Escarpolette*, oil on canvas, London: Wallace Collection, c.1767. Photo by The Wallace Collection, Fair Use under Creative Commons CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0 (Unported) licence, web.<https://www.wallacecollection.org/collection/les-hazards-heureux-de-lescarpolette-swing/>.

normally through portraits where they too were dressed as a shepherdess. Jean-Honoré Fragonard's (1732-1806)'s *L'Escarpolette* (1767) is perhaps the most famous example of the aristocracy's embracement of the passive shepherdess. In this painting, the elegant, carefree woman is swinging while two men gaze up towards her.⁶⁸⁴ Importantly, she is wearing a *bergère* or shepherd hat—a straw flat-brimmed hat normally adorned with a simple ribbon.⁶⁸⁵ The *bergère* hat became the height of fashion in the 1760s as it furthered the cleansed, moralistic, and virtuous role of the beautiful and often passive pastoral figure.⁶⁸⁶

Candeille's Catherine is anything but passive, though. Through transforming this character from a shepherdess to a farmer, which we can deduce as a milkmaid due to the opera's costuming

⁶⁸³ Sarah R. Cohen, "Body as 'Character' in Early Eighteenth-Century French Art and Performance," *The Art Bulletin* 78 no.3 (1996): 454-466, 458.

⁶⁸⁴ For the complete history of this painting, see Allen Farber, *Fragonard's The Happy Accidents of the Swing* (New York: State University of New York at Oneonta, 2006).

⁶⁸⁵ Valerie Cumming and C.W. Cunningham, *The Dictionary of Fashion History* (Rev., updated ed.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2022, 131.

⁶⁸⁶ Crystal G. Herman, *Period Reproduction Buckram Hats: The Costumer's Guide* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2015), 65-78.

and the work's location setting in the Alpes, Candeille rejects much of the submissive shepherdess' stereotypes.⁶⁸⁷ With her "hygienic picturesqueness" and "bountiful lactation", the milkmaid carries a very different pastoral significance.⁶⁸⁸ Aside from the obvious connection to virility, milkmaids suggest a more realistic connotation of domestic labour. No longer passively laying against a tree in a meadow, the harsh domestic duties of these women farmers cannot be ignored. In essence, "dairying was the most economically valuable and the most arduous form of women's agricultural work" and this offered a certain prestige while simultaneously signifying the working class.⁶⁸⁹ Perhaps by reimagining Catherine within this realm of the hard-working, Third Estate dairy farmer, Candeille was aligning herself with fellow Parisian working-class women like the *poissardes*. If nothing else, this occupation change does at least further the early Revolution's connection between Republican Womanhood, virtue, and milk.⁶⁹⁰

However, it is far too simplistic to suggest that this dismissal of the shepherdess should be read exclusively as a pro-Revolutionary, pro-Third Estate reworking. As explored through Florine Dezède's opera *Lucette et Lucas*, the increasing popularity of French pleasure or ornamental dairies suggests that we cannot overlook the late eighteenth-century connection between milk and aristocratic female power.⁶⁹¹ As an entirely feminine domain, the pleasure dairy was a liminal space where female authority and sexuality were not only upheld but championed. Often found within larger gardens and as separate buildings, pleasure dairies provided necessary escapism for aristocratic women to enter a sanitized and elevated world of dairy farming for pure enjoyment.

⁶⁸⁷ See Figures 4.2 and 4.3, respectively.

⁶⁸⁸ Donna Landry, *The Muses of Resistance: Laboring-Class Women's Poetry in Britain, 1739-1796* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 26.

⁶⁸⁹ Landry, *The Muses of Resistance*, 26.

⁶⁹⁰ For more on the politicization of milk and Republican Womanhood, see Chapter Two: Unspoiled Milk: Feeding the Nation Through Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786).

⁶⁹¹ See Chapter Three: Beyond the Dairy: Employing Gendered Pastoralism in Florine Dezède's *Lucette et Lucas* (1781).

As independent structures, “the idealization and ornamentation of dairies within the garden space enhanced their imaginative distinction and allowed them to become spaces that were both sacred and sexual, pious and pagan.”⁶⁹² While these spaces were the ideal location for women to practice acceptable modes of femininity, because these spaces were exclusive for women, the male gaze became restricted and, as a result, they were deemed mysterious, perhaps even subversive domains. As with many elements within *Catherine, ou La belle fermière*, even the lead character cannot be read as pro-Jacobin or pro-monarchy.

4.8 Catherine as a Redemptive Figure

Catherine, ou La belle fermière begins with Catherine’s servant Fanchette speaking to Henri, the valet to Fierval. The two declare Catherine’s innate goodness, an important reoccurring theme of the opera, and they quickly discuss the marriage that will likely take place between Fierval, a wealthy man of low moral status, and the Marquise’s daughter, Elise. While admitting their own feelings for each other and their desire to eventually wed, Fanchette and Henri introduce the audience to Lussan, a highly sensitive man, who is supposedly of lower birth. By the second scene, the audience becomes aware of Lussan’s, who is now disguised as a peasant named Charles’, admiration for Catherine. Despite Catherine’s hostile, public decree against men and marriage, Fanchette decides to assist Lussan in his pursuit.

The Marquise informs her daughter that she must wed and both Fierval and Lussan are presented as options. There is little interest on the part of Lussan, so Elise reluctantly states that her husband shall have to be Fierval. The young woman is infuriated at Lussan’s lack of interest, and she informs her mother that she is scared Fierval will also grow distant if there is no

⁶⁹² Ashlee Whitaker, “Dairy Culture: Industry, Nature and Liminality in the Eighteenth-Century and Liminality in the Eighteenth-Century English Ornamental Dairy,” *Brigham Young University - Provo* (blog), 2008, 6, <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2326&context=etd>.

competition for her hand in marriage. Both the Marquise and Catherine quickly condemn this thinking, and this moment serves as the first glimmer of a more feminist take on Marmontel's original story. When Fierval arrives, he behaves in an abhorrent manner as he flirts with various women, including Catherine; his wicked nature begins to shine. Catherine takes notice and while Fierval publicly tries to hasten his marriage with Elise, Catherine speaks about the dangers of women losing their freedom to unworthy men. When her own life is mentioned, Catherine responds by singing a harrowing retelling of a young, married woman who is abandoned and reduced to poverty all because she fell in love with a dishonourable and undeserving man. Despite her obvious intent to inform those who are listening that she wishes to remain single, Fierval becomes infatuated with the farmer.

The setting quickly shifts to a farmhouse where Catherine is concerned that Charles, who has now volunteered to organize her finances, is missing. While waiting for his arrival, Catherine asks Fanchette about Henri and her attachment to this valet. Fanchette announces that she wishes to marry, but Catherine is quick to reject this notion; the farmer reprimands her maid and forbids the union as it would mean a potential loss of personal freedom for her young servant. Again, the discussion of a woman's freedom is a rather feminist remark.

Charles eventually arrives and he begins to approach Catherine. However, the farmer begins to play her harp as she sings about love's necessity yet inherent disappointments. Charles approaches Catherine, as he is overcome with love, and he tells her of his longing for a moral woman, yet the farmer takes care to distance herself from these advances. She begins to explain why she is so distrustful of men in her *romance*, "Aux temps organaux." After sharing her life story of abuse at the hand of her wicked husband, Catherine is approached by Henri who brings a seductive letter from his master intended for Catherine. Henri, Fanchette, and Charles all remark

on Fierval's despicability, as he should be faithful to his eventual wife Elise, but Catherine appears unworried; to her, she declares, he is simply behaving like a man.

The mysterious older character of Boniface d'Orneville quickly appears on the stage, accompanied by Henri, who brought the elderly man inside the farmhouse as his carriage broke down. Boniface explains that he is looking for his sister and his niece, the Marquise and Elise respectively. Fierval quickly enters the stage, and he bluntly interrupts the informal gathering as he has yet to receive a written response from Catherine. When the atrocious Fierval notices Charles, he purposefully reveals that Charles is in fact Lussan, a wealthy gentleman. Catherine, overcome with disappointment and distrust, feels a deep sense of betrayal, from both Lussan and Fanchette, but Lussan assures her that he only hid his identity out of true love for the farmer. It does not matter; Catherine exclaims that all men are the same and, in a direct breaking of the fourth wall to the audience, she reveals that her husband was the son of Boniface, although only the audience is aware of this connection for the time being as Catherine never actually met her late husband's father.

The last act begins with Elise and Fierval at a party for their upcoming marriage, yet Elise appears to be more preoccupied with the new knowledge that Lussan loves Catherine than she is with her own impending nuptial. Overcome with jealousy, Elise declares that she no longer welcomes Catherine's services, and she informs her mother that it must have been Catherine who seductively stole Lussan away as no man could naturally resist Elise's allure. Boniface, who is not easily convinced by this explanation, draws up an agreement with an unknown condition which is signed by Fierval and Elise. In a private conversation between Catherine and Boniface, the farmer shares Fierval's letter and she stresses that she must depart the village as this is the only way she can maintain her modesty and avoid Fierval's advances. Boniface wishes to understand why

Catherine fears marriage, and the farmer beings to share her life story with the older man who quickly realizes their connection. His son was indeed Catherine's late abusive husband. Boniface apologizes on his son's behalf, and he promises to restore Catherine's wealth to rectify her hardship.

The opera concludes with Fierval's wickedness finally being revealed, and the clause which Boniface included in the engagement contract is exposed; Fierval's contract with Elise may be annulled on the grounds of deception by either party. As everyone has gathered for a wedding, Catherine and Lussan decide that it should be them who wed and, now that the truth has been restored and Elise has apologized to Catherine, the two decide to bestow the farm to Fanchette who is set to marry Henri in a double wedding. The opera concludes with a final vaudeville and, rather remarkably, this is the first time the characters sing, apart from Catherine.

A review from the *Mercure français historique, politique et littéraire* in 1793 exclaimed that the opera was a massive success, despite its supposedly complicated plot.⁶⁹³ The reviewer notes that the opera was *un peu romanesque* and that Catherine was a tad too metaphysical, with the story being *celui des livres de morale*.⁶⁹⁴ Despite this, the opera was still described as hugely successful mainly because of its sentimental second and third acts, which are entirely based on revealing the truth and committing to one's own ideals. Candaille's honest portrayal of Catherine and her character's sheer courage are praised in this review as these qualities shine best in the opera's second half.

Another review, this time a year later in 1793 from the *L'Esprit des journaux français et étrangers*, suggests a similar interpretation. The plot is mentioned, and the unrealistic ability of Lussan to conceal his identity is rightfully challenged. Yet, again, the supposedly "pure" second

⁶⁹³ *Mercure français historique, politique et littéraire*, no. 7, 7 janvier 1793, 49-50.

⁶⁹⁴ "a little too romantic", "that from books about morals." From *Mercure français historique*, 49-50.

and third acts are celebrated.⁶⁹⁵ Candeille's portrayal of Catherine is deemed to be the highlight of this production where it was “*impossible de voir un ensemble plus satisfaisant & une exécution mieux soignée.*”⁶⁹⁶

4.9 Marriage as a Revolutionary Act

Marriage and love are central themes in this opera, yet it is the concept of egalitarian unions, of equal partnership, which drives the story and makes it different from that of Marmontel. While I agree with those who have suggested that Catherine's stance on financial independence and marriage is progressive for its time, its resemblance to Republican attitudes towards marriage aligns, thus allowing for the argument that Candeille's opera was less ahead of its time and more in line with discourses of the early Revolution.⁶⁹⁷ One of the greatest markers of the early 1790s for women's lives was the Loi autorisant le divorce en France, enacted on 20 September 1792. For the first time, husbands and wives could divorce without cause, on equal terms, and with the property divided amongst both parties. In Rouen alone, from 1792-1803 there were between 38,000 to 50,000 legal separations.⁶⁹⁸ By no longer needing a reason aside from one's desire to divorce, such as adultery, which was previously the only grounds for legal separation during the *ancien régime*, compatibility was now a central point of marriage discussions.⁶⁹⁹ As such, the Revolutionary idea that there should now be, at least theoretically, genuine love or mutual companionship between both parties was celebrated.⁷⁰⁰ Catherine seems to embody this belief as

⁶⁹⁵ *L'Esprit des journaux français et étrangers*, 1793, volume III, 322-327.

⁶⁹⁶ “Impossible to see a more satisfying ensemble or a better execution.” From *L'Esprit des journaux*, 322-327.

⁶⁹⁷ See Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 33.

⁶⁹⁸ See Roderick Phillips, *Family Breakdowns in Late Eighteenth-Century France: Divorces in Rouen, 1792-1803* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

⁶⁹⁹ Historian Antony Copley explores Republican speeches that addressed divorce in Revolutionary France. See Antony Copley, *Sexual Moralities in France, 1780-1800: New Ideas on the Family, Divorce, and Homosexuality: An Essay on Moral Change* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1989), 35.

⁷⁰⁰ Edward Behrend-Martínez, *A Cultural History of Marriage in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021), Chapter Six “Love, Sex, and Sexuality, 1650-1800.

she not only refrains from entering another unequal union, but she even forbids her maid from doing the same.

This is perhaps the opera's most progressive element; it is an unmarried woman who forbids marriage, both her own and her servant's. A woman usurping the father or head of the household's role by restricting a union truly separates this opera from earlier *opéra-comiques* like André Grétry's *Lucile* (1771), where Lucile's union must be approved by her father-in-law, or in *L'amant jaloux* (1778), where Léonore's father forbids her to marry at the opera's start.⁷⁰¹ The reason such a bold choice could have been included is due to this shifting culture around marriage in the early 1790s. However, one must be careful to not assume that this meant that wives were considered equal to their husbands, a notion which was only proposed by more radical thinkers like Olympe de Gouges.⁷⁰² Rather, the progressiveness of France allowing divorce for the first time revolved around the fact that husbands and wives could initiate the legal procedure as forcing individuals to remain in an unhappy union was seen to restrict one's individual liberty.⁷⁰³

In theory, the idea of celebrating a woman who rejects marriage and determines her own fate neatly supports other philosophical thoughts regarding liberty during the early Revolution.⁷⁰⁴ It was not that marriage was completely rejected, but that for civic morality to ensue, marriage had

⁷⁰¹ See André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry *Lucile* (1771). Libretto by Jean-François Marmontel (Brussels: Breitkopf & Haertel, 1771); André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry *L'amant jaloux* (1778). Libretto by Thomas d' Hèle (Brussels: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1778).

⁷⁰² In Olympe de Gouge's *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen* (1791), the idea is proposed that "Woman is born free and remains equal to man in rights". This feminist manifesto is a direct parallel to *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789). De Gouge's exchange of "woman" for "man" was largely ridiculed and, ultimately, she went to the guillotine in 1793. See Lynn Hunt, *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History*, (Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1996), 124–129.

⁷⁰³ Linda Frey and Marsha Frey, *The French Revolution* (London: Greenwood Press, 2004), 142.

⁷⁰⁴ In Rousseau's *Émile*, he states "'As the true nurse is the mother, the true preceptor is the father. Let them be in agreement both about the order of their functions and about their system; let the child pass from the hands of the one into those of the other. He will be better raised by a judicious and limited father than by the cleverest master in the world'; and a bit later, 'A father when he engenders and feeds children, does with that only a third of his task. He owes to his species men; he owes to society sociable men; he owes to the state citizens ... He who cannot fulfill the duties of a father has no right to become one.'" Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile*, ed. A. Bloom (New York, 1979), 48–9.

to be a mutually beneficial union and one which ultimately resulted in a more just and moral man.

This is best exemplified through Robespierre's declaration that marriage was

a fertile source of virtues; it ties the heart to thousands of worthy objects, it accustoms it to the gentle passions, to honest sentiments. It is a rule derived from Nature herself; when one becomes a father, one generally becomes a more honest man...A wife, children are powerful ties which bind a servant to the duties of his estate; they are precious guarantors of fidelity and submission. I do not know why one would prefer to servants of this type, isolated beings in whom the independence of bachelorhood seems to encourage rebelliousness and licence.⁷⁰⁵

Should a man not be willing to become a "servant to the duties of his estate" and reject bachelorhood, marriage's societal purpose and political importance to encourage a sense of civic devotion could be lost. It is in these situations that Revolutionaries tended to reject the idea of marriage as it was not serving its social purpose. Conceivably, Catherine's wicked first husband can be read through this category. His abuse disallows himself and Catherine from obtaining personal liberty. Rather, Catherine's declaration to remain single until an honourable man with whom she can encourage "honest sentiments" aligns with the thought behind Robespierre's concept of societally useful marriages.

And yet, despite being played by Candeille and having some autobiographical elements, Catherine is entirely a fictional character. She can reject male advances and focus on mutual love and the benefits of a happy marriage precisely because she is not tied to the realities of the real world. The operatic stage offers a refuge to explore what an emancipated, empowered French woman who will only marry within the boundaries of this virtuous, ideal type of marriage might have looked like. As this project has explored, many women-created operas empower their fictional characters to embrace Revolutionary concepts without directly challenging women's real

⁷⁰⁵ McPhee, *Robespierre: A Revolutionary Life*, 43.

role within society. The idea of a character rejecting marriage is rather different from an actual woman doing so, who was still very much a figure of anxiety during the early Revolution.⁷⁰⁶

Divorces sharply decreased during the late years of the Revolution and ultimately, divorce was abolished in 1816 with the monarchy's return.⁷⁰⁷ While it is outside of this chapter's scope to address the performance history of *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* post the Terror, it is interesting that this idea of mutual marriage and compatibility was still being shown on Parisian stages long after divorce was made illegal again. Considering Candelle was open to divorce—she broke off her marriage to Citizen Laroche on 11 February 1798 to marry Jean Simons that same year—I do not believe it is a stretch to understand this opera through its political messaging regarding marriage.⁷⁰⁸

4.10 Revolutionary Authenticity and Liberation through Sensibility

While marriage is a central theme of the opera, at its heart, *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* is ultimately about authenticity, personal liberty, truth over deception, self-sacrifice, rallying against those who are vicious, and challenging tyranny. It is a reworked story about a virtuous milkmaid who believes in freedom, and she spends her life demonstrating inner strength to reject advances that would otherwise compromise her oath to self-sufficiency and happiness. The theme of the self-sacrificing woman is not unique to Candelle's opera nor to operas of the early

⁷⁰⁶ Susan Foley, *Women in France Since 1789* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), especially Introduction: The French Revolution and Gender Politics—Creating a World of Difference, 1-25.

⁷⁰⁷ For scholarship of the Loi autorisant le divorce en France, see Dominique Dessertine, *Divorcer à Lyon: Sous la Révolution et Empire* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1981); Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*; Suzanne Desan, *The Family on Trial in Revolutionary France*; Tracey Rizzo, *A Certain Emancipation of Women: Gender, Citizenship and the Causes Célèbres of Eighteenth-Century France* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2005); Jennifer Ngai Heuer, *The Family and the Nation: Gender and Citizenship in Revolutionary France, 1789–1830* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

⁷⁰⁸ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 103.

Revolution.⁷⁰⁹ For example, in André Grétry and Michel-Jean Sedaine's *Le Comte d'Albert* (1786), the Countess is shaped through her self-sacrifice.⁷¹⁰ However, I believe there is one clear distinction which must be highlighted. Self-sacrifice during the Revolution was, according to historian Marisa Linton, no longer viewed under the classical tradition as a harsh, agonizing choice.⁷¹¹ Rather, it was understood that natural virtue was in fact needed for personal liberation and happiness.⁷¹²

This is reflected in another of Robespierre's speeches, this time from his address to the Convention on November 18, 1793.

This great purity of the French Revolution's fundamental elements, the very sublimity of its objective, is precisely what creates our strength and our weakness: our strength, because it gives us the victory of truth over deception...our weakness, because it rallies against us all men who are vicious, all those who in their hearts plan to despoil the people, and all those who have despoiled them and want impunity, and those who reject liberty as a personal calamity, and those who have embraced the revolution as a livelihood and the Republic as if it were an object of prey...⁷¹³

The line which strikes me most is "...and those who reject liberty as a personal calamity" as this reflects what Linton describes. Liberty can only result from personal loss and distress, a calamity. Heroism, in the early Revolution under this ideology, was not about surrendering oneself for another's benefit but to surrender oneself to the nation to have a liberated France; to become

⁷⁰⁹ For example, see André Grétry's *Richard Cœur de Lion* (1784), Nicolas Dalayrac's *Raoul sire de Créqui* (1789) and Luigi Cherubini's *Lodoviska* (1791) which all feature strong women who attempt to free their captured husbands.

⁷¹⁰ David Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 271.

⁷¹¹ Linton, *Choosing Terror*, 25.

⁷¹² Linton, *Choosing Terror*, 25.

⁷¹³ Richard Bienvenu, *The Ninth of Thermidor: The Fall of Robespierre* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 32–49. Translated from *Rapport sur les principes de morale politique qui doivent guider la Convention nationale dans l'administration intérieure de la République, fait au nom du Comité de salut public, le 18 [sic] pluviôse, l'an 2^e de la République par Maximilien Robespierre. Imprimé par ordre de la Convention nationale* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, n.d.), 31.

truly free.⁷¹⁴ In *Le Comte d'Albert*, the Countess shows great bravery to appear to release her husband from prison. She is depicted as “devoted and courageous”, according to musicologist Paul Robinson.⁷¹⁵ Yet, her devotion is not to herself, it is to her husband. The story is about her heroic sacrifice for his life. Her own liberty is not of interest in this opera. This is entirely different in *Catherine, ou La belle fermière*.

4.11 Balancing Political Views Through Music

The highlight of Catherine’s self-sacrifice occurs in her *romance* aria “Au temps orageux des folies”, which Lussan happens to overhear. At this moment, she is alone on the stage accompanying herself on the harp. Eighteenth-century reviewers deemed this self-conscious moment between Catherine and her audience as partly responsible for the work’s overall sense of authenticity, a theme which was again paramount to Revolutionary discourses in 1793.⁷¹⁶

“Au temps orageux des folies” occurs in Act 2 Scene 3 while Catherine describes her woeful story:

*Au tems orageux des folies
J’osai me choisir un vainqueur.
Victime de ses perfidies
Sa mort détruisit mon erreur.
Mais mon sort fit digne d’envie
Tant qu’il partageât mon ardeur.
Dans tous les instants de la vie
L’amour seul fait le bonheur.*

In times of stormy weather
I dared to chose myself a winner.
Victim of his treachery
His death destroyed my mistake.
But my fate was worthy of envy
As long as he shared my ardor.
In every moment of life
Love alone brings happiness.

*De mes tourments enfin guérie
Je respirais depuis deux ans.
Mais de ce monde qui m’oublie
J’ai conservé tous les penchants.
Et, malgré ma philosophie,
Hélas, je le sens en mon cœur,
Dans tous les instants de la vie*

My torments finally healed
I have breathed for two years.
But of this world that has forgot me
I’ve kept all the inclinations.
And, despite my philosophy,
Alas, I feel in my heart,
In every moment of my life

⁷¹⁴ Linton, *Choosing Terror*, 61.

⁷¹⁵ Paul Robinson, *Ludwig Van Beethoven: Fidelio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 54.

⁷¹⁶ *L’Esprit des journaux français et étrangers*, 322-327.

*L'amour seul fait le bonheur.*⁷¹⁷

Love alone brings happiness.

Robespierre's 1793 speech on terror reflects a similar ideology about self-sacrifice, thus showing that Candeille's opera was very much a product of its political time.⁷¹⁸ Of particular significance is how, at its core, Robespierre's speech is entangled with this idea of violence justifying the means, meaning that terror and massive destruction are the sole way to fully embrace and achieve the Revolution's goals. Catherine is certainly not singing that terror shall result in the Revolution's victory, and she takes almost the exact opposite belief regarding violence as she reveals the personal cost one faces from treachery. Yet, this aria can be read as a proclamation that when one is protecting an honourable or noble idea, there will be great sadness and loss. Personal sacrifice cannot be escaped if one wishes to keep their values. To remain chaste, to uphold virtue, and to not repeat the same mistake of giving herself to an unworthy lover, Catherine must face immense sorrow as she herself notes that it is through love alone that one finds ultimate happiness. The act of shielding herself from affection and disallowing herself to fall in love is a kind of personal, inner terror, which is justified throughout this aria as it is the only way to live out her philosophy of not repeating her past mistake.

Self-sacrifice is central to Catherine's character. As this project explores in its previous chapters, the concept of Republican Motherhood and Republican Womanhood were shaped through this idea of women's sacrifice for the betterment of society.⁷¹⁹ A historian Patrice Higonnet notes, the Jacobins were obsessed with self-sacrificing heroes; those who were willing

⁷¹⁷ Julie Candeille, "*Catherine, Ou La Belle Fermière*, Comédie En Trois Actes et En Prose Mêlée de Chant," (Paris: Théâtre de la République, 1792), 25.

⁷¹⁸ This speech is addressed in section 4:1 "Withstanding the Terror" in Chapter Four: Navigating the Reign of Terror in Julie Candeille's *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* (1792).

⁷¹⁹ See Chapter Two: Unspoiled Milk: Feeding the Nation through Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786) and Chapter Three: Beyond the Dairy: Employing Gendered Pastoralism in Florine Dezède's *Lucette et Lucas* (1781).

to die for good of the nation, not for individuals.⁷²⁰ Yet, it was women who truly became the “premier agents of selflessness”.⁷²¹

The following part of Robespierre’s address surrounding terror and Revolutionary virtue furthers this notion. After speaking about the importance of upholding one’s faith, the politician focuses on the idea of ‘the other’ through declaring:

Hence the defection of so many ambitious or greedy men who since the beginning have abandoned us along the way, because they had not begun the voyage in order to reach the same goal. One could say that the two contrary geniuses that have been depicted competing for control of the realm of nature, are fighting in this great epoch of human history to shape irrevocably the destiny of the world, and that France is the theater of this mighty struggle.⁷²²

The first line from this speech almost directly parallels Catherine’s situation; a greedy man from her past abandoned her as they shared very different goals, and his appreciation of marriage was incompatible with Catherine’s. The idea of Catherine’s husband reflecting the politics of the *ancien regime* and absolutism is reinforced when considering the opera in the same light as this speech.⁷²³ The two “geniuses”, the virtuous individual versus those who are greedy, is essentially *Catherine*’s plot, seen through not only her own narrative but also that of Fierval and Elise. While Robespierre declares that all of France was the theatre for this battle, I do not believe it is a stretch to suggest that his ideology did not occur in a vacuum, only found within political speeches; *Catherine ou la belle fermière*’s plot suggests that themes of inner sacrifice for personal liberation were equally being explored on the Revolutionary stage.

⁷²⁰ Patrice Higonnet, *Goodness Beyond Virtue: Jacobins During the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 318.

⁷²¹ Higonnet, *Goodness Beyond Virtue*, 318.

⁷²² Richard Bienvu, *The Ninth of Thermidor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1970), 32–49.

⁷²³ Justification for why we can read operas of the French Revolution through older, anti-Revolutionary characters is given in section 2.6: “*Le mariage d’Antonio* as a *Maternité*” in Chapter Two: Unspoiled Milk: Feeding the Nation through Lucile Grétry’s *Le mariage d’Antonio* (1786).

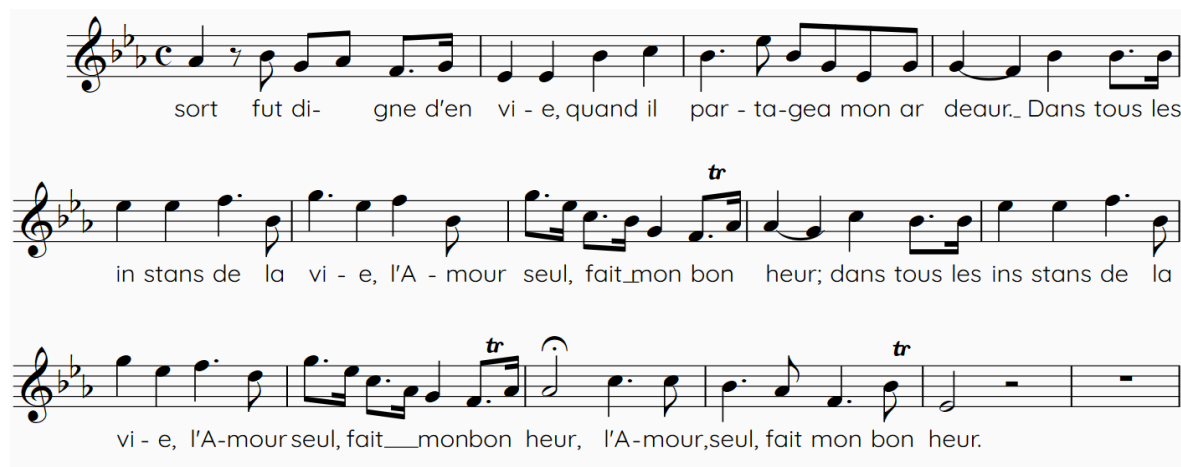
From a musical standpoint, the *romance* “Aux tems orageux des folies” is composed in E-flat major, a key often used in military marches as demonstrated through André Grétry’s famous “La victoire est à nous” from *La Caravane* (1783) which was famously played when Napoleon I’s army, the *Grande Armée*, captured Moscow in 1812.⁷²⁴ The aria’s strong and simple rhythm in the style of the gavotte, as seen through the anacrusis of a half-measure entry coupled with the piece’s phrasing which begins and ends in the middle of a measure, also projects a stately, courtly feel.⁷²⁵ Intentional or not, the music coupled with the act of Catherine playing the harp alone on the stage suggests that this aria is for a grand, noblewoman.

While the rhythm and key may suggest nobility, the vocal line does not parallel this call to the court. The text’s importance clearly shines as there are essentially no melismatic passages nor is the voice challenged throughout the aria. This could be, in part, due to reviewers critiquing Candeille’s vocal ability, and the composer may have wanted her solo moment to be devoid of any potential vocal flaws or scrutiny. Regardless, focusing on this aria’s text setting suggests that despite any potentially self-conscious writing decisions on the composer’s part, the aria should still be sung in a highly lyrical manner. In eighteenth-century French opera, it was typical that recitatives and more declamatory styles often omitted the schwa on the final “e” to create an elision. Yet, in this aria, there is a clear decision being made to encourage the singer to pronounce all final schwas, most clearly seen with the text-setting of *victime*, *d’envie*, and notably *vie*, as demonstrated below in Musical Example 5.⁷²⁶ This conscious choice to make the farmer’s relatively easy vocal line appear more challenging and lyrical was a clever addition, and it likely adds to the aria’s sentimental feeling.

⁷²⁴ R.J. Arnold, *Grétry's Operas and the French Public: From the Old Regime to the Restoration* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2007), 92.

⁷²⁵ Michael Thomas Roeder, *A History of the Concerto* (Cleckheaton: Amadeus Press, 1994), 145.

⁷²⁶ See Candeille, “Romance” from *Catherine, ou La belle fermière*, m.9, m.15, mm. 19-23.



Musical Example 5: Melody reduction from “Aux tems orageux des folies”, mm.14-27, *Catherine, ou la belle fermière* (1793), Julie Candeille, “Catherine, Ou La Belle Fermière, Comédie En Trois Actes et En Prose Mêlée de Chant” (Théâtre de la République, 1792).

Candeille’s musical education and talent are better reflected in the opera’s instrumental overture, which she calls the *mouvement de chasse* and the March, which appears in Act Two when the guests arrive for the wedding between Elise and Fierval. Written in C Major, with a brief modulation to C minor via a cello and bassoon duet, the *mouvement de chasse* is highly conjunct and pleasing.⁷²⁷ This supports Candeille’s belief that “an excessively long succession of suspensions and dissonance is distressing and ear-splitting” and that music must refrain from becoming an *ennuie*.⁷²⁸

Of particular importance in this overture is the topic of a hunt, which perhaps brings new insights to this movement and opera. Much research has already been completed on the musical topic of the hunt, and musicologist Leonard Ratner’s observation that this theme during the early eighteenth-century was intrinsically linked to the monarchy is important.⁷²⁹ However, I wish to slightly move away from the topic’s more noble attributes and instead turn to Raymond Monelle’s idea that “the hunt was a scene of courage, joy, and oneness with nature; hunting accustomed a

⁷²⁷ See Candeille, “Overture” from *Catherine, ou La belle fermière*, m. 346.

⁷²⁸ Candeille, *Essai sur les felicités humaines*, 311-14.

⁷²⁹ See Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), 18.

man to hardship and sacrifice; it was a training for war and a kind of substitute for military actions.”⁷³⁰

The hunting call in the overture begins with the flutes and horns who then exchange this theme while suspended strings support the call. It is certainly pastoral in its nature, especially post-climax in the “Musette” section, and by no means should this be overlooked.⁷³¹ One could safely declare this overture as pastoral as its purpose is to atmospherically signify the countryside, the opera’s setting. Yet, this additional idea of the hunt preparing one for war and sacrifice, instead of exclusively signifying nature or nobility, is interesting as this is fundamentally what is happening to Catherine. Her courage is tested throughout the first Act, with both Lussan and Fierval’s flirtations, and the opera may be read as a story about her own inner battle.

Returning to Robespierre’s thoughts on the Terror, and his idea of France at a battle between republicanism and monarchists, may offer new insights. This overture may be read today as a sort of encouragement for Catherine’s steadfastness, one which mirrors that within the politician’s speech. She must be prepared for her immense sacrifice to forsake love, and, in many ways, it is almost as if she is preparing for a battle, albeit one within herself. I appreciate that the hunt theme is more likely to represent pastoral images but, read under this more militaristic light, this overture becomes quite important. Perhaps it is not simply about setting the stage and relaying the picturesque countryside, but a sort of forewarning that conflict will transpire.

The March is a pleasing, short piece in what is essentially a very simple minuet and trio as there is no modulation in the B section. Again, it is in C Major with the cello only oscillating on

⁷³⁰ Raymond Monelle, *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 65.

⁷³¹ See Candeille, "Overture" from "*Catherine, ou La belle fermière*", m. 66.

the tonic for the duration of the entire march. There is a comparable horn call as in the Overture, but this time it appears in thirds and fifths with the viola acting as the drone on the dominant in the B section. This well-balanced piece is the least challenging of the entire opera and, one could presume, it was written to demonstrate the composer's ability to follow convention and showcase her proper treatment of harmony. The first four-measure call ends in a half cadence while the subsequent response is predictably concluded with a perfect authentic cadence. The piece reads almost like a musical study and clear attention has been given to avoiding parallel intervals, celebrating simple textures, and following all formalized rules.

The opera's finale vaudeville is much closer to the *romance*, in that it also serves to elevate the text over its music, a common feature of eighteenth-century *opéra-comiques* as previously discussed in this project.⁷³² The vaudeville appears at the very end of the opera, although the libretto does suggest that a ballet should be performed as the actual final piece, though we do not have a score nor document to suggest which dance is preferred. Including a final vaudeville is not only quintessentially French, but it also serves as a distinctive marking of eighteenth-century *opéra-comiques*.⁷³³ This genre owes its roots to popular, even lowbrow taste as vaudevilles often relied upon familiar folk songs to encourage audience participation.⁷³⁴ Easily singable with simple rhythms and melodies, vaudevilles often crossed into the public consciousness and became part of popular culture as many eighteenth-century reviewers remark on the audience singing the final number while leaving the theatre.⁷³⁵ As such, this form has become a symbol of French culture

⁷³² See Section 3.9 "A Vaudeville's Lasting Message" in Chapter Three: Beyond the Dairy: Employing Gendered Pastoralism in Florine Dezède's *Lucette et Lucas* (1781). See also Charlton, *Popular Opera*, Chapter Five: *Opéra-comique en vaudevilles*, 10-13.

⁷³³ Charlton, *Popular Opera*, 10-13.

⁷³⁴ Jama Stilwell, "A New View of the Eighteenth-Century 'Abduction' Opera: Edification and Escape at the Parisian 'Théâtres de La Foire,'" *Music & Letters* vol. 91, no. 1 (2010): 51-82, 56. See also Daniel Heartz, "The Beggar's Opera and *opéra-comique en vaudeville*," *Early Music* XXVII, no.1 (1999): 42-54.

⁷³⁵ Stilwell, "Abduction Opera", 61.

and, as other types of dramatic music rose in popularity, Alexandre du Coudray defended the form by exclaiming, '[Vaudevilles] should please you, O joyous Parisian, all the more because you are the father of this genre.'"⁷³⁶

After each secondary character sings for the first time in the opera, Catherine takes the stage and sings the final words of the show. The entire piece is only nineteen measures long, and it is highly declamatory in style. As with the *romance*, Catherine, unlike the other characters' solos, sings directly to the audience. This again was common for vaudevilles at the end of *opéra-comiques*.⁷³⁷ While Fanchette, Henri, Lussan, Boniface, Elise, and the Marquise all spend their respective verses remarking on Catherine's good will, beauty, and spirit, the farmer speaks about the current political time of the Revolution.⁷³⁸ She states:

*Moi, Messieurs, depuis deux ans,
Ici j'ai vécu solitaire;
Mais, pour regagner le tem;
Je vais chercher à me distraire.
Pour charmer voire loisir,
Pour me donner ce plaisir,
S'il ne vous faut qu'un grand désir;
Un grand soin de vous plaire,
Vous reviendra voir la Fermière.*"⁷³⁹

Candeille changed this final vaudeville during the Thermidorian Reaction after the Terror when some of the actors were accused of Jacobin sympathy, which is highly understandable

⁷³⁶ Stilwell, "Abduction Opera", 61.

⁷³⁷ Milena Kozic, "Praxis: A Comedy Revolution" in *A Cultural History of Comedy in the Age of Empire* ed. Matthew Kaiser (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2021): 67-92, 91.

⁷³⁸ Fanchette ends her solo with "*A m'respecter comme un fermière*" (to respect me like a farmer), Henri ends his with "*A conteaux ma petite fermière*" (to the slopes, my little farmer), Lussan with "*Pour attendre une fermière*" (to soften a farmer), Boniface "*J'aurais guette notre fermière*" (I would have watched a farmer), Elise "*A l'Exemple de la fermière*" (at the example of the farmer), and la Marquise with "*Me traiter on jeune fermière*" (treat me as the young farmer). See Candeille, *Catherine, ou La belle fermière*, 65-66.

⁷³⁹ "I, gentlemen, for two years, here I lived in solitary, but to regain time, I will look to distract myself. To charm or leisure, to give me pleasure, if all you need is a great desire, a great care to please you, you will come back to the Farmer." Candeille, *Catherine, ou La belle fermière*, 67.

considering the Théâtre de la République's reputation.⁷⁴⁰ To distance both the opera and its composer from Jacobin sympathy, Candeille altered her final verse to the following in 1794:

*Peuple français, peuple de frères,
Peux-tu voir sans frémir d'horreur
Le crime arborer les bannières
Du carnage et de la terreur?
Tu souffres qu'une horde atroce
Et d'assassins et de brigands
Souille par son souffle atroce
Le territoire des vivants...*⁷⁴¹

As Letzter and Adelson note, this attempt failed as audiences simply forced known Jacobin actors to sing this rewrite as a way of admitting or confirming their guilt.⁷⁴²

This observation by Letzter and Adelson suggests that this opera did indeed have political resonances, albeit in 1795 after the Terror. I do not use the scholar's remarks to automatically suggest that because it had a direct political connection in 1795, it did in 1793-4. However, the fact that this opera was politicized, due to its actors and the theater it was performed in, at least offers the opportunity, if not the justification, to understand this opera as being politically relevant to the French Revolution.

4.12 Where Catherine Ends and Julie Begins

French composer Julie Candeille was a highly successful, politically savvy, and important figure in Paris during the early French Revolution. Her most famous opera, *Catherine, ou La belle fermière*, offers the opportunity to explore how a woman-created opera embraced, rejected, challenged, and contributed to Republican discourses of the early French Revolution. The need to

⁷⁴⁰ Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 93.

⁷⁴¹ "French people, brotherly people, can you see without trembling with horror, how the crime brandishes the banners, the carnage and the terror? You accept a hideous hoard, and assassins and brigands, soiled by their monstrous breath the land of the living." Translation from Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 93.

⁷⁴² Letzter and Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 93.

classify this work as being either pure entertainment or as poignantly political overlooks both Candeille and her opera's significance. *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* became a prominent feature on the operatic stage during 1793 perhaps because it managed to serve both purposes in tandem. It managed to politically straddle a complex and dangerous period while offering audiences a chance to enter a fictional realm; a world where women oversee their own futures and the Revolution's theoretical principles unfold from the safe confines of the operatic stage without directly challenging French society.

Due to Candeille undertaking the title role herself, the boundaries between composer, performer, and character were indeed blurred. Where *Catherine* ended and Julie Candeille began has no clear answer. I believe this semi-autobiographical nature of women-composed operas is vital to any understanding of their work. By creating virtuous, moral women who reflected the ideology of Republican Womanhood, women opera creators were, in a large way, reinforcing their own significance as moralizers for French Republican society. Through offering a glimpse into the feminocentric world of dairy farming, the mindset of a woman who vows to remain single, a woman mentor who initially forbids her young maid from marrying, and a composer who consciously forged strong political relationships for her own benefit, this opera serves to demonstrate how Revolutionary discourses on self-sacrifice and liberty were being reflected on the Parisian stage.

Without detracting from the brilliance of this opera and Candeille's own political discernment, perhaps *Catherine, ou La belle fermière*'s true political importance is that it did not exclusively offer relief from the harsh realities of the Reign of Terror. Rather, as highlighted in this chapter, this feminocentric opera offered a very real glimpse into a potential new social order and the possibility of the Revolution's values—liberty, equality, and fraternity—being lived out

to their fullest, most realized extent. Most progressively, this opera may be understood as advocating that this core, Republican ideology must be extended to women as well as men.

Conclusion

*To become an adult, you must be born twice.
The first birth is the real one from your
mother's womb. The second, more secret and
unpredictable one, is from the paternal womb.*

—Daniel Maximin, *L'Isolé soleil* (1981)

In Daniel Maximin's novel *L'Isolé soleil* (1981), a seemingly unrelated quotation encapsulates what has remained relatively unspoken within this project.⁷⁴³ Despite being a contemporary Künstlerroman or apprenticeship novel, Maximin highlights the paternal figure's importance and his direct influence over his children, an act which defines late eighteenth-century France and indeed the lives of Lucile Grétry, Florine Dezède, and Julie Candeille. The most apparent similarity between these three women is that they were all brought into the world of *opéra-comique* through their established composer fathers. While their mothers may have physically carried them into the world through their first real birth, their fathers' second metaphorical delivery figuratively birthed their lives as composers.

It is a conscious decision for this project to focus on French women composers, their stories, their music, and their political significance within the Revolutionary decade, rather than on their more well-known paternal relationships. However, women composers' fathers and their role in furthering female musicians' success—financially and culturally—cannot be discounted. Opera composers André Grétry (1741-1813), Nicolas Dezède (1740-1792), and Pierre-Joseph Candeille (1744-1827) all used their prominent positions within powerful Parisian opera houses

⁷⁴³ Daniel Maximin, *L'Isolé soleil* (Paris: Seuil, 1981), 117.

like the Comédie-Italienne to directly assist their daughters in their pursuit to compose and, as a result, fatherhood's importance within women's musical success warrants acknowledgment.

Focusing on the father-daughter relationship does not, however, suggest that Lucile Grétry, Florine Dezède, and Julie Candeille must be appreciated under the veil of their fathers, despite previous scholarship's inclination.⁷⁴⁴ Instead, this conclusion seeks to offer one last way to explore these women's societal, cultural, and political importance, in this case through the lens of their father-daughter relationships. The intent is to not strip these talented and autonomous women from their rightfully earned identity as composers, but rather to use their close and well-documented connection with their fathers as the means to better understand women's political relevance through the world of French opera.

As highlighted within Rousseau's paradoxical views regarding fatherhood's importance, good fatherhood was a necessity for creating successful children. In *Émile*, the philosopher highlights that while "the true nurse is the mother, the true preceptor is the father."⁷⁴⁵ As a result, a father's philosophical role, and how this position shifted during Revolutionary France, is vitally important to understand the complete history of women-composed opera.

As a learned skill, pragmatically, many women learned composition from their fathers as they were largely excluded from the *chapelle* system and the *académies*. Young women were not allowed to learn the art of composing through an apprenticeship like their male counterpart.⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴⁴ In *Women Writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution*, women opera composers' fathers are central to much of their biography. For example, see Jacqueline Letzter and Robert Adelson, *Women Writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution* (London: The University of California Press, 2001), 47-54.

⁷⁴⁵ "Comme la véritable nourrice est la mère, le véritable précepteur est le père..." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* (Mineola, United States: Dover Publications, Incorporated, 2013), 20. Translation by Nancy Isenberg in Nancy Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America* (Durham: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 181.

⁷⁴⁶ Jacqueline Letzter and Robert Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 47.

Music was an *art d'agrément* intended to refine women for marriage. Women had to “be careful to not become too accomplished” as they could risk being viewed as ambitious or vain, neither of which were deemed appropriate attributes for a young woman.⁷⁴⁷ I object to current scholarship regarding women’s composition which suggests that Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille’s fathers were largely “open-minded”, simply because they educated their daughters in music.⁷⁴⁸ Often, those who instructed women during the early modern period are celebrated today as avant-garde outliers or as those who championed women’s causes, but perhaps these three case studies slightly push against this prevailing assumption. When turning towards the role of the father and fatherhood, Andre, Nicolas, and Pierre, and their respective father-daughter relationships, may have indeed served to carve a far more traditional and conservative side to their daughters’ reputations.

The Revolutionary family’s role has garnered much attention within French eighteenth-century studies, the most notable likely being Hunt’s *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (1992). Using the patriarchal model to understand the French Revolution through the idea that one could become unchained from their individual family yet indebted to the family structure to serve wider society, underlines this entire area of scholarship. The understanding of the French State being fashioned from within the home—where male children were obedient to their parents until they reached their own age of reason, the father was the family’s head due to his natural “independence from the consequences of sexual activity” and his predisposition to hold reason, as discussed in Rousseau’s *Political Economy*, and where women were largely considered

⁷⁴⁷ Jacqueline Letzter and Robert Adelson, *Women Writing Opera*, 47.

⁷⁴⁸ Jacqueline Letzter and Robert Adelson, 47.

the guardians of morality—highlights the family’s importance within shaping the wider social organization of the late eighteenth century.^{749 750}

The question of how much authority a father could hold over an individual was a point of great discussion among Revolutionary politicians, with the general idea being that civically responsible citizens could only be created through liberation from the paternal figurehead. As Deputy Pierre François Gossin (1754-1794) remarked to the Constituent Assembly on August 5 1790, “...under the Old Regime, the tyranny of parents was often as terrible as the despotism of ministers; often the prisoners of state became family prisons.”⁷⁵¹ The private relationship among family members and their respective rights became increasingly attached to the French State’s potential to grant happiness and liberty, an overarching goal for Revolutionaries.⁷⁵² In essence, free sons could live autonomously and serve the state while restrained individuals, weighed down by their own confinement, were unable to do so. The connection between the overbearing father and the king’s role within the *ancien régime* is rather obvious, but the idea was that a strict, stern, and selfish father could never foster virtuous, autonomous French citizens.

As such, the idea of the “good father” became a point of fascination. As Hunt notes, this role was often defined through treatises, tracts on education, paintings, and, most prominently, in the rise of the sentimental novel.⁷⁵³ However, this belief was entirely subjected to sons and not daughters. While the good, benevolent father should treat his daughter with kindness, protecting and guarding his female children was still within his role. This is precisely why the

⁷⁴⁹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on Political Economy* (Bethesda: Stonewell Press, n.d.), 210.

⁷⁵⁰ Joseph Losco, “Rousseau on the Political Role of the Family,” *History of Political Thought* 9, no. 1 (Spring, 1988): 101-104.

⁷⁵¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol.17 (Paris 1884), 617. Translation by Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance*, 17.

⁷⁵² Hunt, *The Family Romance*, 17.

⁷⁵³ Hunt, *The Family Romance*, 21.

sentimentalization of the family never enhanced or bore changes in women's lives.⁷⁵⁴ A father should take interest in his daughter, but still control her ambitions, movements, and importantly, her aspirations and desires.

Through this understanding, the connection between the protection André, Nicolas, and Pierre provided their daughters follows the format of the good Revolutionary father. However, what makes the lives and operas of Lucile Grétry, Florine Dezède, and Julie Candeille potentially far more traditional and aligned with the past occurs when we connect the father's role within the *ancien régime* to that of their own fathers' position within their musical careers. As subordinates and not free citizens due to their sex, the father figure's influence within women-composed opera demonstrates the most honest, authentic, and idealized version of the father-daughter relationship without any corruption or malice. Returning to the idea of the king as a father figure, these fathers may have represented what the king's role should have looked like during the *ancien régime*; a guiding, loving figure who, while remaining in charge, brought out the best in his children. In other words, the public nature of women composers' father-daughter relationships offered the chance to see what a proper, traditional working family order could have looked like.

Having a composer for a father opened musical doors into Parisian opera houses. However, this father-daughter relationship is likely equally as symbolically important as it was practically. Perhaps it is even the reason why there are numerous elements of progressive, Revolutionary sentiments within this project's three case studies as women composers' self-fashioning through their operas was largely formed within the boundaries of this traditional, conservative template.

⁷⁵⁴ Hunt, *The Family Romance*, 25.

However, as this conclusion argues, it is far more complex than simply listing off the progressive elements within women-created opera and declaring them “Revolutionary.”

As this project discusses through its exploration of Grétry’s *Le mariage d’Antonio* (1786), Dezède’s *Lucette et Lucas* (1781), and Candeille’s *Catherine, ou la belle fermier* (1793), French women opera composers and their works came to embody the core values of the Revolution, both before 1789 and during the Revolutionary decade itself. Chapter Two reveals how comparable to a mother’s milk, Lucile Grétry symbolically nursed Parisian audiences’ lessons in morality and virtuousness. Sweet, authentic, untainted melodies filled her comic opera, and ultimately, the composer’s youthful innocence was shielded through Madame de Beaunoir’s penname as well as through her father André Grétry’s protection. Her main character, Colette, finds personal liberation at the end of the opera when she weds Antonio in a comparable way to the Revolution’s promise to its citizens; happiness becomes possible under this new concept of individuals deciding their fate. The possibilities of responsible, earnest, and genuine love are truly celebrated and contrasted against the older more archaic style of marriage within this opera.

Through exploring the gendered associations of French pastoralism and its historical importance in granting elite French women self-governance, Chapter Three highlights how women may have relied on forging pastoral worlds to gain autonomy. The idea is proposed that the pastoral’s potential of granting women liberation shifted from serving the Second Estate to the needs of women within the Third. Through creating an entirely fictional pastoral world, yet one which still contained at least elements of rural realities, Dezède’s *Lucette et Lucas* reflected larger Revolutionary discussions regarding the importance of unifying the entire French nation through merging ruralism and urbanism. The political emergence of France becoming defined through a homogenization of rural identity to unite disparate regions is of particular importance. As a result,

in many ways, this opera became a celebration of the pastoral as women's domain while simultaneously granting Parisian audiences the ability to see this shift in the French nation from being defined through subordination to a king to a nation that was now united through a unification of all its peoples.

Perhaps the most evident case of opera embodying the Revolution's values is explored in Chapter Four. Through her opera *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* (1792), Julie Candeille managed to straddle elements that may be understood as either being supportive of or in contradiction to the *ancien régime*. Importantly, her emancipated, strong-willed, and semi-autobiographical lead character became one of the most celebrated figures on the Parisian operatic stage, likely due to the opera's ability to resonate with multiple political ideals. The argument is proposed that Candeille may have even personally managed to avoid persecution during the Reign of Terror, despite her probable connection to Girondist politicians, due to her opera's straddling of numerous political identities.

In general, the importance of liberty for female characters who dictate their own lives, self-governance through a rejection of traditions like marriages based on financial gains, the importance of mutual friendship, and the blurring of social classes are all prevalent within these three case studies and these themes are all directly connected to Revolutionary ideals. However, this project ultimately argues that these ideas are not responsible for making Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille's operas politically significant to the French Revolution. As explored in this project's Chapter One, many of these so-called Revolutionary plot devices are found within most comic eighteenth-century French operas. What this project ultimately demonstrates is that French women-composed *opéra-comique* was politically significant not just because it mirrored French Revolutionary sentiments, but rather because the act of women publicly creating feminocentric

worlds was a Revolutionary act itself. Women creating publicly successful operas revealed the French Revolution's possibilities being lived to their fullest extent, though this was an achievement that could only take place from the fictional space of the operatic stage.

Women-composed opera likely grew in popularity during the early Revolution because, as historian Lynn Hunt notes, art was one of the only channels available to depict the social contract at its fullest completion since, while it is formed within a construction of reality, it is ultimately fictional.⁷⁵⁵ Women-composed opera could theoretically create a refuge where audiences saw what enlightened philosophical and political understandings may look like in real life without drastically altering societal order. Crucially, women and other marginalized groups were largely excluded from the French Revolution's advancements in human rights, but this is precisely why women-composed opera must be understood as being deeply politically significant. Their works could be used to conjure support for the Revolutionary movement abstractly as the threat of wider societal change, where women were granted the same rights as male citizens, was largely nonexistent from the place of the operatic stage. Through creating successful fictional matriarchies, these women composers became synonymous with Revolutionary female allegories. Through their operas, they could morally instruct, influence, and promote Revolutionary values without becoming a real threat.

In no way should any of these political symbolic considerations suggest that the women of this project were only admired for what they represented. Financially, their operas were considered highly successful, a fact which is most easily demonstrated through their continued performances. Rather, what this project suggests is that women opera composers served a gender-specific

⁷⁵⁵ See Lynn Hunt, "The World We Have Gained: The Future of the French Revolution," *The American Historical Review* 108, no. 1 (2003): 1–19.

significance to the formation of the French Republic in addition to their personal, musical, and financial triumphs. Their ability to signify, through creating women-centric works, the French Revolution's possibilities and yet its limitations was edifying. Through composing popular *opéra-comiques*, Lucile Grétry, Florine Dezède, and Julie Candeille managed to thoughtfully create or co-create worlds where justice, benevolence, charity, modesty, authenticity, liberty, equality, and fraternity were all exalted. Their operas showed the possibility of a "truly united social body"; a new people and a new moral order were on display for all to see.⁷⁵⁶ However, this ideal order, as historian Cecilia Feilla notes, was not a reflection of Revolutionary society but rather a sympathetic imagination of its opportunities.⁷⁵⁷ A momentary experience yet one which did place women at its helm.

Perhaps the most important lasting significance of these three women is that they challenged the prevailing idea of French women composers as being exceptional to their sex, a term often bestowed on prodigies and virtuosos during the eighteenth century.⁷⁵⁸ What makes Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille important to the world of French opera studies, and indeed French history, is that through opera, they all managed to meaningfully advance women's position as composers without disrupting the status quo. Without being viewed as outliers suggests, in part, that composing opera was indeed a place for women, not just exceptional women.

⁷⁵⁶ Cecilia Feilla, *The Sentimental Theatre of the French Revolution* (London: Routledge, 2013), 63.

⁷⁵⁷ Cecilia Feilla, *The Sentimental Theatre*, 63.

⁷⁵⁸ The designation "exceptional to their sex" has been used by many feminist historians and it does serve an important purpose. As historian Mary Sheriff states, "exceptional woman" has a specific meaning and refers to the woman who, owing to no particular circumstance (talent, money, family ties, beauty, luck, political clout) has been exempted from rules or laws (be they perceived as natural, social, or statutory) prescribing the behavior of the female sex." It is often used within studies of the *ancien régime*, as demonstrated in Geneviève Fraisse's *La Raison des femmes* (1992). The problem with this designation is that it does not consider women opera composers who were not breaking the social customs of their time to compose opera, despite our modern inclination to view them as radical figures. See Mary D. Sheriff, *The Exceptional Woman: Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun and the Cultural Politics of Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 2.

Unlike Olympe de Gouges (1748-1793), Charlotte Corday (1768-1793), and Théroigne de Méricourt (1762-1817), Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille were not condemned or discouraged from composing despite the progression they made within a domain which was generally restricted to male advancements. They were celebrated during all stages of the Revolution, albeit to varying degrees, and despite harnessing womankind's innate political power within their operas, they largely remained within the established expectations of their sex. The delicate balance between claiming authorship and female anonymity underlines much of their reputations. This is perhaps these women's most significant achievement; they achieved unparalleled success in a seemingly passive or at least uncontroversial way.

One reason these women managed to avoid a detrimental fate which was common for those who challenged societal norms is that they themselves were largely apolitical and, aside from composing operas, they embodied many of the ideals surrounding an idealized version of Republican Womanhood. And yet, despite many of the arguments presented within this study, it is still unwise to assume that these women only signified pro-Revolutionary sentiments. Their role as daughters challenges this idea, and it is precisely why I have not claimed any of these figures as being revolutionary, only specific elements within their respective operas have been granted this designation.

Merging these considerations with the concept of the ideal good father, perhaps the reason women found increasing success as opera composers during the early French Revolution is that they demonstrated all the nation's possibilities, not only those which were tied to Revolutionary values but equally those of the past regime. As with Marianne and the other Revolutionary muses, the blank canvas of "womanhood" could convey these political hopes because women themselves could not become active political citizens. The danger with this connotation is, as political

scientists Emanuela Lombardo and Petra Meier note, that through women's "iconisation [sic] as symbols of the nation and its values," it becomes implied that men had to defend them just as they would their country.⁷⁵⁹ The idea that women became passive, symbolic objects that had to be protected is the natural result of this thinking.

However, in the case of Lucile Grétry, Florine Dezède, and Julie Candeille, I propose a final alternative understanding of women's emblematic importance for shaping the French nation-state. Turning towards modern feminist studies—where scholars also seek to uncover women's role in representing newly established liberal political ideals—political scholar Haleh Afshar argues that while womanhood and its symbolic resonances are certainly manipulated by men during moments of political instability, women also become active in "the protection and development of their own interests" and carve out their place within nation building.⁷⁶⁰

Perhaps this act of protecting one's interests can be viewed as a reclamation of feminine identities and a rejection of being symbolic pawns. However, I am far more inclined to believe that Grétry, Dezède, and Candeille declared, through their operas, that women were not passive symbols; they could actively contribute to gendered narratives by acting as political agents themselves, advancing the idea that women were indeed the better sex to nourish ideals of liberalism and create ideal Republican citizens. Returning to author Daniel Maximin's idea of people's two births, women opera composers of the French Revolution can perhaps be best understood as undergoing a third. They birthed their own importance to the French nation by

⁷⁵⁹ Emanuela Lombardo and Petra Meier, *The Symbolic Representation of Gender: A Discursive Approach* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2016).

⁷⁶⁰ Sylvia Walby, "Gender Approaches to Nations and Nationalism," in *The SAGE Handbook of Nations and Nationalism*, ed. Gerard Delanty and Krishan Kumar (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2006), 118. See Haleh Afshar, "Women and Reproduction in Iran," in *Woman-Nation-State*, ed. Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1989); Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, eds., "Women and the Turkish State: Political Actors or Symbolic Pawns," in *Woman-Nation-State* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), 126–49.

carving out their rightful place on the operatic stage as guardians and custodians of the most idealized form of women during the early French Revolution.

Appendix A

List of French Women Co-Created Opera Before 1770⁷⁶¹

Élisabeth Claude Jacquet de La Guerre (1665-1729)

1694 *Céphale et Procris* (*tragédie lyrique*). Librettist Joseph-François Duché de Vancy, Théâtre du Palais-Royal.

Marquise de la Mizangere (1673-c1779)

? *Der Heimliche Bund* (*opéra*). Librettist unknown, place unknown.

Mlle Duval (1718? -1775)

1736 *Les Génies* (*opéra-ballet*). Librettist Fleury [de Lyon], Paris Opéra.

Helene Guerin (1739-1755)

1755 *Daphnis et d'Amalthée* (*pastorale héroïque*). Librettist Claude-François-Félix Boulenger de Rivery, Amiens.

Mlle. Marie-Catherine du Hamel/ Duhamel (18th century)

1763 *Agnès* (*Divertissement mêlé de chants et de danses, en un acte*). Librettist unknown, Théâtre des Boulevards.

Marie-Emmanuelle Bayon-Louis (1746-1825)

1767 *Title unknown* (*opéra-comique*). Librettist Sauvigny, Salon de Mme. De Genlis.

1776 *Fleur d'épine* (*opérette*). Librettist Claude-Henri Fusée Abbé de Voisenon (adapted from a fairy tale by Antoine Hamilton), Comédie Italienne.

⁷⁶¹ Taken from Mary F. McVicker, *Women Opera Composers Biographies from the 1500s to the 21st Century* (Jefferson: McFarland, Incorporated, Publishers, 2016) 2-22.

List of French Women Co-Created Opera Between 1770-1820⁷⁶²

Isabelle de Charrière (1740-1805)

- 1788 *Les Phéniciennes* (opéra). Librettist Isabelle de Charrière, never performed.
- 1788 *Penelope* (opéra). Librettist Isabelle de Charrière, never performed.
- 1790 *Polythène ou le Cyclope* (opéra). Librettist Isabelle de Charrière, never performed.
- 1790 *Junon* (opéra). Librettist Isabelle de Charrière, never performed.
- 1790 *Les femmes* (opéra). Librettist Isabelle de Charrière, never performed.
- 1790 *L'Olympiade* (opéra). Librettist Isabelle de Charrière, never performed.
- 1791 *Zadig* (opéra). Librettist Isabelle de Charrière, never performed.

Henriette Adelaïde Villard or Mlle Beaumensil (1748-1813)

- 1781 *Anacréon* (opéra en un act). Librettist unknown, Paris Opéra.
- 1784 *Les Fêtes grecques et romaines* (opéra). Librettist unknown, Paris Opéra.
- 1784 *Tibulle et Délie ou les Saturnales* (opéra-ballet). Librettist M. Louis Fuzelier / Fuselier, Théâtre du Palais-Royal.
- 1792 *Plaire, c'est commander* (opéra-comique). Librettist Le marquis Adrien-Nicolas de La Salle, Théâtre de Montansier.
- 1792 *Les législatrice* (opéra). Librettist unknown, place unknown.

Florine Dezède (1765-92)

- 1781 *Lucette et Lucas* (opéra-comique). Librettist Nicolas-Julien Forgeot, Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgoigne.

⁷⁶² Compiled from Mary F. McVicker, *Women Opera Composers Biographies from the 1500s to the 21st Century* (Jefferson: McFarland, Incorporated, Publishers, 2016) 2-22; CÉSAR *calendrier électronique des spectacles sous l'ancien régime et sous la Révolution* [Oxford: CESAR Project at Oxford Brookes University, 2001] Web. <https://cesar.huma-num.fr/cesar2/>; DEZÈDE *Les archives de l'Opéra-Comique* [Université de Rouen Normandie, Université de Montpellier III, Institut de Recherche sur la Renaissance, l'Âge Classique et les Lumières, Groupe de Recherche d'Histoire, and Centre d'Études et de Recherche Éditer/Interpréter, 2022] Web, <https://dezede.org/oeuvres/ida-ou-lorpheline-de-berlin/>.

Caroline Wuiet (1766-1835)

- 1783 *L'Heureux stratagème (opéra bouffon)*. Librettist Guillaume Saulnier, Paris.
- 1786 *L'Heureuse erreur (opéra-comique)*. Librettist Caroline Wuiet. This opera was rehearsed at the Comédie Italienne, but it was never given a public performance.

Julie Candeille (1767-1834)

- 1792 *Catherine, ou La belle fermière (opéra-comique)*. Librettist Julie Candeille, Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu.
- 1793 *Bathilde, ou le duc (comédie)*. Librettist Julie Candeille, Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu.
- 1794 *Le Commissionnaire (comédie, prose)*. Librettist Julie Candeille, Maison Égalité.
- 1795 *La Bayadère ou Le Français a surate (comédie, vers)*. Librettist Julie Candeille, Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu.
- 1807 *Ida, ou L'Orpheline de Berlin (comédie en deux actes mêlés de chants)*. Librettist Julie Candeille, Théâtre Feydeau.

Constance de Salm (1767-1845)

- 1794 *Sapho (tragedie melee de chants)*. Music by Jean Paul Égide, Théâtre des amis de la patrie.

Jeanne-Hippolyte Devismes (1770-1836)

- 1800 *Praxitèle (opéra en un acte)*. Librettist Jean-Baptiste de Milcent, Paris Opéra.

Lucile Grétry (1772-90)

- 1786 *Le mariage d'Antonio (opéra-comique)*. Librettist Mme de Beaunoir (Alexandre de Robineau), Comédie Italienne.
- 1787 *Toinette et Louis (opéra-comique)*. Librettist Joseph Patrat/ Patras, Comédie Italienne.

Sophie Bawr (1773-1860)

- 1794 *Le Rival obligeant (comédie en un acte en prose)*. Text by Sophie Bawr, Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique.

- 1802 *Argent et Adresse, ou le Petit Mensonge (comédie en un acte en prose)*. Text by Sophie Bawr, Théâtre du Louvois.
- 1804 *Le chevalier du lion (mélodrame en 3 actes)*. Librettist Sophie Bawr, never performed.
- 1804 *L'Argent du voyage, ou l'Oncle inconnu (comédie en un acte et en prose)*. Librettist Sophie Bawr, Théâtre de l'Odéon.
- 1811 *Léon, ou le château de Montaldi (mélodrame en 3 actes)*. Librettist Sophie Bawr, Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique.
- 1811 *Le Double Stratagème (comédie en un acte et en prose)*. Librettist Sophie Bawr, Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique.
- 1813 *Un quart d'heure de dépit (opéra-comique)*. Librettist Sophie Bawr, never performed.
- 1813 *La Suite d'un bal masqué (comédie en un acte et en prose)*. Librettist Sophie Bawr, Rouen, Théâtre des Arts.

Edmee Sophie Gail (1775-1819)

- 1813 *Les deux jaloux (opéra-comique)*. Librettist Jean-Baptiste-Charles Vial, Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique (Salle Feydeau).
- 1813 *Mademoiselle de Launay à la Bastille (opéra-comique)*. Librettist Auguste Creuzé de Lesser, Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique (Salle Feydeau).
- 1814 *Angela ou L'atelier de Jean Cousin (opéra-comique)*. Librettist Anne -Gilbert George de Montcloux d'Épinay, Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique (Salle Feydeau).
- 1814 *La Méprise, (opéra-comique)*. Librettist Auguste Creuzé de Lesse, Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique (Salle Feydeau).
- 1818 *La Sérénade (opéra-comique)*. Librettist Sophie Gay, Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique (Salle Feydeau).

Performance History of French Women Co-Created Opera During the French Revolution (1789-1799)⁷⁶³

Henriette Adelaïde Villard or Mlle Beaumensil (1748-1813)

Plaire, c'est commander (1792, opéra-comique)

1792.05.12	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1792.05.14	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1792.05.18	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1792.05.22	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1792.05.26	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1792.05.28	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1792.06.11	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1792.06.13	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1792.06.18	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1792.06.24	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1792.07.04	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1792.07.08	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1792.07.13	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1792.07.20	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1792.07.28	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1792.10.07	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1793.01.04	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1793.01.06	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1793.01.08	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1793.01.29	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1793.02.24	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1793.03.12	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1793.03.15	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1793.03.26	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1793.04.09	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1793.05.25	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris
1793.06.25	Théâtre de Montansier	Paris

⁷⁶³ The performance histories for these works have been compiled from both CÉSAR *calendrier électronique des spectacles sous l'ancien régime et sous la Révolution* [Oxford: CESAR Project at Oxford Brookes University, 2001] Web. <https://cesar.huma-num.fr/cesar2/> and DEZÈDE *Les archives de l'Opéra Comique* [Université de Rouen Normandie, Université de Montpellier III, Institut de Recherche sur la Renaissance, l'Âge Classique et les Lumières, Groupe de Recherche d'Histoire, and Centre d'Études et de Recherche Éditer/Interpréter, 2022] Web. <https://dezede.org/oeuvres/ida-ou-lorpheline-de-berlin/>

Florine Dezède (1765-92)*Lucette et Lucas* (1781, *opéra-comique*)

See Appendix E for a complete performance history.

Julie Candaille (1767-1834)*Catherine, ou La belle fermière* (1792, *opéra-comique*)

See Appendix C for a complete performance history.

La Bathilde, ou le duo (1793, *comédie*)

1793.09.18	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.09.20	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.09.23	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.09.29	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris

La Bayadère ou Le Français a surate (1795, *comédie, vers*)

1795.01.25	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1795.01.27	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris

Constance de Salm (1767-1845)*Sapho* (1794, *tragedie meele de chants*)

1794.12.12	Théâtre des amis de la patrie Paris	Paris
1794.12.15	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1794.12.21	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1794.12.27	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.01.31	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.02.02	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.02.05	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.02.07	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.02.12	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.02.15	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris

1795.02.20	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.02.24	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.03.05	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.03.15	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.03.20	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.03.22	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.03.25	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.03.27	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.03.30	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.04.04	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.05.29	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.05.29	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.05.30	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.06.05	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.06.07	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.06.09	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.06.14	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.06.17	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.06.18	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.06.22	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.06.28	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.07.05	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.07.07	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.07.11	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.07.17	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.07.21	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.07.28	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.08.01	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.08.09	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.08.15	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.08.20	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.08.26	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.09.01	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.09.18	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.09.22	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.10.15	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.10.20	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.10.25	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.10.27	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.10.30	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.11.04	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.11.15	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.11.17	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.12.02	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1795.12.30	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris

1796.01.05	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1796.02.04	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1796.02.08	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1796.06.05	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1796.06.07	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1796.06.09	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1796.07.16	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1796.07.19	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1796.07.25	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1796.07.30	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1796.08.12	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1796.09.02	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1796.09.09	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris
1796.10.03	Théâtre des amis de la patrie	Paris

Lucile Grétry (1772-90)

Le mariage d'Antonio (1786, opéra-comique)

See Appendix D for a complete performance history of *Le mariage d'Antonio*.

Toinette et Louis (1787, opéra-comique)

1787.03.22	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
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Appendix B

Key Events Leading to the French Revolution

1740-48 **War of Austrian Succession**: new tax reforms are proposed increasing the parliament's significance

1756-63 **Seven Years' War**: France faced numerous losses in the colonies to Britain. The massive economic loss financially devastated the country which partly facilitated the revolution's necessity

The 1760s-1770s **Pacte de Famine**; was the height of the widespread conspiracy during the *ancien régime* that the government was withholding food. Largely spread due to food scarcity caused by a rapid increase in population

1774-76 '**Physiocratic reforms**': Economic idea that land should be indicative of the nation's wealth which resulted in the removal of grain controls

1775-83 **American War of Independence** (French involvement from 1778).

1776-81 **Necker becomes the Director General of finance**: increasing the centralization of the state's power

1786 Major reform proposal put to King, and eventually presented to **Assembly of Notables** (February 1787).

1786 **Eden Treaty** with England: Ends the economic war with Britain but 'free' trade hurts French economy

1788 **Estates General recalled**

1789 **Paris riots begin**

1789 **Estates General meets** in May: little consensus which leads to the establishment of the National Constituent Assembly

1789 12-14 July Paris riots and the **fall of the Bastille**

1789 26 August **Declaration of the Rights of Man**

1789 5-6 October **Women's Bread March to Versailles**

Appendix C

Performance History of Julie Candelle's *Catherine, ou La belle fermière* (1792) during the French Revolution (1789-1799)⁷⁶⁴

Date	Theatre	Place
1792.12.27	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1792.12.31	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.01.02	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.01.03	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.01.05	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.01.08	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.01.11	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.01.14	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.01.17	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.01.20	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.01.23	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.01.29	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.02.01	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.02.03	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.02.05	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.02.08	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.02.12	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.02.15	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris

⁷⁶⁴ Taken from CÉSAR *calendrier électronique des spectacles sous l'ancien régime et sous la Révolution* [Oxford: CESAR Project at Oxford Brookes University, 2001] web.
https://cesar.humanum.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UOID=200447

1793.02.19	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.02.21	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.02.24	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.02.26	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.02.28	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.03.02	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.03.10	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.03.13	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.03.15	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.03.20	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.03.24	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.03.26	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.04.01	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.04.04	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.04.07	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.04.10	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.04.19	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.04.21	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.05.01	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.08.07	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.08.12	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.08.17	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.10.11	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris

1793.10.15	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.10.22	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.10.27	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.11.01	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.11.08	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.11.14	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.11.19	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.11.24	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.12.19	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1793.12.22	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.01.08	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.01.24	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.02.02	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.02.09	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.02.16	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.04.19	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.05.02	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.05.09	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.05.13	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.05.20	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.05.28	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.06.05	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.06.11	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris

1794.06.20	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.07.02	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.10.02	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.10.08	Variétés Amusantes, Comiques et Lyriques	Paris
1794.10.31	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1794.12.09	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1795.03.10	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1795.04.17	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1795.05.03	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1795.05.16	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1795.06.04	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1795.06.15	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1796.01.17	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1798.06.19	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1798.06.22	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1798.06.24	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1798.07.18	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1798.07.22	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1798.09.16	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1798.10.13	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1798.11.03	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1799.04.18	Théâtre de la Cité	Paris
1799.06.23	Théâtre du Marais (nouveau)	Paris
1799.06.28	Théâtre du Marais (nouveau)	Paris
1799.07.31	Théâtre du Marais (nouveau)	Paris
1799.08.07	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1799.08.10	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1799.08.20	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris

1799.08.31	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1799.09.11	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1799.09.17	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1799.09.29	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1799.09.29	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1799.10.01	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1799.10.10	Théâtre des Victoires	Paris
1799.10.10	Théâtre des Victoires	Paris
1799.10.11	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1799.10.11	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1799.10.12	Théâtre des Victoires	Paris
1799.10.13	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1799.10.14	Théâtre des Victoires	Paris
1799.10.16	Théâtre des Victoires	Paris
1799.10.16	Théâtre des Victoires	Paris
1799.10.19	Théâtre des Victoires	Paris
1799.10.20	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1799.10.20	Théâtre Molière	Paris
1799.10.23	Théâtre des Victoires	Paris
1799.11.03	Théâtre français de la rue de Richelieu	Paris
1799.11.03	Théâtre des Victoires	Paris

Appendix D

Performance History of Lucile Grétry's *Le mariage d'Antonio* (1786) during the French Revolution (1789-1799)⁷⁶⁵

Date	Théâtre	Location
1786.07.29	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1786.12.14	Salle de l'Hôtel de ville (Capitole)	Toulouse
1786.12.17	Salle de l'Hôtel de ville (Capitole)	Toulouse
1786.12.20	Salle de l'Hôtel de ville (Capitole)	Toulouse
1786.12.26	Salle de l'Hôtel de ville (Capitole)	Toulouse
1787.01.21	Salle de l'Hôtel de ville (Capitole)	Toulouse
1787.02.03	Salle de l'Hôtel de ville (Capitole)	Toulouse
1787.02.24	Salle de l'Hôtel de ville (Capitole)	Toulouse
1789.03.15	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1789.08.06	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1789.08.19	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1789.09.17	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1789.09.26	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1789.10.12	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1789.10.21	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1789.12.19	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1790.01.07	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1790.08.05	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1790.08.18	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1790.09.14	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1790.11.27	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1790.12.01	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1790.12.20	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1791.01.15	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1791.02.09	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris

⁷⁶⁵ Taken from CÉSAR *calendrier électronique des spectacles sous l'ancien régime et sous la Révolution* [Oxford: CESAR Project at Oxford Brookes University, 2001] web. https://cesar.humanum.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UOID=147971

Appendix E

Performance History of Florine Dezède's *Lucette et Lucas* (1781) during the French Revolution (1789-1799)⁷⁶⁶

Date	Theatre	Place
1781.11.08	Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne	Paris
1790.03.03	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1790.05.09	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1790.06.30	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1790.12.03	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1790.12.31	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1791.01.11	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1791.02.10	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1791.06.17	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1791.07.05	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris
1792.01.11	Théâtre Italien (salle Favart)	Paris

⁷⁶⁶ Taken from CÉSAR *calendrier électronique des spectacles sous l'ancien régime et sous la Révolution* [Oxford: CESAR Project at Oxford Brookes University, 2001] Web, https://cesar.humanum.fr/cesar2/titles/titles.php?fct=edit&script_UOID=152475 n (salle Favart) Paris

Appendix F

Letter from André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry to the Journal de Paris, 29 July 1786

Gentleman,

To try to keep secret the author's name when a work is performed at the theater always seemed to me to be rather silly; especially since it is almost impossible to do. It would be hard to prove that it is out of a genuine sense of modesty that one tries to conceal one's identity.

I therefore have the honour to reveal to you that the little work in one act, entitled *Le mariage d'Antonio*, to be performed today at the Comedie-Italienn, was set to music by one of my daughters who is thirteen years old. But since I do not want to spoil her youthful innocence by encouraging her to misrepresent the facts, I must say that, although she composed all the arias with their bass and a simple accompaniment for the harp, I wrote the score, which she is still incapable of doing. I also corrected the ensemble pieces, for this kind of composition requires a knowledge of the theater which I would have been upset if she had already acquired.

If there are moments in the arias where the declamation is pure, this is undoubtedly the result of my approach to teaching, which is perhaps useful to describe.

When she brings me a piece that I find not well composed for the spirit of the text, I do not tell her "Your aria is bad," but rather "Here is what you have expressed." I then sing her aria with the words that I think fit the music thereby giving a truth to an expression that was only vague or contradictory.

That method of education strikes me as the best; for why should one reject as bad that which in certain situations could be good? By learning harmony with an excellent teacher, Tapray; by studying the art of counterpoint with me, I do not find it useless to teach her to set a text with a purity of expression. This habit must be learned early because the musical language, enigmatic for many people, is in reality as true and as varied as the spoken word. I teach her truths of which I am convinced.

The object of a composer's work is the declamation of text, as the sketching of a live model is that of a painter. One must take into account the age, the social status, the morals, and the situation of the character one wants to make sing. When one has understood the interrelationship of all these elements, it is up to nature to do the rest; that is, it is up to nature to create a pleasant aria that springs directly from the declamation. If instead you only write a non-descript aria, you do not please the ear; if you only declaim, you only please logic; but to sing and to declaim are the secrets of genius and of reason.

I tell my daughter what I would like her to do one day, and what I would like to do myself.

It is an encouragement that I permitted her to try; but only the public can permit her to continue. It is up to the public to encourage a sex which, born to unravel perhaps better than we men, all the nuances of feeling and the finer points of comedie, could find both glory and an honest living, the paths to which are everywhere closed to them. Painting is ennobled by the superior

talents of Madame Lebrun and Madame Guiard; maybe one day music too will have masters of the same sex, capable of charming us with their musical compositions?⁷⁶⁷

⁷⁶⁷ André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry to the Journal de Paris, 29 July 1786 in Georges Froidcourt, *La correspondance générale de Grétry, augmentée de nombreux documents relatifs à la vie et aux oeuvres du compositeur liégeois, rassemblée et publiée avec une introduction et des notes critiques* (Brussels: Brepols, 1962). Translation provided by Adelson, XIV.

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